

IDOP Site Visit: Potential Dispatch Center Locations in Taos
Date: September 19, 2013
Locations visited: Kit Carson Electric Coop EOC and Taos County Planning Building
Notes By: John Selkirk

Partial List of Attendees (not all visited both sites):

Luis Rey, John Selkirk, Steven Miranda, Dave Curtis, Claren Martinez, Dorotea Martinez, Chris Romo, Pat Pacheco, Abigail Ordon (Assitant Town Manager), Steve?? (Kit Carson Electric Cooperative).

Kit Carson Electric Coop Emergency Communications Center:

--Town of Taos has 911 services in building, which covers the Taos, the Village of Questa, and Taos Ski Valley. The electric coop's dispatching operations are also located here. The town serves as the agent for the building which is owned by Kit Carson Electric Coop. The town can exercise an option to purchase building.

--4,000 square feet can be made available for the Taos Dispatch Center , with 2,500 sq. ft. in the lower level and the remaining area in the upper level. They can alter the floor plan to add 500-1,000 sq. ft. where there is currently an opening above the lower level, resulting in more space on the upper level.

--Fiber optics are in place, and the building can accommodate any telecomm system. The USFS telecom technicians will need a room for radio/telecom equipment. There is a question about space in the existing utility rooms for this, plus concerns about sharing utility rooms due to security issues with the 911 dispatch and electric coop operations.

--The fire agencies would be responsible for all costs of alterations/ or build out for our operations. No funding could be would be provided by the town or electric coop.

--The terms of a lease and rent costs remain to be determined, but we would have to pay our fair share.

--The building design and layout are very limiting. Structurally there are massive concrete bearing walls in the interior, and no hallways, i.e. it has an open floor plan. This requires people to walk through one workspace to get to the interior rooms, which may be disruptive and a possible security issue. The design of the building with the concrete walls limits the options for altering the space. There are concerns about being able to meet ADA requirements.

--There is limited parking space, and access for large vehicles is extremely limited. Access for larger vehicles is considered important for a fire dispatch center, since vendors with large trucks, larger fire apparatus, etc., frequently need to go to the dispatch center.

--The security needs of 911(police) and electric coop dispatch would need to be addressed.

--A general telecomm issue for either option: We must have a radio tower at each dispatch location, and the cost is approximately \$1/2 million.

--The facility was built with 2002 federal community development funding under a loan/grant program for 911 operations. The electric coop considers this a public service for public safety, not a money maker for the coop. However, the electric coop is a non-profit entity which must generate revenue to recoup costs of the facility for its members. The town has a 15-year lease, with extensions available in 5-year increments.

--A 3,000 sq. ft. addition to the building was proposed and designed, but never built. This option would still be available, at our expense.

--We need to quantify our square footage needs, both for normal dispatch operations and what is needed for expanded dispatch.

--A re-design of the floor plan for the whole building might be possible (within the structural limitations of the structure, such as the concrete interior bearing walls). By moving the electric coop dispatch functions to the lower level, the entire upper level could be made available for dispatch.

TAOS COUNTY PLANNING BUILDING

Attending this portion of the site visit were Allan? County Fire Chief, Mark?, Taos County facilities manager, and Rick Belles, Taos County Assistant County Manager.

--The "Taos County Planning Building" is a vacant building located in the Taos County administrative complex. The county is planning to renovate this building to house the county 911 dispatch operations. (Note that the county 911 dispatch is separate from the Town of Taos's 911 dispatch operations at the Kit Carson Electric Coop ECC).

--The County will offer ½ of building to house the Taos Dispatch Center. The dispatch operations would be separate from the 911 dispatch operations, but would share common facilities such as break room, restrooms, etc.

--The county is offering to build out to suit our needs at no cost. The county has adequate financial resources to provide this service, mainly through the county gross receipts tax. Their philosophy is that this will lead to better coordination and cooperation with the land management agencies. Mr. Belles stressed this is important to the county leadership: Taos county is predominately state and federal lands, and the economy and culture of Taos is strongly tied to the land.

--Likewise, the county would not charge rent for the facility. Our costs would be limited to our share of the utilities, and any costs associated with our telecom systems, furniture, etc.

--This building is considered an interim facility. An entirely new building is being planned on adjacent county property, and is expected to be available in 5-10 years. This would also be available to us, free of construction costs or rent. This facility will be constructed whether or not the Taos Dispatch Center is included in the plan.

--Fiber optics are available at the county government complex.

--In addition to the dispatch facility, an adjacent building could be renovated to house expanded dispatch operations. In the nearby county buildings, several conference rooms would be available to us as needed.

--A large amount of parking space and vacant land is available, so parking and access to the dispatch center by large vehicles would not be an issue. Surrounding vacant county land and a nearby school yard offer opportunities for staging areas, an incident command post/base camp, etc.

--Part of the county planning building retrofit include a back-up generator system and possibly solar power.