

CREST

EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



MORE PREPARED THAN EVER



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

This past year represents the final year in CREST's 2020- 2025 Strategic Plan, a period that saw a series of environmental crisis hit our region from heat domes and bomb cyclones to atmospheric rivers, as well as devastating wildfires that burned through vast areas of our province. Amidst these large-scale events was the onset of the COVID-19 health pandemic, a humbling and devastating virus that spread around the globe shutting down economies and overwhelming healthcare systems far and wide – including here at home. The cumulative impacts of these events vigorously tested the performance of the CREST network. The system managed a record number of transmissions each year without interruption and these numbers continue to build, a testament to the competencies and dedication of CREST's employees who maintain the network and the equipment every day no matter the circumstance; It is also a reflection of the increased demands placed on our region's first responders and public service agencies. More than three thousand emergency response and public service personnel rely on CREST throughout the Capital Region for their safety and the safety of the citizens that they serve.

With this as a backdrop, 2025 was a pivotal year for CREST.

CREST maintained its focus on fiscal stewardship, operational performance and service excellence. The network continued its strong performance managing more than eleven million transmissions and posting a reliability factor greater than 99.99%. The consistency of these performance metrics is a compelling demonstration of the service reliability of CREST – the network and the organization.

As part of our ongoing commitment to service excellence, a co-location agreement was signed with TELUS for a CREST site on a new communications tower in Colwood's Royal Bay neighbourhood. Planned for installation in 2026, this new site will improve coverage in this fast-growing area and strengthen the resiliency of the network on the west shore. CREST will also be installing transmission equipment at the new Ganges firehall on Salt Spring Island to improve the emergency communications network on the Gulf Islands.

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

... continued from previous page

CREST reached a key milestone this year with the completion of the organization's new operations centre. The purpose-built, post-seismic structure consolidates CREST's technology, infrastructure and personnel in one location. Our gratitude and congratulations to the CREST Directors on the Building Committee who oversaw this important public safety infrastructure project with CREST staff, and to CREST's technical team for their massive coordination efforts leading up to the seamless relocation of CREST's master site. The successful completion of the new CREST headquarters on time and within budget was a priority in CREST's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

Looking ahead, CREST begins 2026 with a new five-year strategic plan and a new General Manager. Gordon Horth, who led CREST through a dynamic period of growth, retired after almost two decades at the helm. He leaves CREST as a high-functioning organization in solid financial shape. The Board joins me in recognizing Gord for his leadership and his friendship. His management resulted in many important operational legacies. He guided and mentored his team with a steady hand and built a solid reputation amongst our user agencies for reliable, performance excellence. We acknowledge his staunch commitment to CREST with gratitude. The Board selected Al Marston, CREST's former Operations Manager, to lead the organization into the future. Al stepped into his new role after many years of managing the critical technical operations that underpin the organization's growth and service improvements across the Capital Region.

In closing, we are grateful for the continued support and trust of our shareholders and our Board Directors whose governance and dedication have enabled CREST to deliver on the organization's performance goals for the past five years. We are immensely grateful for their valued time and contributions. CREST is the beneficiary of our Directors' unwavering commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our region's first responders and the citizens they serve. We also give thanks to our user agency organizations and service provider partners for their confidence in CREST and shared commitment to the delivery of dependable, quality public safety services throughout the Capital Region. And to our CREST employees, your constant professionalism is the foundation of CREST's reputation for service excellence. We are proud to work with you.



Tim Morrison,
Chair of the Board



Gordon Horth,
General Manager



Al Marston,
General Manager





ABOUT CREST

CREST operates and maintains emergency communications equipment and infrastructure for more than 50 first responder and public service agencies throughout the Capital Region. In doing so, the CREST organization is highly accountable to its shareholders and user agency organizations.

The CREST digital network is considered the world standard in public safety communications technology. Primary safety features of the network are interoperability, encryption and noise suppression. All CREST user agencies communicate on a common network utilizing the same technology. In the event of an incident that requires a multi-agency response across jurisdictions, all the Capital Region's first responders and public service agencies can communicate seamlessly with one another in real time. CREST also shares a common platform with E-Comm, the organization that supports emergency response agencies throughout the lower mainland. Interoperability and the design and capacity of the CREST network strengthen the Capital Region's ability to be self-reliant in emergency response activations.

