



# A few comments on narrow banding, digital communications and planning for the future

by Burch Falkner - President of Falcon Direct

ALL users of VHF and UHF radios are required to convert from a bandwidth of 25 kHz to 12.5 kHz before January 1, 2013. Those operating on the Alabama Forestry Commission repeaters will be required to switch even sooner. ALL public safety agencies desiring to obtain federal grant assistance must purchase 2-way radio equipment that meets the Federal P25 digital standard.

There are four major points to remember:

- 1) ALL users are required to switch to narrow band (12.5 kHz channel spacing) by January 1, 2013. More information is at <http://icomfuture.com/regulatory.aspx>. This is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandate.
- 2) ALL manufacturers must produce equipment capable of operating at 6.25 kHz by January 1, 2011. This is an FCC mandate.
- 3) ALL users of the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) UHF repeater system must convert to 12.5 kHz as new stations are installed. This is an AFC mandate.
- 4) ALL public safety agencies, whether EMS, Fire, or Law Enforcement agencies must purchase ONLY P25 capable equipment – No exceptions. This is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) mandate which conditions grant approvals by FEMA (Assistance to Firefighters) and the Department of Justice Byrne/COPS grants to Law Enforcement agencies).

I said all that to say this. It's not just about narrow banding. It's about your total communications plan! It starts with determining what you have. If you will prepare a list of all your equipment, both radios and pagers, and send it to us by fax at 205.853.6178 or email to [sales@falcondirect.com](mailto:sales@falcondirect.com); we will assist you in determining the most affordable way to convert your existing equipment to narrow band.

Once you have determined what equipment can be narrow banded and what cannot, you proceed with doing the necessary programming. When radio channel capacity allows, we will program your radios to operate on either standard 25 kHz or 12.5 kHz channels at the push of a button. In some cases, we will recommend an alternative to programming. We will also make specific recommendations as to the type of equipment that best suits your current and future needs during the transition period. For example, here is an alternative for updating older pagers. See [www.info4u.us/purrfect.pdf](http://www.info4u.us/purrfect.pdf).

We can handle the narrow band programming either by sending a few units at a time to our shop, or we can arrange an on-site visit to do everything at one time. We WILL save you money! Of equal importance, we will help you plan not only for now, but also for the future. We'll give you all the facts without smoke and mirrors, competitive huff & puff, or opinions based on nothing but what we "think". The fact is that we DO think, and we are thinking about YOU!