

CREST

EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



**FAR
REACHING
PUBLIC
SAFETY.**

NETWORK EXPANSION MEANS GREATER SAFETY FOR SYSTEM USERS AND THE PUBLIC

Ensuring optimal performance of the CREST network, and prudent fiscal stewardship in the face of worldwide inflationary pressures made for a successful and interesting year. The network seamlessly handled another record-year of transmissions without service interruption, a testament to the reliability of the CREST system and the organization's team of dedicated employees. Where extreme weather events knocked out power, connectivity on the CREST network was uninterrupted, and when emergency response agencies needed to respond to urgent situations, the network performed as designed.

CREST's user agencies, our region's essential service personnel, are to be commended for their unrelenting professionalism and dedication to their public safety responsibilities in yet another challenging year marked by increased workplace demands, housing supply and affordability issues, and inflation. Employee retention and attraction issues tested businesses across the region, the province and the country including CREST's user agencies. In addition to ensuring the CREST network and equipment were performing optimally 24/7, CREST added to its online training tutorial resources, and increased the number of in-person training sessions to strengthen user knowledge and competencies. Engagement in training sessions continues to be key to fully realizing all the public safety features of the CREST system. In early 2023, CREST will undertake its second User Satisfaction Survey since completing the network upgrade. Given the frequency and number of new user agency employees being added to workplaces throughout the year, measuring performance indicators in relation to accessed training and level of user proficiency is of high interest to CREST in our commitment to continual improvement and service delivery.

With inflation rates the highest they have been in over 40 years, CREST continued to apply rigorous fiscal oversight to all capital investments, network upgrades and operational expansion. Steady progress was made this year on CREST's co-location agreement with Rogers Communications bringing the CREST network to an underserved region along the Highway 14 corridor from Shirley to Port Renfrew. Installation along this busy route will be completed by spring 2023. CREST will also be moving ahead with a second co-location opportunity with Rogers Communications on Salt Spring Island. Anticipating

[continued on next page ...](#)



... continued from previous page

global inflationary pressures, CREST purchased the necessary supplies and transmission equipment from Motorola in advance of cost escalations to support these planned coverage expansions and network enhancements. These two negotiated agreements have resulted in significant cost savings to CREST and will address the existing gaps in public safety telecommunications coverage in these areas.

CREST completed on its land purchase in the City of Langford moving the organization one step closer to having a new consolidated public safety building that will house all of CREST's equipment and technology under one roof in a post-seismic structure. The importance of protecting the Capital Region's emergency telecommunications network is widely recognized and supported by CREST's shareholders and user agencies, however, CREST is moving ahead cautiously monitoring costs to ensure that capital expenditures are within budget allocations.

In a year of ongoing and emergent challenges, CREST met and exceeded all performance expectations of the network and the organization.

In closing, we wish to acknowledge CREST's Directors for their leadership. The November municipal election brought changes to the Board, and we welcome the new Directors joining us. To those Directors who moved on, we are grateful for their valuable time and stalwart dedication to the delivery of quality public safety services throughout the Capital Region.

We also recognize our CREST employees for the integral role that each individual plays safeguarding our region's front-line workers and the public. Their skills, professionalism, and commitment, 365 days a year, ensures the efficient and reliable performance of the CREST network 24/7. Thank you.



Tim Morrison,
Chair of the Board



Gordon Horth,
General Manager



ABOUT CREST

On behalf of its shareholders, CREST operates 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 Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth peoples. In the delivery of essential public safety services to all citizens, CREST's Board of Directors and CREST employees proudly recognize the First Nations' governments across the south island region.

The CREST public safety network allows all our region's primary emergency response agencies to use the same system, the same technology and the same world-class standard of communication. This 'one-system' approach is the ideal model in which to address public safety from an emergency communications perspective. It allows for interoperability, reliability and efficiency of communications among all responding agencies.

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 20-member Board of Directors, nominated by CREST shareholders. CREST's secure emergency telecommunications system 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.

OUR MISSION AND VISION

MISSION: CREST provides effective emergency communications for the safety of our communities.

