



Wicomico County, Maryland

OFFICE OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

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Steve Roser, CPA
Internal Auditor

October 18, 2011

Internal Auditor's Report

The County Council and County Executive of Wicomico County, Maryland:

Pursuant to Section 305(D) of the Wicomico County Code and Council Resolution No. 78-2009, the Office of the Internal Auditor (IA) has conducted an Audit of the Wicomico County Telecommunications System. A report is submitted herewith. The purpose of the audit was to determine the adequacy of procedures and controls, the level of compliance with those procedures and controls, the existence and types, and the associated cost of the telephone lines utilized by Wicomico County.

IA conducted the audit with due professional care, and IA planned and performed the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the current Telecommunications System practices are in compliance with applicable policies and procedures and whether those policies and procedures are adequate to obtain an acceptable level of control.

The audit revealed a cumbersome telecommunications system with limited checks and balances in place implemented by the administrators of the telecommunications system along with an adequate level of internal control. Adequate internal control indicates that a number of findings, some of which are significant, have been made. Where action is in progress to address these findings, and other issues known to management, these actions are at too early a stage to allow for a satisfactory opinion. IA identifies several findings in subsequent sections of this report that bear discussion.

IA extends appreciation to Management and Staff in all Departments for their assistance, kind cooperation, and thoughtful assessment of the telecommunications system.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Stephen Roser, CPA
Internal Auditor

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Audit Report

Background - Wicomico County Telecommunications System

The Telecommunications system for Wicomico County has two major components:

1. Telecommunications service
2. Telecommunications infrastructure

Due to the size, scope, and complexity of the county telecommunications system and in the interest of time, this audit focuses on telecommunications service. The county telecommunications service consists of three major types:

1. An analog Centrex system provided by Verizon with AT&T and Verizon long distance
2. Other landline accounts not associated with the Centrex system
3. Mobile telecommunications consisting of cellular telephone¹ service provided by Verizon or Sprint

PC Magazine defines a Centrex System as “A telephone service in which the Private Branch Exchange (PBX)² is located in the telephone company's facilities. Some Centrex services provide the PBX switching at the customer's site, but control is still in the central office.”

The Wicomico County telecommunications system is a large structure that provides diverse applications including voice communication, electronic communication, emergency communication (911, etc.), and facsimile. Wicomico County divides services into user groups that roughly mirror county departments. Telecommunications bills are paid through various means including purchase order, blanket purchase order, purchase cards, and (in the case of Centrex) directly through the Finance Department. Wicomico County is currently under a contract with Verizon to provide the analog Centrex service. The current Centrex contract with Verizon expires September 30, 2013. Several other accounts exist outside the Centrex system for telecommunications service with various telecommunications companies, both landline and cellular. There were, however, no other contracts in evidence.

Audit Objective

The objectives of the audit are to:

1. Determine the existence of billed telephone lines and telecommunication services
2. Show the current cost of those services
3. Determine whether internal controls are adequate to reasonably safeguard against errors and abuse

¹ Please note that cellular communications include “air cards” used for mobile computer internet access. The vast majority of the air cards are used by the Sheriff’s Office in their patrol cars.

² Per PC Magazine Encyclopedia: “Private Branch eXchange [is] [a]n in-house telephone switching system that interconnects telephone extensions to each other as well as to the outside telephone network (PSTN). A PBX enables a single-line telephone set to gain access to one of a group of pooled (shared) trunks by dialing an 8 or 9 prefix. PBXs also include functions such as least cost routing for outside calls, call forwarding, conference calling, and call accounting. Modern PBXs use all-digital methods for switching, but may support both analog and digital telephones and telephone lines. For more information see: http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia_term/0,2542,t=CENTREX&i=39523,00.asp#fbid=3S0E2Qlltdx”

Scope of the Audit

The audit periods examined, on a test basis, were January and April 2011³. All telecommunications transactions for the period were reviewed. IA conducted observations, interviews, and inquiries with appropriate personnel. IA visited each department to trace the existence of landlines, review cellular telephone bills, and discuss telecommunications efficiency and effectiveness with management. Record keeping in the departments was examined and discussions were held with those responsible for the records. Additionally, IA examined, on a test basis, various documents, and electronic system information pertaining to, but not limited to, the following:

- Centrex telephone bills for January and April 2011
- Other landline telephone bills for January and April 2011
- Wireless telephone bills for January and April 2011
- Selected telephone bills from other periods
- Term contract (currently in force)
- Internal list of telephone numbers
- 2011 telecommunications expenditures from MUNIS

Other than the time periods tested, the scope was open ended with concentration on existence, internal control procedures, adherence to those procedures, examination of data, billing detail from vendors, and listings of phone lines available for the period.

