

# Crews wrapping up first construction phase on emergency-radio site atop Mount Tiburon

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Dave Jeffries (left), deputy executive director of the Marin Emergency Radio Authority, inspects electronic equipment with electrician Phil Chalaris at the Mount Tiburon radio tower on Dec. 1. The radio authority is upgrading its towers with its NextGen system to improve coverage and reliability.

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network of towers throughout Marin with a NextGen system, which officials say will improve communication coverage and reliability throughout the county. Local MERA members include the Tiburon and Belvedere police departments and the Tiburon and Southern Marin fire protection districts.

Construction began in September at the 99½ Mount Tiburon Road site as part of a planned \$74-million overhaul of the radio system that would transition the service to 700-megahertz frequencies and would raise its capacity to 5,000 users. Voters in 2014 narrowly approved a \$29-per-year parcel tax to pay for

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Shapiro said the contractor discovered began in late September is expected to be complete by the end of the year. Shapiro said the construction fencing is

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said the incidents, which were all recorded by the district's security cameras, began about 9:45 p.m. Nov. 23, when a group of five

The local nonprofit tourism and marketing agency Destination Tiburon is exploring the idea of a free open-air electric trolley that would travel up and down Tiburon Boulevard between Highway 101 and downtown, looping around Ark Row as well.

Stephanie Fermin, the executive director of Destination Tiburon, presented the idea to the Town Council last month, saying the trolley could help ease traffic congestion and attract more visitors to downtown — but the council said it wants more information, including how the service would differ from a Marin Transit bus that follows a similar route, before discussing the idea further.

Fermin said the idea for the trolley was born during a conversation she had with

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## CORRECTIONS

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the systemwide overhaul.

The last updates to the site before this year occurred in May 2018, when the authority swapped out two existing microwave dishes for two new ones and replaced three existing antennas with four new ones in preparation for the new system.

During this first phase of construction, crews in September used an electric jackhammer to drill holes in the foundation of the tower and used ground-penetrating radar to locate the structure's reinforcement bars so they wouldn't disturb them when they continued to work on the tower.

MERA's Deputy Executive Director Dave Jeffries previously said the next phase of construction will include structural work on the tower itself. That work was originally planned for October or November but has been pushed to early next year.

After construction is complete, MERA will turn the site over to Motorola, which will install the new radio equipment, Jeffries said.

The entire system overhaul is expected to be complete within a year, according to the MERA website. With the new system, 10 existing sites are being upgraded, five are being decommissioned and eight new sites are being added at Muir Beach, Wolfback Ridge, Mount Burdell, Tomales, Coyote Peak, the sheriff's dispatch center in San Rafael and on water tanks in Mill Valley and Las Gallinas.



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**The Marin Emergency Radio Authority Tower, which sits on Marin Municipal Water District property atop Mount Tiburon, is one of 10 existing sites being upgraded to the voter-approved \$74 million NextGen system.**

Once Motorola installs its new equipment, it will take another year for the company to test and optimize the system. Regular operation of the NextGen system should begin in 2023.

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and live in the Belveron East neighborhood.

In taking over for Thier, Welner praised her "incredible attention and responsiveness to what the voters of Tiburon are saying."

"The level of outreach and taking very seriously everyone's comments is something Holli is extraordinary at," Welner said. He called her "an idea factory" who is also adept at moving those ideas forward.

Ryan, 54, will take over as vice mayor for Welner. He's a Hawthorne Terrace resident who beat out two other candidates to win election to the council in March 2020.

He's a retired hedge-fund manager who worked as the part-time program manager for the Yellow Bus Challenge from 2016 to 2018.

Ryan and his wife, Sara Klein, moved to Tiburon in 2010 and have two daughters who attend Reed Union School District schools.

Griffin said that although he knows Ryan