



Introduction to Candidates for Vice Chair Joint Council on Transit Wireless Communications

The two candidates for Vice Chair in 2013 have each provided a brief introduction to themselves, and a short response to the question: *“In your view, what are the two most critical issues for transit wireless communications today that you think the Joint Council can help address?”*. Introductions and question responses are shown below. Online voting will be from February 27 to March 5, 2013.

<p>Mark McGregor <i>CEO, Virginia Regional Transit</i></p>	<p>William J. George <i>Manager, Systems & Technology, JACOBS Engineering Inc.</i></p>
<p><i>Introduction from Mark</i></p> <p>Thank you for considering me for the Vice Chair position on the Joint Council. I am currently the CEO of Virginia Regional Transit, a rural transit system that borders the Washington DC Metro area. I have over thirty years of experience operating bus systems serving the general public and Human Service transportation. I am active in CTAA, APTA, and state associations as well as many community groups and committees. I am an active Rotary member, and involved with the local Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Commissions in several communities. I am familiar with the budgeting requirements and lead times faced by many public providers. My system struggles with melding the need for wireless communications on a moving vehicle and fixed place staging systems covering over 13% of the geographic area of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition, distracted driving, and the need for immediate information for customer service are issues I deal with on a daily basis.</p> <p>I have the ability to work with private sector business and I can travel to attend relevant meetings. My proximity to the nation’s capital makes business there less inconvenient than it would be for others. I believe that my background and experience would serve the membership well.</p>	<p><i>Introduction from Bill</i></p> <p>I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Joint Council for the opportunity to serve as Vice-Chair. I understand the importance of the JC, its goals, vision and the position of VC. I reside in Easton, PA, have been married for 31 years, and have two children, and three grandchildren. I am retired from the US Marine Corps Reserves after 23 years of service while having a parallel career in Communications. I spent 8 years in Public Safety as a Communications Specialist (Northampton County, PA, Emergency Management Agency) and in 1986 I started at NJ TRANSIT. Through promotions and reorganizations I progressed and migrated to Corporate as the Manager of Communications Systems for bus, light rail, commuter rail and police. I left NJT after 13 years of service and joined the consultant community, currently with Jacobs Engineering in Morristown, NJ.</p> <p>I have been a member of APCO for many years, having served on the Region 8 Planning Committee and currently as a Commercial Member. I also have been a member of APTA and previously served on the Security Committee. Collectively, I have over 30 years of experience in the planning, design, procurement, construction, operations, and supervision of RF, communications, security, and public safety systems.</p>



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<p><i>Response to question on two most critical issues:</i></p> <p>I have seen first-hand that among transit operators, the depth of differences in capability, technology, and staffing to support transit communication systems are broad. Of the rural systems I work with in Virginia, almost all have a contracted radio system through a third party, and have little or no contact with the bureaucracy or technical expertise that creates and administers two way communications on buses. As such, I believe that the two most critical issues the Joint Council can help with are:</p> <p>(1) Bridging the technology gap and reality that transit systems and private fleets almost never employ technical professionals to meet the communication needs. Since third party contractors are involved, fleet managers need layman’s instructions on what to get to meet needs within the budget restrictions they have.</p> <p>(2) Most fleet managers do not know the rules, requirements, and technology that would affect and serve their needs in 3-year, 5-year, and 10-year planning cycles. Every sales person tries to convince the user that they need the product they offer, and there is no good planning source for predicting future compliance. As a result, transit operators need an unbiased source to assist in developing wireless communication plans that will be compliant, efficient and affordable.</p>	<p><i>Response to question on two most critical issues:</i></p> <p>In my view, there are more than two critical issues; however I briefly touch on a couple areas:</p> <p>(1) One of the most important issues is internal to the JC and the means in which we identify and establish a recurring funding source. Committee funding is critical to the survivability and sustainability of the Committee. Potential solutions include, but not limited to events, membership fees, grants, FTA/FRA support, etc. Additional efforts must continue in maintaining the agnostic association/ relationship we have with APTA, APCO, etc. and the comps for conference space and support.</p> <p>(2) The second area includes technology and the wireless industry. With the FTA/FRA mandates of narrowbanding, PTC, and the increase use of wireless devices/systems makes us vulnerable and creates the need to stay ahead of and in front of policy, regulations, initiatives, and technology. Everyone is seeking ways to communicate wirelessly, and create interoperable means of communications such as FirstNet. Agencies continue to look for ways to enhance customer communications, and spectrum is not growing to meet demands. Therefore, we need to stay ahead of the curve and remain aggressive in our efforts to provide the best advice and information to all those that seek our input and service.</p>