General Statistics and Highlights

A thorough review of all telecommunications billing approximating April 2011 revealed the following for Wicomico County:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| • Total Number of fax lines | 41 |
| • Total number of other landlines | 348 |
| • Total number of cell phones | 239 |
| • Total Centrex billing | \$ 6,904 |
| • Total landline charges (including Centrex) | \$ 19,254 |
| • Total cell phone charges | \$ 10,498 |
| • Monthly grand total | \$ 29,752 |

The Centrex contract in force with Verizon contains the following rates:

Service Item	Monthly Rate ⁴	Unit	Annual Minimum
Local Message Unit	\$ 0.050	per message	\$ 15,018
Local Measured Service	\$ 0.016	per minute	\$ 328
Toll Service	\$ 0.047	per minute	\$ 1,587

³ Due to the nature of the telecommunications billing, telecommunications bills were examined for two months approximating January and April 2011. Since various accounts for telecommunications have differing cutoff dates few of which correspond to month-end, IA felt it counterproductive to adjust billing to account for exact calendar months deferring instead to approximate. This method gives us a picture of the cost approximating monthly expense without any overlap or duplication of billing.

⁴ A recalculation of the Centrex Verizon bills confirms that these are the rates charged to the county. Other Verizon landline accounts, however, indicate that the county is charged rates in excess of these contract rates.

Per telephone conversation with a Verizon representative, the county is billed discount rates provided to State Governments. The three service items listed above for April Centrex totaled \$1,333. Other individual line charges billed to the county through Centrex for the period approximating April totaled \$5,183. Appendix I contains a breakout of these charges and Appendix II contains a brief summary of the IA understanding of the charges. Additionally, aggregate charges on the April Centrex bill are as follows:

Aggregate Charges:

Telecommunications Access Fee	\$	11.54
MD Gross Receipts Tax Surcharge	\$	130.39
MD 911 Fee	\$	16.00
Federal Universal Service Fee	\$	83.03
Other Providers	\$	49.99

The Monthly grand total for all telecommunications of \$29,752 is approximately \$3,000 less than the monthly average for FY2011⁵. There is evidence that some landlines were eliminated between January and April 2011, and basic cell phone charges were reduced prior to April 2011.

The top five user groups of telecommunication with total non-aggregate April expenditures for all types, including cellular, are as follows:

Emergency Management	\$	11,296
Sheriff's Office	\$	4,726
Department of Corrections	\$	2,356
States Attorney	\$	1,496
Recreation & Parks	\$	1,110

Please see Appendix III for a summary breakout per user group. Billing from Verizon and other vendors is cumbersome and does not lend itself to timely and proper scrutiny for the purposes of internal control. For example, the Verizon Centrex bill and the accompanying AT&T bill for April together contain 564 pages.

Conclusion

Based on the detailed billing analysis and department-level interviews:

1. Wicomico County telecommunications billing contains some telephone lines and service that cannot be identified.
2. The cost of the service in the period approximating April 2011 was \$29,752, which represents a decline over the monthly average for the past fiscal year.
3. The process of charging Centrex expenditures to departments and users is at an adequate⁶ level of internal control.

⁵ That is, the period ended June 30, 2011

⁶ According to IPPF Practice Guide issued March 2009: "Adequate system of internal control means that findings are subject to reservations. A number of findings, some of which are significant, have been raised. Where action is in progress to address these findings and other issues known to management, these actions may be at too early a stage to allow a satisfactory audit opinion to be given."