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.

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. The creation of CREST addresses the public safety risks inherent to our unique island location and strengthens the Capital Region's ability to be self-reliant in the event of a large-scale disaster.





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Councillor Tim Morrison
Chair – Esquimalt

Councillor Karel Roessingh
Vice Chair – Highlands

Councillor Esther Paterson
Finance Chair – Oak Bay

Councillor Chad Rintoul
Governance Chair – Sidney

Councillor Matt Dell
Director – Victoria

Councillor Kimberley Guiry
Director – Langford

David Pilling
Director – Province of BC

John Wakefield
Director – CRD Salt Spring
Island Electoral Area

Councillor Chris Graham
Director – Central Saanich

Councillor Dean Jantzen
Director – Colwood

Councillor Don Brown
Director – View Royal

Brad Mitchell
Director – BC Emergency
Health Services Commission

Councillor Irene McConkey
Director – North Saanich

Jeri Grant
Director – CRD Juan de Fuca
Electoral Area

Councillor Karen Harper
Director – Saanich

Brett Sinden
Director – RCMP

Councillor Megan McMath
Director – Sooke

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

Councillor Sharie Epp
Director – Metchosin

Stephen Anderson
Director – BC Transit

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Director Esther Paterson
Oak Bay - Chair

Director Karel Roessingh
Highlands

Director Rob Reeleder
CRD Southern Gulf Islands

Director Irene McConkey
North Saanich

Director Chris Graham
Central Saanich

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Director Chad Rintoul
Sidney - Chair

Director Karel Roessingh
Highlands

Director Tim Morrison
Esquimalt

Director Jeri Grant
CRD Juan de Fuca Electoral Area

Director Don Brown
View Royal

BUILDING TASK FORCE

Director Karel Roessingh
Highlands - Chair

Director Esther Paterson
Oak Bay

Director Dean Jantzen
Colwood

Director Kimberley Guiry
Langford

Director Megan McMath
Sooke

John Wakefield
Director – CRD Salt Spring
Island Electoral Area





STRATEGIC PLAN 2020- 2025

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

2025 represents the last year of CREST's five-year Strategic Plan. The economic and social distress resulting from the multi-year COVID health pandemic along with successive extreme weather events tested the performance of the CREST system throughout this period. CREST user agencies on the front-line faced increased workplace demands and more complex working environments.



Despite these challenges, CREST's Board of Directors and operations team accomplished several significant milestones:

- **The region-wide P25 digital network upgrade was successfully completed on time and within budget.** The system operates 24/7 every day of the year and supports area coverage of 97%. The network experienced a steady increase of transmissions exceeding 11 million in 2025 while maintaining system availability of 99.998% and posting above industry standards for system reliability.
- **CREST Directors approved the land purchase and construction of a purpose-built, operations centre** to protect the Capital Region's public safety technology and infrastructure in a post-seismic structure.
- **CREST's master site was transferred to the new operations centre without incident.** With the successful completion of CREST's new headquarters, CREST Directors addressed the number one risk identified in the previous 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan.
- **CREST negotiated a new service agreement** (to 2027) with the Capital Regional District
- **Operational costs were kept within the rate of inflation** and posting positive annual surpluses
- **Leadership succession was achieved.** Gordon Horth retired in the fall having served as CREST's General Manager for 19 years. The Board of Directors selected Al Marston, formerly CREST's Operations Manager, to assume the General Manager's responsibilities.



SHAPING A STRONGER, SAFER TOMORROW: CREST'S 2026-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

CREST Directors met in the fall for a Strategic Planning Workshop to lay out the goals for the next five years. A road map for the future, CREST's strategic priorities continue to reflect optimal performance of the network and the fiscal sustainability of the CREST organization.

The CREST 2026-2030 Strategic Plan can be read [here](#).