VISION: CREST is a recognized leader in public safety communications: responsive, resilient, connected

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tim Morrison
Chair – Esquimalt

Karel Roessingh
Vice Chair – Highlands

Esther Paterson
Finance Chair – Oak Bay

Chad Rintoul
Governance Chair – Sidney

Sharmarke Dubow
Director – Victoria

Lillian Szpak
Director – Langford

Brian Sims
Director – Province of BC

Charles Nash
Director – CRD Salt Spring
Island Electoral Area

Niall Paltiel
Director – Central Saanich

Dean Jantzen
Director – Colwood

David Screech
Director – View Royal

Bradley Cameron
Director – (BC Emergency
Health Services Commission)

Murray Weisenberger
Director – North Saanich

Jeri Grant
Director – CRD Juan de Fuca
Electoral Area

Karen Harper
Director – Saanich

Mac Richards
Director – RCMP

Megan McMath
Director – Sooke

Rob Reeleder, ICD.D
Director CRD – Southern
Gulf Islands

Kyara Kahakauwila
Director – Metchosin

Stephen Anderson
Director – BC Transit

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Kyara Kahakauwila
Metchosin

Director Esther Paterson
Oak Bay (Chair)

Director Rob Reeleder
Southern Gulf Islands

Director Karel Roessingh
Highlands

Murray Weisenberger
North Saanich

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Director Dean Jantzen
Colwood

Kyara Kahakauwila
Metchosin

Director Tim Morrison
Esquimalt

Director Chad Rintoul
Sidney (Chair)

Director Karel Roessingh
Highlands

CREST would like to thank the following Directors who completed their service in 2022 for their many years of guidance and dedication to the CREST organization.

Director Cameron
BC Emergency Health
Services Commission

Director Dubow
Victoria

Director Kahakauwila
Metchosin

Director Nash
CRD - Salt Spring Island

Director Paltiel
Central Saanich

Director Screech
View Royal

Director Sims
Province of BC

Director Szpak
Langford

Director Weisenberger
North Saanich





Ensuring optimal performance of the P25 network and continued fiscal sustainability underly CREST's strategic priorities.

The full 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



TECHNOLOGY PERFORMANCE METRICS

The CREST network handled another record number of transmissions in 2022 as first responders and public service agencies across the Capital Region continued to manage increased workplace demands and more complex working environments. The reliability and performance of the CREST network and the professionalism of CREST staff met the standards of excellence set out in the organization's strategic goals.

	2020	2021	2022
Total Transmissions	6,333,875	10,386,160	10,067,183
System Availability	99.9980%	99.9984%	99.9992%
Average Calls per Hour	723	1,185	1,149
Radios in Service	2,834	2,926	2,994
1 Busy For Every	8,468	16,356 calls	26,149 calls

CREST P25 NETWORK

All 50 CREST user agencies - more than 3,000 public safety and public service employees - are operating on the digital P25 network and experiencing performance improvements.

30% increased capacity

Almost 3,000 radios programmed

More than 30 transmission towers and more than 60 in-vehicle repeaters





USER SATISFACTION

In 2020, upon the completion of its region-wide network upgrade to a digital platform, CREST undertook a User Satisfaction survey to set benchmark performance measurements for the network and the CREST organization.

Results reflected strong performance of the new system and support from user groups highlighting opportunities for additional training support on the new network. CREST will undertake a second User Satisfaction Survey in early 2023 to support CREST's commitment to optimal performance of the CREST network and the organization's commitment to continual improvement and client service excellence.

TRAINING ON THE CREST NETWORK

CREST provided in person training to over 40 of 50 user agencies. The training ranged from broad interaction with new recruits, to specific sessions on DVR (Digital Vehicle Repeaters), emergency button use, Hot Mic use (a feature when the microphone on the radio stays open during an emergency call), and battery management.

“
We received an enhanced radio tutorial from CREST's Keith Lewis (training facilitator) and Taso Barous (communications technologist). They did an excellent job with the session and answering questions from our officers.

Lorne Fletcher
City of Langford, Manager Community Safety and Municipal Enforcement.

”

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

	2021	2022
Revenue	\$ 7,798,130	\$ 8,180,701
Direct operating expenses	2,967,057	3,907,389
Other expenses		
Amortization	3,551,812	3,019,350
Interest expense	1,010,809	1,017,923
Total expenses	7,529,678	7,944,662
Excess of revenue over expenses	268,452	236,039
Surplus, beginning of year	12,709,526	15,334,807
Surplus, end of year	12,977,978	15,570,846

CREST is funded through user fees paid by the agencies using the system. Their fees are based on the geographic size of the area they serve, its population, the number of radios required, and radio traffic.