IA recommends a management review of county telecommunications needs along with an assessment of available alternative technology (e.g. digital, V.O.I.P., etc.). Cost/benefit analysis should be leveraged in the evaluation. With Council and management's permission, the extensive information gathered in the audit process can be made available to assist in any evaluation. It is further recommended that management work with service providers to develop a billing system that lends itself to better vendor accountability and department level internal control. Management should exercise caution when evaluating need and consider the specialized needs of emergency management, law enforcement, and others.

Schedule of Findings and Recommendations/Management Response

This extensive review of the Wicomico County telecommunications system revealed a large, cumbersome, analog central phone system supplemented by ancillary landline accounts and cell phones. Internal control is assessed as adequate because control over the system is hampered by voluminous monthly billing form Verizon and AT&T. It should be noted that other landline and cell phone bills paid on a department level have a satisfactory level of internal control. The findings listed below represent some key issues that warrant discussion.

1. AT&T Long Distance

IA discovered that some long distance services for landlines outside the county system were included in the county billing and paid on a regular basis. The materiality for the payments on a monthly basis was very small, but accumulated over time. Investigation by IA and management revealed that these phone numbers were once used by the county, disconnected and reassigned to other users by Verizon. The new users were making long distance calls which were billed to the county by AT&T along with other long distance charges in monthly statements. The AT&T monthly statements reviewed average approximately 240 pages each month. IA recommends that management implement controls that assure notification of AT&T when disconnecting a landline. Additionally, IA recommends that management define long distance services charged by Verizon vs. long distance charges from AT&T and test for duplication. IA, with Council's permission, stands ready to help in this process.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

2. Unused Lines

IA discovered approximately 33 lines that could not be identified. Some of these lines are "dead lines" in that the county is paying for phone service to an unused terminal. One such line was an active internet line costing \$52 monthly that is no longer in use. It is possible that others will be subsequently identified as specialized lines established for alarms or other uses. Additionally, Department of Corrections maintains a bank of specialized numbers that it is evaluating for obsolesce and should be commended and encouraged to continue the effort. IA recommends that management keep and review an inventory of all its phone lines, including specialized lines, and update on a regular basis. IA will forward the list developed during this audit to management.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

3. Billing

As mentioned in the conclusion section of this report, billing accountability is problematic and a deficiency exists in the billing process. Unfortunately, the situation is a quandary. It is not feasible for Wicomico County to provide the work force to scrutinize 500+ pages contained in the Centrex and AT&T phone bills each month. Management should work with the current and potential vendors to create a billing system that lends itself to accountability. In the meantime, departments can check their monthly posting in MUNIS against a baseline and inform the finance department when problems arise. The vast majority of county departments realize that they have this minimal control tool and should be commended for comparing monthly Centrex posting to their baseline.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

4. Multiple Repair Services

Interviews with department managers revealed that three different companies provide repair services to the county telecommunications system. IA recommends that management evaluate the three different service providers to determine the best cost to service quality ratio.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

5. Inconsistent Listing Service

Among the various line fees (see Appendix I) charged to the county by Verizon is a listing service that provides listings for various numbers in the county system. Some of the numbers charged a listing fee might not require a listing. IA recommends that management evaluate listing fees charged to various phone numbers for accuracy. Additionally, there may be other fees associated with some of the phone numbers that are charged to the county unnecessarily. IA, with council's permission, can provide a pivot table created during the course of the audit enumerating the various fees and associated phone numbers to management for their use.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

6. Other Service Provider

Verizon Centrex bills the county monthly for an "other service provider". IA recommends that management evaluate the necessity and purpose of the other service provider and monitor all bills for charges from other providers.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

7. Outliers

IA evaluated the telecommunications bills for outliers. For the purposes of this audit, outliers are defined as a landline with a basic service charge exceeding \$50 or a cell phone basic service charge exceeding \$60 monthly. Sixteen outliers were discovered. IA will provide a list to management for evaluation.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

8. Seasonal Cell Phones

Some cell phones are provided on a seasonal basis. IA recommends that management develop controls to assure that the phones are turned off in the off-season.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

9. Sprint Verses Verizon

The Emergency Services Department switched cell phone service from Sprint to Verizon. The Department of Corrections did just the opposite. IA recommends that management leverage the lessons learned and the reasons for the switch in its evaluation of the telecommunications system.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

10. Facsimile Service

The Law Department purchases a service that provides facsimile through the internet to its existing printers costing ten dollars per month. IA recommends that management evaluate the service.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

11. Federal Tax Credit

Per phone conversation with a Verizon representative, the county pays Federal subscriber line charge for each individual line in the Centrex system. The state government discount package (upon which the county contract rates are based) offers a rebate for the tax. Some of the telephone lines in the Centrex system are charged the tax and not credited with a rebate. IA will provide a list to management of the telephone lines affected.

