




CREST

EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS

CONNECTED FOR SAFETY

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



ABOUT CREST

On behalf of its shareholders, CREST provides and maintains emergency communications equipment and infrastructure for more than 50 first responder and public service agencies throughout the Capital Region, an area that spans the Territories of the Coast and Strait Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth peoples.

In the delivery of critical public safety services to all citizens, CREST's Board of Directors proudly recognize the First Nations governments across this region - the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees) and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) Nations in the core area, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations (W̱JOLELP (Tsartlip), BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin), ŠTÁUTW̱, (Tsawout) W̱SIKEM (Tseycum)) out on the Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands, and to the west Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), T'Sou-ke, – Pacheedaht, MÁLEXEL (Malahat) and Pune'laxutth' (Penelekut) Nations.

CREST is incorporated under the BC Business Corporations Act and regulated by the Emergency Communications Corporations Act. It is a private emergency communications not-for-profit corporation owned by its shareholders and governed by a Board of Directors. CREST's dedicated emergency telecommunications network responds directly to the region's unique island geography and strengthens the Capital region's ability to be self-reliant in the event of a natural disaster.

CONNECTED FOR SAFETY ACROSS THE CAPITAL REGION

2020 was a defining year for CREST as we successfully transitioned user agencies in the Westshore, Pacific Rim and Gulf Island areas onto the new digital P25 emergency telecommunications network. The completion of this 'next generation' technology upgrade across the Capital Region proved to be both prudent and timely as our region, like the rest of the world, was navigating the uncertainties and complex challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. CREST's P25 network became fully operational this year meeting and exceeding expectations of our user agencies when they needed it most. The seamless cut-over and optimal performance of the new network meant we were able to provide our user agencies with better tools and improved connectivity as they faced escalating workplace demands. Our User Survey undertaken at the end of the year indicated a high level of user satisfaction. Respondents confirmed that the new digital technology system and the support services we provide 24/7, 365 days a year are effective, efficient and consistently reliable. Our users told us that the new system made a difference; they felt safer and better able to serve and protect their citizens of the Capital Region. We proudly offer our gratitude to all involved as we transitioned to the new network, especially our team of professionals at CREST who, working in cooperation with CREST user agencies and our partners, carried on with unwavering dedication to deliver this multi-year project on budget. To further promote interoperability amongst staff, as well as continuing a proven strategy of system self-maintenance, CREST hired

on two young electrical engineers who had been contracted to work on the P25 project over the last few years bringing CREST's employee count up to nine.

CREST remains committed to continual improvement, fiscal transparency and accountability, and responsive, customer-focused service. These are among the principles enshrined in CREST's new Strategic Plan that articulates the organization's goals and direction for the next five years. The plan establishes performance measures holding the organization accountable to its shareholders and its user agencies in the delivery of public safety communications to the highest standards. Thank you to all CREST Directors for their leadership participation this year in developing the new plan.

The presence of COVID-19 has dramatically impacted this year and has highlighted the important role that CREST plays in backstopping the Capital Region's public safety communications needs of our user agencies and our citizens.

Our sincere thanks to our Board colleagues, our CREST employees, and our user agencies and service provider partners who stood shoulder to shoulder with us throughout this extraordinary year helping support CREST's successful technology upgrade to a new digital P25 network. As CREST embarks upon the next five years, it does so as a fiscally sound, capable and stable organization with a telecommunications network that is considered a world standard for public safety telecommunications.



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Gordie Logan,
Chair of the Board



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Gordon Horth,
General Manager



FROM THE BOARD

Thank you to Colwood Councillor,
Gordie Logan

As CREST moves forward, we say good bye to CREST's longest serving Director, Gordie Logan, who is stepping down after 19 years of service. Gordie has served as Chair of the Board for the past 12 years and has been steadfastly committed to CREST from its inception in 2001. With the confidence and support of his Board colleagues, Gordie's leadership guided CREST through the growing pains of start-up organization to where CREST is today, an effective, highly-efficient, professional organization committed to ensuring that our region's first responders and public service agencies are supported 24/7 by a world-class digital telecommunications network. On behalf of the entire CREST organization and our user agencies, thank you Gordie for your service and your friendship.

The CREST Board of Directors

THE NEXT CHAPTER

After proudly serving CREST for almost two decades, and with a 'best in class' public safety telecommunications network functioning optimally, this is the right time for me to step away and make room for new leadership and a new Director. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of participating in this journey. CREST's collaborative business model that ensures each shareholder has an equitable voice in public safety decision-making has served the organization and those we serve – our user agencies and our citizens – extremely well. We have traveled a long and productive way together

guided by this important understanding. I have truly enjoyed my time spent with my Board colleagues over these many years, and with the CREST team, a very talented group of dedicated professionals who are the foundation of CREST's success.

