This alert list information can be used for official record keeping, and also for predictive actions to be taken in the future for communication endpoints that may have special needs.

By the foregoing, a method and system are provided for enhancing communications between emergency responders and personnel located at the communication endpoints. The communication bridge or patch may be selectively enabled or disabled. The communication brides between the endpoints, the 911 Call Center and emergency responders is achieved by commands issued over the Internet/Worldwide Web, and the number of communication endpoints can be easily tailored or modified by a sensor that manages communications between locations having their unique IP addresses. Organizations like schools may still maintain their local radio equipment, but have the capability to directly communicate with emergency responders on an as needed basis. Accordingly, organizations like schools maintain a public radio system capability, but without the great cost associated with such systems. The advanced digital interpreters also have other capabilities that not only enable or disable the capability of local radios to communicate with public safety radios, but also to control the specific manner in which the various local radios may communicate, such as by providing patch capability only to selected radios in the local radio set.

School personnel may carry hand-held UHF radios for normal communications within the school building. These portable radios are typically capable of being programmed to add additional UHF frequencies to minimize interference and to expand their capability to be used with public safety radios. During initial setup for each location to be a communication endpoint, each of the local radios are evaluated and programmed so they are capable of being bridged with the public safety radios. At the district level, VHF hand-held radios are preferred. In the event the local area network for the school district is down at a time when radio bridging is required, then the manual switch **46** on the local control panel may be used.

The ADI may utilize digital audio links between any band radio systems in either one channel or two channel modes. The bridge activation and deactivation is via web-based, graphical user interface screens, secured with log-on and network security measures. The system software can be configured as standard web-based applications. The server may utilize, for example, a Fedora Linux operating system. The three basic views in the user screens as discussed include a district activation view, a school activation view, and a notification view. The district view allows a district-wide list and status of bridging activations and alerts. The notification view only allows the user to view the status of designated bridging and alerts. The system administrator can manage the installed sites, licenses, users, and notification lists. The ADI has the intelligence to complete the radio links, report status, and process audio. The antennae systems for the radio units at the specific school locations are included to complete the radio signal link between the dissimilar radio networks. Backup power is provided at each location by an

As disclosed, the ADI/processor can be a stand-alone unit integrated at each location to facilitate the bridge between the local radio users at that location and the public safety first responders. A command sent by the activating party in the form of IP packets over one or more communication networks is received by the ADI/processor, the command is recognized by the ADI as an instruction to either make the bridge or to knock down the bridge at that designated communication endpoint, and then the ADI facilitates the commanded bridging function. The radiating antennas at the user locations provide wireless links to the radio users at the location and the first responders. The public safety radio system often uses a radio tower or a collection of towers to provide links to their users, such as first responders which exchange dispatch voice messages with the 911 Call Center. The school district may have its own local area network with suitable network equipment, such as routers or switches. This local area network is connected to other local area networks via the Internet/Worldwide Web. The 911 Call Center and emergency responders may operate on their own local area network and which also communicate with the local area network school districts through a network transport or Internet connection. When the software associated with the invention is configured on terminals at each communication endpoint, users at those locations can operate the system in accordance with the privileges associated with the site software installation. As also discussed, the software installations at the various communication endpoints provides the proper indications and activation options enabling users to operate the system or to monitor the system. The software and the status and activation commands are configured and monitored by the network server. The number of communication endpoints, radios, and public safety communication endpoints is virtually unlimited in the present invention since radio bridging is web based. So long as each of the communication endpoints have their own IP addresses, the appropriate software can be installed at those locations to enable the communication bridges to be established between selected communicants, as established by an administrator of the system. As also mentioned, the server has the ability to manage e-mail or text messages to other networks in which activation has been achieved for selected communication endpoints. It is also contemplated that the server can be programmed to provide other services such as VOIP communications. Periodic testing can be conducted at the local control panels in order to ensure that the system is operating correctly at that location. Additional activation buttons/controls may be provided on the panels in order to accomplish these tests. These tests could also be processed at any operator terminal, to include testing of the integrity of the software to ensure the system as set up by the administrator is properly functioning.

While a system and method of the present invention have been set forth above with respect to a particular preferred embodiment, it shall be understood that various other modifications and changes may be made to the invention in accordance with the scope of the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

1. A communication system especially adapted for facilitating emergency communications between communicants having respective radio systems, said system comprising:

a first computer processor located at an emergency call center location, said first computer processor including a first user interface and a first input means for inputting data in said first computer processor;

a second computer processor located at an emergency responder location, said second computer processor including a second user interface and a second input means for inputting data in said second computer processor;

a third computer processor located at a communication endpoint location such as a school, said third computer processor including a third user interface and a third input means for inputting data in said third computer processor;

a communications server for managing communications between users located at said locations;