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## ***Access to the Airwave Network***

The Airwave Network rollout is gathering pace with installations taking place in Manchester and Derbyshire to add to the now operational Lancashire Police scheme. At the beginning of February, DTI published the outcome of their consultation on the process whereby requests for other groups of workers to be added to the "Sharers List" would be considered. Applications for these additional groups of workers have to be submitted via Airwave by 8 March 2002. JRC is working with the UK Fuel & Power utilities to ensure that applications are lodged for those groups who wish to be considered for inclusion on the "Sharers List". This doesn't commit applicants to using Airwave, it merely means that Airwave may tender for any future communications contracts for these groups. Currently, the Sharers List contains provision for the National Nuclear Accident Radio Communications System (NNARCS) and some other nuclear industry systems.

[www.dti.gov.uk/cii/regulatory/telecomms/airwave.shtml](http://www.dti.gov.uk/cii/regulatory/telecomms/airwave.shtml)



*Simon Parsons (JRC) with Claire Hobson & Vernon Brown of DTI examining monitoring equipment in a NNARCS equipped mobile sampling laboratory.*

## ***AVL on the PMR?***

United Utilities (NORWEB) are testing a KEY Radio Automatic Vehicle Location system that uses the control channel of their Marconi PMR system for signalling. There are obvious advantages of this approach over GSM – it's cheaper and the infrastructure is installed where your fleet goes, which isn't always the case with GSM or other commercial providers. The system currently has ten mobiles and a control station installed.

## ***Telemetry over PMR?***

An excellent way of getting added value from an infrastructure that has good coverage of your fixed distribution network and is paid for and reliable. Equipment is available - KEY radio has had a system in use by London Electricity for some years (about 4000 outstations). KEY are now discussing options for integrating their system with Marconi's infrastructure, so the facility will be available to most Electricity companies and some of the Gas Local Distribution Zones as well. JRC have recently spoken to representatives of TAIT who are also actively investigating telemetry over Marconi PMR infrastructure.

## ***UCC2002***

Sponsorship and sales of exhibition space for the third Utilities Communications Conference on Tuesday 18 June & Wednesday 19 June are proceeding well. Vodafone and Brand Communications will be our Platinum sponsors, highlighting a focus on field applications for 2002. We will also be pleased to welcome a highly informative presentation from the National Radiological Protection Board on the continuing public concern about the possible effects of radio frequency energy. With the current focus on Tetra and concern in the media about any potential "16 Hz" brain wave effects, it will be invaluable to hear an accurate, informed and up-to-date account.

For more details and an application form go to:

[www.UCC2002.co.uk](http://www.UCC2002.co.uk)

## ***Telemetry & Telecontrol***

JRC hopes to commence a trial shortly with two of its members and RADIUS Sweden AB to assess the effectiveness of a low power single frequency telemetry and telecontrol system. The objective is to match the cost and ease of installation of deregulated low power systems with the security of operation that is normally only associated with regulated schemes.

The trial will use JRC's VHF midband which is predicted to offer significantly greater range than UHF outside urban areas. The system effectively allows nodes to act as "repeaters" to further enhance the range of the scheme.

**Spectrum Management Review**

Following on from the Government's Communications White Paper and proposals for a new Office of

Communications – OFCOM, the Independent Review of Radio Spectrum Management by Professor Martin Cave, commissioned jointly by DTI and the Treasury will be reporting soon. JRC will provide an assessment and response when it is published as it is likely to be influential in establishing a new framework for spectrum allocation and pricing in the UK, which is likely to facilitate the introduction of spectrum trading in 2003.

[www.spectrumreview.radio.gov.uk](http://www.spectrumreview.radio.gov.uk)

### **Automotive Directive 95/54/EEC**

The water around the Automotive Directive has got even muddier recently. You will recall that the way the UK has implemented the Automotive Directive means that from 1 October 2002, no electrical or electronic equipment can be fitted into a new vehicle unless that equipment is “e” marked (which is different from “CE” marking). In the UK the Directive has been implemented using the Construction & Use Regulations. Since this affects all vehicles and all equipment, representative bodies have been impressing upon the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) the impracticality of this approach. Most severely impacted organisations would be the Police and Ambulance Service who regularly retrofit old equipment into new vehicles.

Following intense lobbying spearheaded by RA, DTLR are having second thoughts and considering remedial action. Meanwhile, JRC is assessing fallback scenarios to allow PMR equipment (such as the RC630/FM1200/R40/R58/Storno9000) to be used in vehicles produced after October 2002. ETSI will be meeting the European Commission at the end of February to discuss the re-writing of the Directive. We understand that a consultation document on the Automotive Directive will now be published by DTLR in early March 2002. This will risk running right up to the wire before the implementing regulations can be amended. JRC will advise members when there is further news on this. In the meantime, JRC suggests members should insist that their vehicles can operate with normal business communications equipment installed according to accepted industry codes of practice such a VIDG or MPT1362.

### **Radio sites database**

The UK Sitefinder database for all cellular radio sites is now live and can be accessed at:

[www.sitefinder.radio.gov.uk](http://www.sitefinder.radio.gov.uk)

The Radiocommunications Agency have now launched a consultation document on extending such databases to include ALL radio base stations in the future. This would include data such as frequency, power and location, plus details of the owner or operator. JRC will be providing a response on behalf of the electricity and gas industry, but member companies may wish to make their own contributions. Comments are invited by 12 April 2002.

[www.radio.gov.uk/topics/spectrum-strat/consult/disclosure/index.htm](http://www.radio.gov.uk/topics/spectrum-strat/consult/disclosure/index.htm)

### **2002 FEES ORDER**

RA has published a consultation documentation proposing changes to the Fees Regulations in July 2002.

The proposals will further increase the price for microwave fixed links in congested areas, whilst reducing the fees in some other regions where pressures on the spectrum are less. The major change is a return to the theme of moving UHF scanning telemetry from licensing individual sites at £40 per site to charging JRC £7,920 per national channel allocated to

the Fuel and Power Industries. JRC is discussing the effects of these changes and their implementation, and will be advising members shortly. PMR is largely unaffected by this year’s changes. The closing date for comments on the Draft Fees Regulations is 12 April 2002.

[www.radio.gov.uk/topics/spectrum-price/condocjan02/specpricingcondoc.doc](http://www.radio.gov.uk/topics/spectrum-price/condocjan02/specpricingcondoc.doc)

### **Protection from interference by mobile satellite systems**



*Yagi antenna installed on an ICL Mast at Hertford to establish a benchmark for the Transco PMR system (the lowest antenna to the right side of the mast).*

JRC continues to work with RA to protect JRC members’ PMR systems from interference from the Mobile Satellite System operated by ORBCOMM. Live testing has been undertaken at Hertford on a Transco PMR Mobile Data System. The performance of the Transco PMR system was benchmarked, producing an availability of 99.89%. Satellite interference was then simulated by RA, demonstrating a substantial incompatibility between the satellite system and PMR systems operating to MPT 1327. An unexpected consequence was the reduction in PMR system capacity caused by the interference. A confidential summary report is available to JRC members.



*John Airs from the Radiocommunications Agency labs at Whytleaf, setting up the satellite interference simulator.*