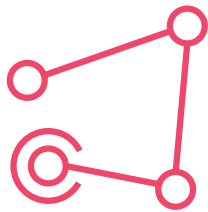
TECHNOLOGY PERFORMANCE METRICS

Integral to CREST's commitment to continual improvement and performance excellence are investments in network expansion. CREST entered into a co-location agreement with TELUS to strengthen emergency and cellular communications in this the fast-growing Royal Bay neighbourhood in Colwood. This new site will be online in early 2026 and complements two earlier co-location agreements with Rogers Communications on their cellular installations in the Juan de Fuca region and on west Salt Spring Island. Public and emergency responders' safety in these previously underserved areas has been greatly enhanced as a result. The reliability and performance of the CREST network and professional staff continue to consistently meet the standards of excellence set out in CREST's strategic goals.

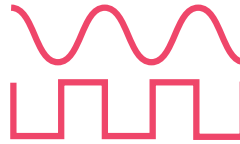
	2023	2024	2025
Total Transmissions	10,166,306	10,664,752	11,016,978
System Availability	99.9983%	99.9976%	99.9973%
Average Calls per Hour	1,160	1,217	1,258
Radios in Service	2,994	3,115	3,228
1 Busy For Every	17,086 calls	16,232 calls	18,331 calls



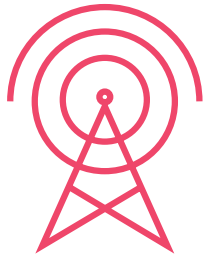
QUICK FACTS



> 11 million transmissions per year



Links > 50 CREST user agencies - police, fire, ambulance and other emergency response and public service agencies supporting the work of more than 3,000 users



35 transmission towers and more than 75 in-vehicle repeaters



Improved audio clarity and coverage



Post-disaster headquarters



Over 3,000 radios programmed



Technology upgrade to all digital platform with broadcast frequency of 700 MHz in the urban areas and using VHF in the rural areas



Interoperability and encryption capabilities



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

	2023	2024	2025
Revenue	\$ 8,314,677	\$ 8,379,331	\$ 10,065,943
Direct operating expenses	4,864,204	5,034,879	5,392,872
Other expenses			
Amortization	3,085,090	3,157,216	3,424,877
Interest expense	1,279,558	1,145,915	1,432,026
Total expenses	9,228,852	9,338,010	10,249,775
Excess (shortfall) of revenue over expenses	-914,175	-958,679	-183,832
Surplus, beginning of year	15,570,846	14,656,671	13,697,992
Surplus, end of year	14,656,671	13,697,992	13,514,160

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.

The Board consistently takes a measured approach to costs to end users on the CREST network while, at the same time, continuing to make incremental improvements to the coverage that the network provides throughout the region keeping pace with population growth and the corresponding impact to public safety.



TRANSMISSION MAP

Transmission sites are located in all areas of the Capital Region from the Gulf Islands to Port Renfrew.

Six new sites have been added to the CREST network in the past five years to improve coverage and reliability and to keep pace with population growth.



NEW POST-DISASTER PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

Completed in the fall of 2025, CREST's new post-disaster operations centre consolidates the region's critical public safety technology, equipment and personnel in one building.



Protecting CREST's public safety technology and infrastructure is vital. It ensures first responders can continue providing life saving services during major emergencies, when reliability matters most. CREST is the foundation that makes our work possible.

Chris Aubrey
Langford Fire Rescue Chief





PASSING THE TORCH

As CREST moves forward, the organization expresses gratitude to CREST General Manager, Gordon Horth (Gord), who retired this fall after almost two decades of leadership.

Gord's management was pivotal, strengthening and stabilizing CREST in its early years and guiding the organization forward through periods of growth to deliver upon the community-promise and vision of CREST shareholders and Board of Directors.

Throughout his tenure, Gord rooted the organization in fiscal accountability and service excellence laying the groundwork for a future-ready, resilient organization. He hired like-minded, skilled professionals and fostered a supportive culture of learning, skills development and teamwork. Gord's dedication to CREST, to his colleagues and to the emergency response and public service agencies that we serve, will have an enduring legacy. CREST directors passed the leadership torch to CREST's Operations Manager, Al Marston who assumed responsibilities as General Manager to lead the organization into the future..





ACCESS TO THE CREST NETWORK IS A GAME CHANGER FOR VOLUNTEER PUBLIC SAFETY ORGANIZATIONS

Recent investments in the CREST system and a robust repeater network along Highway 14 linking Sooke with Port Renfrew has ensured the backbone of the region's public-safety infrastructure and emergency response has this popular area covered.

