May 7, 2020

Steve Hyde
Chief Executive Officer
Paris Regional Medical Center
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Steven Davoust
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Mr. Hyde:

I am writing you in my capacity as president of the Red River Valley Amateur Radio Club (RRVARC) based in Paris, Texas. My reason for writing is in hopes of opening a dialog about relocating some of our radio repeater equipment from its current location on the roof of the Paris Regional Medical Center (PRMC) to your adjacent tower. Our club members use this repeater equipment during emergencies and in service to large local community events. In recent review of our operational design we have identified a number of things we could do to enhance this community service. Moving this equipment is one of the most important issues we have pinpointed.

Our members are amateur radio operators licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Although called radio amateurs, they are anything but. Many have advanced degrees in engineering and other sciences as well as advanced radio certifications. Many are involved with making weather observations for the National Weather Service Fort Worth SKYWARN program, participate in Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) organized and sponsored Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) and/or FCC Part 97.407 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) as a part of their civic duty. You may be more familiar with their being called “ham” radio operators. Hams go out during severe weather and report our observations directly to the National Weather Service (NWS), in this case their office in Fort Worth, via our local repeater, which is networked through other repeaters back to the NWS Fort Worth office. We amateurs also provide communications responding to disasters and during planned events such as one of the large ones in Paris, the Tour de Paris bicycle ride, providing safety and update communication all along the course, again via our local repeaters.

PRMC has hosted some of our equipment on the roof of one of your buildings for several years now. However, it’s proximity to some of the ventilation exhaust stacks combined with the COVID-19 pandemic has recently restricted our access to it. Prior to COVID-19 it was at times inconvenient to get to the equipment, but recently it has been completely inaccessible. During a recent storm at least one component failed and we have now gone weeks unable to access it. But even before the current situation manifested itself we had issues with the power to the room not being on the circuits covered by your emergency generators and absent a cellular router we do not have Internet connectivity for it. Said plainly – When the community most needs us during a major weather event that knocks

out power our needed equipment would fail once our uninterruptible power supply runs out of stored power and we have no ability to remotely access it to deal with the occasional resets that all this type equipment sometimes needs.

The RRVARC provides emergency services during times of need. The complete inability for us to access our gear during the COVID-19 pandemic has caused us to analyze the matter and look for solutions. One possible option we have identified would be to move the equipment to your tower adjacent to the building where it is currently located. Were we to move our gear there it would solve a number of problems. This letter seeks to initiate conversation to outline how we might accomplish these objectives.

The areas where we have identified needed upgrade are:

1. Antenna height – Radio equipment always benefits from antennas located high above the local terrain. Moving our antennas from the PRMC roof to the tower would appear to add one hundred feet (100') to our current height, a net gain.

2. Power – Emergency preparedness dictates redundant capabilities and that includes electricity. Moving our repeater equipment from its current location, not powered from a circuit on your emergency power network, to your tower, which we believe does have access to a circuit on your emergency power network, would be a net gain.

3. Network connectivity – Moving our repeater equipment from its current location which does not have a network connection available to your tower location; we believe network connectivity is available there. This would require your information technology personnel to help craft a solution that they would be comfortable with. One where we would be able to remotely access the equipment via the Internet. Having an always on high-speed Internet connection would allow us to remotely use other hardware to power-cycle and/or reset many of our components, any time of the day, any day of the week. I want to emphasize the word "remotely". Only rarely would anyone need to physically access the equipment. Anything that did need to be accessed; that could be coordinated at the convenience of all involved. This is a net gain.

4. Antennas – We installed the antennas on the roof of the PRMC and we recognize that installing them on the tower would require a different approach. The RRVARC has access to tower climbers that are licensed and insured such that we believe PRMC could be satisfied of professional installation in conformance with their policies and procedures.

So what would PRMC gain from a closer affiliation with the RRVARC? Two things: 1) A nice IRS deduction at no or very low cost to PRMC; and 2) Community good will via a cross-branding agreement.

We are an IRS 501(c)(3) organization and as such we would encourage you to check with your tax advisors to see what you might gain from the arrangement. The commercial value of tower space is substantial, usually incurring a monthly fee based on the height

above the ground…by the foot. We believe PRMC and RRVARC could get a commercial value for this space on your tower and at no cost to the PRMC provide the space to the RRVARC and we could provide documentation for an IRS deduction of several thousand dollars per month. If you provide power and Internet then it would be at low cost, very lost cost actually, with a several thousand dollar a month deduction in exchange.

As for the community good will, we are willing to enter into discussions with the goal of reaching agreement with PRMC where our club association may be highlighted in your literature, on your website and where we will pledge to do the same. Cross-branding the two organizations, recognizing their integration is of benefit to the entire northeast Texas community; we believe that would be a great opportunity.

Mr. Hyde, when you have had the opportunity to consider the points I have raised in this letter I would like to see if we could chat by phone or in person and at least develop the framework for how we might conclude a mutually advantageous contractual agreement. To that end, once you have had the chance to read and consider these points, please have someone on your staff contact Phillip Beall (W5EBC) (214-729-6182). I am sometimes difficult to reach during business hours, he is the club secretary and has a flexible schedule. Since we are in the current "social distancing" environment he will coordinate our discussion and see if we should initially have a phone conference call, a video chat or what our options are.

We are excited at the prospect of partnering with PRMC in furtherance of enhancing emergency preparedness communication in the Red River Valley area of northeast Texas. I look forward to speaking with you and/or your representatives at your earliest convenience.

Best Regards,

Steven Davoust (N5KCH)
903-517-3427
President, Red River Valley Amateur Radio Club
North Texas Emergency Communications Coordinator ARRL

CC: Kelly Collins
Phillip Beall