Management Response

Please see Appendix IV

Auditor's Closing Remark

The Wicomico County Office of the Internal Auditor would like to thank management and staff from the various departments for their timely cooperation and assistance during the audit. County personnel involved should be commended for their interest in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Wicomico County.

Appendix II – Individual Centrex Line Fee Explanations⁷

New contract expires September 2013

What are additions and charges listed as pro-rated adjustments?	Contracted terms - promotional discount
How is prorated amount for FSLC calculated in Jan?	No information available as of audit date
What is a message unit?	Calls in & out based on per second terms in the contract

There is no flat rate in MD - this is a feature-rich analog arrangement

Caller ID without feature package - Centrex Custopak	Outside package bundle
Caller ID without Feature Package	Outside package bundle
Centrex Line - Unrestricted Exchange Access	Charge for line access
Centrex Line - Sec Loc - Partially Restricted Intercom	Secondary Location
Centrex Line - Sec Location Unrestricted Exchange Access	Charge for line access
Centrex Line - Sec Location Unrestricted Intercom	Secondary Location
Centrex Line - Unrestricted Intercommunication	Line acts differently = check w/source (no other information available)
Centrex Line-Sec Loc Partially Restricted Exchg Access	Only one line affected- management should investigate
Dial Tone Line	Additional lines - plain lines standard
Digital Centrex - Sec Loc Unrestricted Exchange # Access	Digital as opposed to analog lines
Digital Centrex - Sec Loc Unrestricted Intercom	Digital as opposed to analog lines
Enhanced Station Features - Display Set Interconnect	Refers to phone equipment with display for caller id and name along w/ buttons for enhanced Centrex features available.
Federal Subscriber Line Charge Credit	Credit per Maryland agreement – not all lines get the credit
Federal Subscriber Line Charge Multi Line	Standard pricing subject to discount
Listed Service	Allows for listing access (411,etc) for line
Multi-Button Business Set Non- Display Set Interconnect	Refers to phone equipment w/o display for caller id name or number
Multi-Button Station Features Automatic Dial	No information available as of audit date
Non-Button Station Feature Package	Affiliated feature package for phone equipment that that enable phone/Centrex features via soft codes, instead of programmed buttons on the phone equipment, itself.

⁷ The information contained in this chart is primarily from three sources:

1. AT&T website
2. Verizon website
3. Conversation with a Verizon representative

Appendix II – Individual Centrex Line Fee Explanations (continued)

