



**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**  
COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS

JIM SKINNER, SHERIFF

To: Sheriff Jim Skinner  
Hunter Alley, Senior Buyer, Purchasing, x4117

From: Asst. Chief Bill Armstrong, x5125  
Lt. Brian Ward, x5147  
Chris Barnes, SO Legal Advisor, x5282

Date: Monday, October 28, 2024

Re: Dispatch ILAs and Station Alerting from U.S. Digital Designs

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**Summary**

Dispatch would like to accept the donation of a dispatch gateway from the City of Melissa and incorporate the gateway into the County's dispatch-data servers. U.S. Digital Design makes the gateway and provides fire-station-alerting services. The County would share the annual cost of providing the station-alerting services—just under \$1,200, regardless of the number of fire stations that participate.

In sum, the SO needs (1) an agenda item for the Commissioners Court to accept the donation, and (2) an amendment to the County's dispatch ILA with the City of Melissa and the City of Anna (the only other city whose fire dept. receives station alerting).

**Discussion**

**Dispatch ILAs.** Through the SO, the County provides dispatch services to a list of police and fire depts. in the county, including Anna FD and Melissa FD. As part of these services, the dispatch clients buy radios and the County programs them onto its system, which is connected to the PAWM radio system operated chiefly by the Cities of Plano and Allen. The County charges each dispatch client a fee, which shares the cost of dispatch services. The County's Budget & Finance Dept. calculates the annual fee under a formula, and Purchasing circulates the new fee in an annual amendment document to the ILAs.

**Station Alerting.** The City of Melissa has obtained station-alerting equipment from vendor, U.S. Digital Design, and the Melissa FD asks the County to implement station alerting through USDD. Melissa will donate a USDD dispatch gateway (a piece of equipment) to the County, and the County would need to integrate it with the County's dispatch-data servers and USDD's infrastructure. The far end of the connection would be at the Melissa FD's fire station. With station alerting, Dispatch can receive a fire call and alert Melissa FD (when it's the station to respond) and the alert system will automatically send a chunk of information about the call to the station. That is, the alert system automates part of the fire-dispatch work.

As of Oct. 18, 2024, the only other dispatch client who has a similar station-alerting connection with Dispatch is the Anna FD. Anna FD also uses USDD, but Anna didn't donate a dispatch gateway to the County. The County can't add new alerting members without a gateway.

**IT.** County IT has examined USDD's hardware and the connection to the County's servers, and County IT has signed off on the system's security (CJIS compliant) and compatibility. Casey Stone, Infrastructure Supervisor, x4454, confirmed this in an Oct. 17, 2024 email to Maria Lemonds, Public Safety Comm. Mgr., x5127. USDD's equipment will not connect to any personal property owned by NCT9-1-1.

### **Money**

**Donation.** The Commissioners would have to accept Melissa's donation of the USDD dispatch gateway (est. value \$11,355). *See* LGC, § 81.032.

**Fee.** USDD would charge the County an annual fee for the service. As of Oct. 18, the SO understands that the annual fee is just under \$1,200—regardless of the number of dispatch clients who participate in station alerting.

**Future.** Other dispatch clients could join USDD's station-alerting system down the road. An FD may join any time.

**Cost Sharing.** Under § 791.011(e), Gov't Code, the County may share the cost of the USDD services (the annual fee). As dispatch clients join, the County would track the day a client joined and charge the client a pro rata share of the fee for the portion of the year the client received alerting services. The client would buy all hardware from USDD. Each year, the County would recalculate all alert members' share of the fee, and there would be adjustments as new clients join.