Brian MacPherson
Police Officer
Resource Management and Planning: Police

In early 2008 Corporal Brian MacPherson presented a proposal to have the UCSD Police Department move onto the San Diego County Regional Communications System (RCS) for radio service. Brian had used RCS in his previous two police departments and felt it would be a good thing for the UCSD Police Department. As an example of the need, he pointed out that during the wildfires of 2007, UCSD Police officers assisted the Sheriff’s Department with mutual aid throughout the County without being able to have radio communication with the other agencies. Even though it was outside of his normal job responsibilities, Brian researched and prepared the comprehensive proposal while still performing his regular duties as a Field Training Officer and Patrol Corporal, and while maintaining one of the highest self-initiated activity levels in the department.

Brian’s proposal made a very strong argument for the UCSD Police Department to migrate to RCS. Coincidentally, the UCSD Telecommunications staff began discussing with the UCSD Police the fact that the campus 800 Megahertz trunked radio system was approaching its end of life and that it was time to look at options for the future. Brian had just proposed a solution to a problem we were just becoming aware of. Brian’s research provided an alternative that could be available to other campus departments that use radio communications. After several months of meetings, it was decided the Police Department and would go forward with the transition to RCS with some of the other campus department possibly moving over later.

Brian spent innumerable hours in 2009 making the entire project happen. He was invaluable in working out the details and facilitating the move to RCS. He contacted all the other law enforcement and fire agencies in the County to get letters authorizing their talkgroups to be programmed in UCSDPD radios. He met with communications personnel at other police departments and the County to identify the best practices for fleet maps and console configurations. He worked closely with RCS programmers, technicians, and trainers, as well as the vendor, suppliers and installers to make the transition run as smoothly as possible.

Brian was relentless in working out details and proposing changes while the project was underway. Brian proved to be an excellent problem-solver and he spent many hours taking care of the little details that came up during the project, including identifying a way for UCSDPD officers to monitor San Diego Police Department radio activity while still staying on RCS channels, a problem that only came to light late in the project. Brian has developed an expertise that is already being put into use by other campus departments looking to move onto RCS, so his efforts will benefit the whole campus, beyond just the impact to campus safety by ensuring the Police Department has reliable radio communications.

Brian’s tireless efforts to migrate the department radio communications and improving the UCSD PD experience with RCS has truly benefitted the UCSD Police Department and the campus community, and will continue to do so for many years to come. This entire project and his efforts were well beyond the call of duty for a patrol corporal in the UCSD Police Department.