With gratitude and best wishes for ongoing success,

Councillor Gordie Logan, City of Colwood
Chair of the Board, CREST



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From left to right: Councillor Gordie Logan, Councillor Murray Weisenberger, Superintendent Mac Richards, Councillor Esther Paterson, Director Brian Sims, (Alternate) Director Rob Ferrier, Director Stephen Anderson, Councillor Chad Rintoul, Councillor Kyara Kahakauwila, Councillor Tim Morrison, Mayor David Screech, Councillor Geoff Young, Director Jeri Grant, Councillor Lillian Szpak.

Missing: Councillor Megan McMath, Councillor Niall Paltiel, Director Rob Reeleder, Director Charles Nash, Councillor Karen Harper, Director Brad Cameron, Councillor Karel Roessingh.

Stephen Anderson
BC Transit

Niall Paltiel
Central Saanich

Gordie Logan
Colwood

Jeri Grant
CRD – Juan de Fuca

Charles Nash
CRD – Salt Spring Island

Rob Reeleder
CRD – Southern Gulf Islands

Brad Cameron
Emergency Health
Services Commission

Tim Morrison
Esquimalt

Karel Roessingh
Highlands

Lillian Szpak
Langford

Kyara Kahakauwila
Metchosin

Murray Weisenberger
North Saanich

Esther Paterson
Oak Bay

Brian Sims
Province of BC

Mac Richards
RCMP

Karen Harper
Saanich

Chad Rintoul
Sidney

Megan McMath
Sooke

Geoff Young
Victoria

David Screech
View Royal

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Esther Paterson
Oak Bay

Rob Reeleder
Southern Gulf Islands

Karel Roessingh
Highlands (Chair)

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Kyara Kahakauwila
Metchosin (Chair)

Tim Morrison
Esquimalt

Chad Rintoul
Sidney

Karel Roessingh
Highlands

Murray Weisenberger
North Saanich



STRATEGIC PLAN

Over the summer, CREST Directors met to map out the strategic direction for CREST for the next five years committing the organization to remaining at the forefront of trends and new developments in emergency communications.

Ensuring optimal performance of the P25 network and continued fiscal sustainability underly CREST's strategic priorities for the next five years. CREST Strategic Plan can be read [here](#).

CREST HAS MEASURABLE GOALS IN FOUR KEY AREAS

GOAL 1

Confidence of
Shareholders
and User Agency
Organizations

GOAL 2

Public Safety
Service
Excellence

GOAL 3

Organizational
Effectiveness

GOAL 4

Financial
Performance

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

	2019	2020
Revenue	\$ 11,718,300	\$ 7,798,130
Direct operating expenses	2,949,925	2,967,057
Other expenses		
Amortization	3,373,968	3,551,812
Interest expense	1,016,910	1,010,809
Total expenses	7,340,803	7,529,678
Excess of revenue over expenses	4,377,497	268,452
Surplus, beginning of year	8,332,029	12,709,526
Surplus, end of year	12,709,526	12,977,978

Transition to new P25 digital network across the Capital Region completed in the fall. Data tracking of the P25 network commenced November 2020. Figures below represent a two-month period and are calculated to reflect a twelve-month period. Annual exact performance measures of the new network will be reflected in future years.

P25 TECHNOLOGY PERFORMANCE METRICS

6,333,875

Total Transmissions

2,834

Radios in Service

723

Average Calls Per Hour

8,468 calls

1 Busy For Every

99.9980%

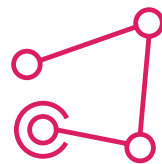
System Availability

2020 TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES COMPLETE

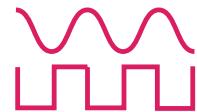
VIEW ROYAL
PUBLIC
SAFETY BUILDING

We are very thrilled to report we have formally switched over to our new radios and are on the P25 700 MHz system. We have done local area testing and have amazing reception and clarity on our upgraded mobiles and handhelds.

Stephanie Dunlop
Fire Chief, Metchosin Fire

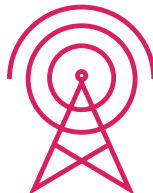


CREST completes final phase of new, digital P25 network installations culminating four years of work.



30%
increased
capacity

All 50 CREST user agencies – more than 3,000 public safety and public service employees – are operating on the new digital network and experiencing performance improvements.



