

Moore County Commissioners this week agreed in principle to shoulder the entire cost of a multi-million dollar emergency communications system. Southern Pines Town Manager Reagan Parsons says he feels reassured that although lawmakers have yet to vote on a funding mechanism, the county's municipalities won't be asked to share in the four-point-five million dollar cost of the project. VIPER, as the system is called, is a state-managed radio network connecting all of North Carolina's emergency responders. An unfunded Federal Communications Commission mandate, VIPER must be operational by next January. Appearing before county commissioners earlier this month, Southern Pines Fire Chief Hampton Williams took commissioners to task for appearing ready to ask the county's 11 municipalities to pick up part of the tab. Quoting Williams, "We are basically asking you to fund one-hundred percent of this initiative."