"It's a game changer," said Jeri Grant, emergency program coordinator for the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, and CREST board member. "It's a big relief knowing I can speak to somebody on my radio along that Highway 14 corridor. Before it could be dead silence."

This same sentiment is shared by Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue, a volunteer organization that joined the CREST network this year.

"If trouble comes, we are now connected on CREST. Whether it's paramedics, fire departments or RCMP, we can now coordinate a response together. This not only improves public safety, it makes it safer for our first responders."



IN THE COMMUNITY

CREST continues to be a proud supporter of public safety and education/outreach initiatives throughout the Capital Region.

SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2025 INCLUDED:

- Greater Victoria Police Foundation's Police Camp (CREST 'radio class')
- Victoria Foundation's Vital Signs report
- Crime Stoppers
- Emergency Preparedness Week
- Association of Vancouver Island Communities Conference

CREST.CA

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK MAY 3-9

MORE PREPARED THAN EVER.

We are dedicated to the safety of our region's first responders and the citizens they serve.

CREST operates the Capital Region's emergency communications system that connects than 50 emergency response and public service agencies in urban and rural communities from the Gulf Islands to Port Renfrew. The system is considered a world standard in public safety telecommunications and provides critical interoperable communications connectivity for police, fire and ambulance agencies across municipal boundaries.

More than 3,000 first responders, and bylaw, security and public service personnel are connected on the CREST network every day, 24/7.

Planning for safety.

Last fall, CREST moved to a purpose-built, post-disaster building ensuring that the region's essential public safety infrastructure is protected and operational for those on the front line in the event of a large-scale disaster.

We are more prepared than ever. Are you?

Whether in the workplace or at home, we encourage residents throughout the region to have an emergency kit, make a safety plan for you and your loved ones, and learn about your community's emergency plan. Share the responsibility of emergency preparedness so our region's first responders can prioritize the most urgent calls. Thank you.

For more information visit prepareyourself.ca

PHOTO: Steven Tweedy Sergeant, Oak Bay Police Department (left) and Chris Ashby Fire Chief, Langford Fire Department (right)



CREST MODEL

SHAREHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

- 13 Municipalities
- 3 Electoral Districts
- Province of BC
- BC Ambulance
- BC Transit
- RCMP

OPERATIONS

- Over 50 User Agencies
- Approximately 10 million calls annually – or 1 call every 3 seconds.
- System availability: 99.999%
- System coverage and reliability: 97%

STAFF

- General Manager and administration
- 8 technical staff

INFRASTRUCTURE/SYSTEM

- Digital P25 system
- 35 + transmission sites
- Over 50 in-vehicle repeaters
- Over 3100 mobile and portable radio
- New post-disaster headquarters and master site facility

FUNDING

OPERATIONAL

- User Agency fees: 80 %
 - About 1/3 of the User Agencies come from each of the 3 levels of government
 - municipal, provincial and federal
- CRD Service Agreement 20%

CAPITAL

- No dedicated source of funding for major capital
- Deficit financing provided by Municipal Financing Authority

BENEFITS

- Local governance and decision-making
- Local priorities & responsiveness
- Self-reliance in the event of a large emergency
- Operational excellence
- Cost effective with a lean staffing model
- Equitable funding formula for User Agencies based on:
 - The geographic size of the area served;
 - The population of the area;
 - The number of radios required; and
 - The amount of radio traffic generated.

FEATURES

- Digital system
- Network design reflects unique South Island geography and offers coverage in difficult to access locations
- Region-wide coverage
- Interoperable system for all emergency response and public service agencies in the South Island Region – 100% participation
- Interoperable with E-Comm on Lower Mainland
- Maintenance of all regional dispatch equipment



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

JUAN DE FUCA EMERGENCY PROGRAM

JUAN DE FUCA SEARCH AND RESCUE

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

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 and 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 recognize the First Nations' governments across the region. CREST complies with Health Canada's Safety Code 6 (SC6), the federal regulations that govern electromagnetic devices.

CREST

EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS

Capital Region Emergency
Service Telecommunications Inc.

2321 City Gate Boulevard
Langford, BC V9B 7A6

Phone: 250-391-6552

Email: info@crest.ca

crest.ca