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Provincial government opens the purse for improved public safety communications

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County officials will look into how Dufferin can benefit from a cash infusion by the province into a public safety radio network.

The crowd at Queen's Park announced Oct. 17 an agreement with Bell Mobility to modernize the radio network used by emergency first responders.

The province set aside $765 million to facilitate the reconstruction of the network's core infrastructure and the replacement of outdated equipment.

County council agreed Nov. 14 that Warden Darren White will meet with Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones to discuss how the coin may affect the local region.

?Ontario's frontline and first responders rely on one of North America's largest and most complex public safety radio networks to protect people in the face of emergencies,? said Jones.

?By rehabilitating and advancing the province's radio network, we can improve connectivity and prevent daily service outages that obstruct frontline and emergency responders and put public safety at risk.?

In making the announcement, Premier Doug Ford said the work is a key step toward supporting frontline emergency responders and keeping Ontario safe.

?In a crisis, every second counts,? said Premier Ford. ?Replacing our aging emergency radio network is not only vital to public safety, it's long overdue.

?Working with our chosen vendors, we're confident this investment will give our first responders on the frontlines access to a reliable, cutting-edge network, so they can do their jobs and keep our families and communities safe.?

The project involves building a land mobile radio network, which includes support antennas, servers and data centre equipment to provide coverage across the province.

First responders and dispatchers will get state-of-the-art radio equipment and consoles to ensure quick response in emergency situations; and

Transition to the new network will begin in 2021 and is hoped to be fully operational by June 2023.

?Investing in essential communication infrastructure will empower emergency responders to better keep Ontario families safe when and where their help is urgently needed,? said Health Minister Christine Elliott.