<p>Single Appearance MADN Number (Multiple Appearance Directory Number)</p>	<p>MADN consists of groups of two or more Centrex line appearances that require a unique relationship, provided by using the same telephone directory number for all appearances. These line appearances do not appear more than once on the same set.</p> <p>The first appearance of the MADN directory number to a set is the primary MADN member. All other appearances of the same directory number are the secondary MADN members.</p> <p>The MADN group configuration can be in two arrangements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single Call Arrangement (SCA): Although the same directory number appears on, and may be used by, more than one electronic set, only one call originates or terminates on the directory number at any given time. Once a member has access to the MADN number, the lamps of the other members turn on to indicate busy. 2. Multiple Call Arrangement (MCA): Allows all of the line appearances to be active on simultaneous calls. Incoming calls to a MADN group queue while the callers hear ringing. Once a MADN call is answered, and if the MADN call queue is not empty, the next call in the queue presents to all the inactive members. This process continues until the MADN queue is empty. The maximum number of calls, including originated, answered, and queued calls allowed for a MADN group, is equal to the number of members in the group. <p>MADN ring forward</p> <p>Enhanced Station/EBS Feature – Line Appearance</p> <p>MADN Ring Forward provides these ringing options:</p> <p>Abbreviated: Line appearance rings until timer expires.</p> <p> Delayed: Line appearance rings after timer expires.</p> <p> Always: Line rings until answered or abandoned.</p> <p> Never: Line appearance does not ring.</p>
<p>Automatic Ringing</p>	<p>Normally, when a person's line is busy, one has to call back every few minutes to check if their line is free yet. With automatic ring back, a code can be dialed into the telephone keypad to enable ring back. Then, when their line is free, the original caller's phone rings with a distinctive ring so that one knows it is automatic ring back and not a regular call. When the phone is picked up, it calls the other number since the line is now free.</p>
<p>Foreign Listing</p>	<p>Listed and Non-Listed Service When you set up telephone service with Verizon, you are entitled to one free listing in the white pages and directory assistance for that number. Other options available to you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Listings: If you do not have a telephone number with Verizon but you have a wireless phone or other landline number with another company, and would like to list that number in our directory and directory assistance, contact Verizon's business office to place an order. Small monthly charges apply for this service. If you would like to list your telephone number in another city's directory, we can help you set that up as well.
<p>Hunting</p>	<p>Rolls the call between lines</p>
<p>Intraexchange Local Channel Half Duplex</p>	<p>Two-way communication of a certain type</p>
<p>Intraexchange Local Channel Off Prem Ex1 To Ctx</p>	<p>Intercommunication within system</p>
<p>Intraexchange Local Channel Regular Voice Grade</p>	<p>Intercommunication within system</p>

Appendix III - Summary Breakout by User Group

Group	Land Lines (Count)		Fax Lines (included in land lines)		Other LL (Expense)	Centrex							Mobile Phones		Dead Lines
	Centrex	Other	Centrex	Other		Fixed Charges	Call Units	Local Time Billing	L/D Units	Verizon L/D Billing	AT&T L/D Billing	Count	Billing		
	~ April Expense														
Administration	8		1			\$ 182.42	346	\$ 17.30	1	\$ 0.36	\$ 8.18	5	\$ 284.14		
Airport	13		1		\$ 105.60	\$ 252.53	269	\$ 13.45		\$ 0.08	\$ 38.54	2	\$ 64.98	1	
Circuit Court	22		5			\$ 433.10	1,789	\$ 89.45	33	\$ 11.03	\$ 36.01	3	\$ 136.28	1	
Civic Center	14					\$ 205.47	1,735	\$ 86.75	5	\$ 1.69	\$ 70.55			3	
County Council	7		1			\$ 142.91	165	\$ 8.25			\$ 0.11	5	\$ 261.00		
Department of Corrections	41	15	9		\$ 319.56	\$ 592.90	6,637	\$ 331.85	52	\$ 17.29	\$ 391.71	18	\$ 702.53		
Department of Law	3					\$ 41.67	228	\$ 11.40	1	\$ 0.28	\$ 7.87	1	\$ 51.20		
Elections	7	1	1		\$ 48.45	\$ 106.02	334	\$ 16.70	1	\$ 0.37	\$ 4.99	1	\$ 50.10		
Emergency Management	27	52	2		\$ 9,701.79	\$ 585.11	2,399	\$ 119.95	7	\$ 2.29	\$ 34.21	25	\$ 853.01		
Extension Service		6		1	\$ 102.86										
Finance	11		1			\$ 179.83	522	\$ 26.10	2	\$ 0.67	\$ 27.75	1	\$ 3.21	4	
General Services/Purchasing	13		2			\$ 226.90	156	\$ 7.80	1	\$ 0.27	\$ 2.76	5	\$ 250.60	3	
Human Resources	7		1			\$ 103.43	799	\$ 39.95	2	\$ 0.52	\$ 23.42	3	\$ 142.21		
Information Technology	1					\$ 13.89						7	\$ 514.17		
Liquor License	3		1			\$ 56.50	111	\$ 5.55			\$ 2.35	1	\$ 78.23		
Local Management Board		4		2	\$ 169.77							3	\$ 244.37		
Mosquito Control												7	\$ 255.63		
Narcotics Task Force		1			\$ 17.59							12	\$ 607.59		
Planning & Zoning	6		1			\$ 92.64	574	\$ 28.70	3	\$ 0.92	\$ 130.65	3	\$ 106.55		
Public Works	9		2			\$ 150.38	704	\$ 35.20	7	\$ 2.39	\$ 16.48	6	\$ 223.09		
Public Works Solid Waste	8	2	1		\$ 183.23	\$ 126.68	452	\$ 22.60	3	\$ 0.87	\$ 20.65	6	\$ 182.70	1	