30 transmission towers and more than 50 in-vehicle repeaters



Almost 3,000 radios programmed



Improved audio clarity and coverage



Interoperability and encryption capabilities



P25 PERFORMANCE USER SATISFACTION

CREST undertook an online survey in November among its user agencies in order to gauge levels of satisfaction with various performance aspects of the new P25 network, and to establish a bench mark for future survey results.

Survey respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with radio features, and gave CREST Technical Support a 100% satisfaction level.



I just wanted to drop you a quick E-Mail to say the new P25 system is working great. We did a few test buildings after we switched and wow what a difference everything is coming in crystal clear.

Gordie Douglas
Fire Chief, CFB Esquimalt Fire Rescue



The system has been good and reliable and much safer in my mind.

Scott Green
Chief Constable, Saanich Police



MOBILE (IN-VEHICLE) RADIO USE

96.4%

Ease of Use

91.9%

Clarity of audio

84.7%

Coverage Within Jurisdiction

82%

Coverage Outside of Jurisdiction

PORTABLE (HAND HELD) RADIO USE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH RADIO FEATURES

97.6%

Ease of Use

88.9%

Clarity of Audio

85.1%

Coverage Within Jurisdiction

81.9%

Coverage Outside of Jurisdiction



CONNECTED FOR SAFETY

CREST successfully completed its \$24.5 million technology upgrade across the Capital Region on behalf of its shareholders and for the benefit of its user agencies and the citizens they serve.



I am pleased to announce that all areas of the district that have NEVER had any emergency radio capabilities (even with the powerful truck-based radios) are now areas that we are able to communicate in with perfect clarity using only the small low power handheld radios!

Dean Ford
Fire Chief, Highlands Fire



DID YOU KNOW?

The completion of the new P25 network meant the decommissioning the old CREST analogue system. Radios that have some useful life have been offered to other public safety agencies working on older analogue systems in central and northern Vancouver Island.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The year 2020 will be forever remembered as one of the most demanding for our front line and essential workers including our emergency responders and public service agencies. CREST on behalf of its shareholders paid tribute to CREST user agencies for their unyielding commitment to public safety during the COVID health pandemic.

COVID restrictions limited large gatherings where interoperability amongst CREST user agencies has historically been very useful, such as the annual Canada Day celebrations in the capital city. While celebratory events were forced to cancel, traffic accidents and forest and structural fires all continued to unfold throughout the year. In most cases, these events involved multiple agencies and required interoperability to manage resources safely and effectively.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND INITIATIVES SUPPORTED

- Tour de Rock
- Emergency Preparedness Week
- Crime Stoppers
- Celebration of Frontline Workers



As our region's emergency communications providers serving over 50 police, fire, ambulance and public service agencies, we know only too well the risks that our essential service employees, first responders and health care workers are taking for the good of us all.

Thank you for your commitment and courage during this COVID-19 pandemic. We are all so very grateful and proud to support you.

CREST
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS



CREST USER AGENCIES

BC AMBULANCE SERVICE

BC CONSERVATION OFFICER SERVICE

BC TRANSIT

CANADIAN FORCES BASE

- Fire
- Police

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

- Salt Spring Island Electoral Area – Fire
- Piers Island – Fire
- Saturna Island – Fire
- Mayne Island – Fire
- Galiano Island North – Fire
- Galiano Island South – Fire
- Southern Gulf Island Emergency Program
- Otter Point – Fire
- Pender Island – Fire
- Willis Point – Fire
- East Sooke – Fire
- Shirley – Fire
- Hazmat Team

CENTRAL SAANICH

- Fire
- Police

COLWOOD

- Bylaw Enforcement
- Fire

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BC (PEP)

ESQUIMALT FIRE

GREATER VICTORIA POLICE

VICTIM SERVICES

HIGHLANDS FIRE

ISLAND HEALTH

LANGFORD

- Bylaw Enforcement
- Fire

METCHOSIN FIRE

NORTH SAANICH FIRE

OAK BAY

- Fire
- Police

PARKS CANADA

PORT RENFREW FIRE

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

SAANICH

- Fire
- Police

SIDNEY FIRE

SONGHEES FIRST NATION

SOOKE

- Bylaw Enforcement
- Fire

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA SECURITY

VICTORIA

- Bylaw Enforcement
- Fire
- Police

VICTORIA AIRPORT

AUTHORITY FIRE

VIEW ROYAL FIRE

DID YOU KNOW?

CREST complies with Health Canada's Safety Code 6 (SC6), the federal regulations that govern electromagnetic devices. CREST sites are lower emitters of electromagnetic energy than a personal cell phone, or a household microwave oven. Since only public safety users are on the CREST system, the amount of transmission air time is a fraction of the activity that commercial cell carriers generate through calls, texts, and on-line interest.