

# County doubles payment

## Communication needs outlined

By France Griggs

Post staff reporter

Hamilton County will pay double what commissioners pledged recently for a \$79,250 study to identify problems in the communication system that police and fire departments depend upon.

The Regional Communications Task Force wants the system modernized to handle increasing usage, which rose from 250,000 dispatches in 1980 to 350,000 this year.

The task force recommended the study, which will total \$200,000 when all its phases are complete, said Deputy County Administrator C. Spencer Barkley. The cost for Phase 1 is \$79,250.

Wednesday, the commissioners approved the consultant contract with RAM Communications Inc. of New Jersey. Cincinnati will contribute \$25,000 toward the first phase, Norwood has promised \$3,000, and the county will pick up the remaining \$51,250 — more than double the last commitment.

Last month, the commissioners agreed to increase an earlier pledge for the study to \$25,000 to match the city's commitment. They told the task force to try to get funding commitments from the communities who could benefit from the improvements. But Barkley said the communities have not responded to the task force's requests.

Initial estimates are that it will cost \$40 million to overhaul the communications system to the degree police and firefighters want. Coming up with that kind of money will require voter approval of a special police and fire levy, county officials say.

Firefighters throughout the county say the radio communication system is inadequate. The airwaves are cluttered on their low-band frequencies. They want a stronger frequency radio band, such as an 800-megahertz frequency system.

Police want to improve their access to the crime-information system kept by the Regional Computer Center.