

Ottawa County, Mich., Irons Out Bugs in Dispatch System

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(TNS) — A couple of months after implementing software updates, Michigan's Ottawa County Central Dispatch officials say they are close to working out all of the bugs.

A joint meeting between the authority's policy board and technical advisory committee was Thursday, April 12, and some discussion touched on the software updates.

Ottawa County Central Dispatch's Mobile Computer Terminal software was updated on Jan. 30. In addition, new hardware was installed in police vehicles across Ottawa County beginning last fall.

Most of the new hardware was installed before Christmas with some installation finishing up in January, said Joe Lalonde IT manager for Ottawa County Central Dispatch.

The Central Dispatch Authority is a separate entity from any law-enforcement agency and provides communication devices such as the MCTs and radios to all police and fire departments in the county, allowing for better coordination between departments.

After deciding between types of computer models, the authority ultimately choose Dell computers to use for the MCT system.

These new software and hardware systems allow officers to create electronic reports, search records, map locations and access addresses while on the go.

"Right now, the old MCTs don't have enough horsepower," Ottawa County Sheriff Steve Kempker told [The Sentinel](#) in July. "They're about eight years old. This new software will streamline our reporting process."

The new hardware and software are significant upgrades for officers from the old system, Kempker said.

However, as it expected, implementation did come with some issues.

"We had a few bugs with the communications on the mobile side of things," Lalonde said. "It primarily impacted the officers in the cars. Field reporting from the vehicles became an issue when they tried to merge the reports into the record system."

Lalonde said the authority has worked with the software provider diligently to have everything with the new system almost all shored up at this point.

Ottawa County Undersheriff Valerie Weiss said the new software has caused some glitches in her department's system and created some communication issues.

"As we are moving forward, we are making progress and figuring out the issues and getting used to the new software," Weiss said. "With any new system, software there are frustrations and we are working through them."

The authority will not implement another software update until after Ottawa County's tourist season and everything should be "status quo" for the next couple months, Lalonde said.

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