

# Cleveland considering radio system partnership

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The city of [Cleveland](#) and the Ohio Southwest Regional Communications Network (SWRCN) are considering a radio communications partnership. Cleveland had budgeted more than \$30 million for the build out of a new radio system that was awarded to Motorola earlier this year, and as part of this costly endeavor, the city may merge systems with the SWRCN at no cost.

The SWRCN, which operates on a Motorola system as well, consists of Middleburg Heights, Berea, Brook Park, Parma Heights, Strongsville, North Royalton, Olmstead Falls and Olmstead Township. The reason for the proposed merger is to increase interoperability through 13 different licensed frequencies that Cleveland uses, improve connectivity, and allow for better coverage among the major systems in Northeast Ohio. The merger is up for vote at the start of 2012.

In the past, Cleveland has addressed limitations in its ability to communicate across agencies. Within Cuyahoga County, there are more than 40 types of radio systems along with a diverse set of frequencies used by all public safety agencies. The integration between the city and the SWRCN would alleviate many of the problems associated with radio coverage across the county.

## Analyst's Take

Integration of communications systems has become more of a norm in order to ensure coverage in the event of a natural disaster or major emergency, especially when systems experience incompatibilities with neighboring jurisdictions. Since both Cleveland and the SWRCN operate on a Motorola system, if an upgrade is pursued or a contract renewed, it will likely be done regionally under the same system to control costs.

As more cities and counties consider regionalizing their public safety systems, it may create additional opportunities for vendor solutions and services, like the need for a systems integrator. Vendors should stay atop upgrades within smaller counties and municipalities as well as research regional and state systems for possible mergers.