In addition, the Capital Regional District contracts with CREST to provide an emergency communications system for the region. This collaborative shareholder model ensures that each shareholder has an equitable voice in public safety decision making.



**Municipal Finance
Authority of BC**

The Municipal Finance Authority of BC featured CREST's \$24.5M region-wide technology upgrade in their 2021 annual report as an example of a high-impact project completed on budget.





PLANNING CONTINUES FOR CREST'S POST-DISASTER PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

CREST took title of the land parcel intended for the new post-disaster public safety building this year. Staff and the Finance Committee of the Board have been closely monitoring the inflationary impacts on the 2019 cost estimates and have commissioned several independent cost estimate updates for the project. To date, the estimates are still within the range of funds allocated in the budget passed by the Board and Shareholders, and staff have commenced the process to bring on a construction management firm. Current plans would see the project underway in late 2023 with completion in 2025.

ABOVE: The proposed CREST public safety building will meet the current and future needs of CREST, the region's essential service agency that operates the region's emergency communications network.



CREST'S COMMITMENT TO ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVICE DELIVERY:

- With the growth and densification of the Capital Region, CREST relocated two existing sites to improve coverage. The site at CRD Fisgard Street in Victoria moved to Hudson Place II, a significantly higher building that provides better coverage in the downtown core. The Mary Hill location in Metchosin has been replaced by a new site in Beecher Bay which offers improved coverage through the broader East Sooke area.
- Co-location agreements are in place with Rogers Communications on their cellular installations along Highway 14 and on Salt Spring Island. The digital CREST network will soon improve public and responder safety in these key areas.
- CREST and the Paging Working Group (a sub-group of the Fire Services Working Group) are moving ahead to replace the existing paging system that currently has no remote monitoring or remote management capabilities. The new paging network will provide full remote monitoring and remote management with 7 new sites planned to improve service in the Gulf Islands and Juan de Fuca/Highway 14 areas. The system being implemented is capable of both analog and digital paging.
- CREST welcomed Legislative Assembly Protective Services and Sidney Island Fire to the network. The new network (2020) was designed to support a 30% increase in capacity.



NETWORK EXPANSION TO PORT RENFREW

Thanks to a push from the provincial government to bring cellular service to Port Renfrew along Highway 14, CREST was able to successfully negotiate a co-location agreement with Rogers Communications (Rogers). This agreement enables CREST to extend their public safety network from Otter Point to Port Renfrew making life safer for residents, for emergency responders and for visitors to this well-traveled corridor. For Otter Point, Shirley and Port Renfrew Fire Departments, RCMP and BC Ambulance Service, this is welcomed news. Emergency Response and public service agencies working in underserved area will be added to the CREST digital network in spring 2023.





CREST is a proud supporter of emergency responder and public safety initiatives throughout the Capital Region.

This year saw the return of major festivals and events including the Canada Day celebrations. Police Camp, an educational hands-on camp for youth who may be interested in a career in policing, returns in early 2023. The participants, all from grades 10 through 12, will be exposed to a wide range of public safety and leadership topics. One of the cornerstones of the program is to practice, through simulated situations, what they learn throughout the camp. CREST staff will be on hand with radios to provide radio training.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND INITIATIVES SUPPORTED

- Canada Day
- Tour de Rock
- Emergency Preparedness Week
- Crime Stoppers
- Police Camp



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

CRD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

ESQUIMALT FIRE

GREATER VICTORIA POLICE VICTIM SERVICES

HIGHLANDS FIRE

JDF EMERGENCY PROGRAM

LANGFORD

- Bylaw Enforcement
- Fire

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PROTECTIVE SERVICES

METCHOSIN FIRE

NORTH SAANICH FIRE

OAK BAY

- Fire
- Police

PARKS CANADA

PORT RENFREW FIRE

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

SAANICH

- Fire
- Police

SALT SPRING ISLAND EMERGENCY PROGRAM

SIDNEY FIRE

SIDNEY ISLAND 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.