Appendix III – Summary Breakout by User Group (Continued)

April, 2011 (Approximately)

Telecommunications Expense

Group	Land Lines (Count)		Fax Lines (Included in land lines)		Other LL (Expense)		Centrex						Mobile Phones		Dead Lines
	Centrex	Other	Centrex	Other	Total	Fixed Charges	Call Units	Local Time Billing	L/D Units	Verizon L/D Billing	AT&T L/D Billing	Count	Billing		
														Count	
Recreation & Parks	22	3	1		\$ 96.17	\$ 365.45	491	\$ 24.55	2	\$ 0.68	\$ 19.69	14	\$ 603.20	6	
Roads	5	3	1		\$ 229.25	\$ 74.40	307	\$ 15.35	0	\$ 0.08	\$ 6.65	8	\$ 211.59		
Sheriff's Office	46		3			\$ 888.49	4,120	\$ 206.00	48	\$ 16.09	\$ 157.79	79	\$ 3,457.71	11	
States Attorney	14		2			\$ 212.24	2,723	\$ 136.15	23	\$ 7.77	\$ 131.40	21	\$ 1,007.98		
Tourism	9		1			\$ 150.44	504	\$ 25.20	4	\$ 1.27	\$ 36.02	3	\$ 206.42	3	
WYCC		4		1	\$ 207.92										
Total	296	93	37	4	\$ 11,182.19	\$ 5,183.40	25,365	\$ 1,268.25	195	\$ 64.91	\$ 1,167.78	239	\$ 10,498.49	33	

~ April Expense

Number of fax lines 41
 Number of other landlines 348
Total landlines 389

Total cellphones 239

Centrex Subtotal \$ 6,516.56
 Landline charges \$ 19,253.72
 Cell phone charges \$ 10,498.49
Monthly Grand Total \$ 29,752.21

Centrex Aggregate Charges:
 Telecommunications Access Fee \$ 11.54
 MD Gross Receipts Tax Surcharge 130.39
 MD 911 Fee 16.00
 Federal Universal Service Fee 83.03
 Other Providers 49.99
 Directory Assistance 103.50
 Verizon Adjustments (7.34)

FY2011 Monthly Average:
 \$ 32,819.00

Grand Total 6,903.67
 Total Centrex Billing **6,903.75**
 Variance \$ (0.08) ~

Appendix IV -

WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND
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Management Response

RICHARD M. POLIETTI, Jr.
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

SHARON A. MORRIS
ACTING DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

MICHAEL T. ELLIOTT
PURCHASING AGENT
melliott@wicomiconcounty.org

To: Steve Roser
From: Michael T. Elliott
Date: October 17, 2011
Subject: Telecom Audit

After having several conversations with some Department Heads, and other members from the different departments and meeting with I.A. Steve Roser, I have advised him that our plan is to work with our Verizon Representative Ms. Deitra H. Hines and we have scheduled a conference call with her on Wednesday around 11:30 which will take place in the Finance Directors office to discuss ways of the departments gaining access to their monthly billing. They way the departments will be able to see what they are paying for and monitoring phone lines similar to that like with cell phones.

As the Purchasing Agent for the county, the phone bills for the last several years have been going to the Department of Finance and it was way too much to go through and separate the departments which were about 500 pages. This was done many years ago. So with discussing certain procedures with our Verizon Representative we are going to look at a way to make this happen so the departments can have access to go to their monthly billing cycle to review their land line phone bills.

I will keep you informed of what happens after our phone conference call and also with any other changes with our county phone systems.

Respectfully,



Michael T. Elliott
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