Statewide Interoperability Coordinators Newsletter

Vol IV, Issue II | June 2014

Note from the Director

***By: Ron Hewitt**, Director, Office of Emergency Communications*

It was great seeing many of you earlier this month in Westminster, Colorado. As you know firsthand, 2014 is shaping up to be a busy, but productive, year for emergency communications. This year, the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) will work with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) community on projects and initiatives detailed in the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) Strategic Plan. One of our shared goals is to leverage new technologies to improve emergency communications and plan for how they will transform the way we do our jobs.

As you know, one of OEC's major initiatives over the last year has been to update the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP)—our Nation's strategic plan for emergency communications. The new plan is designed to incorporate emerging technologies and the convergence of people, processes, and technologies transforming emergency communications. As we await Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Jeh Johnson's signature, we continue to plan for the rollout and implementation of the NECP. Partners like you in the public safety community will play an integral role in the NECP's implementation; so, in advance, we appreciate your time and efforts as this process moves forward.

OEC also continues to conduct Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) revision workshops across the country. We are making progress on our goal of holding workshops with all 56 States and territories by the end of 2014. In the coming months, we have workshops scheduled for Colorado, Georgia, Mississippi, New York, and Wisconsin. In addition to our traditional SCIP workshops, we also unveiled our new eSCIP tool at the NCSWIC meeting in Westminster, Colorado, earlier this month. As many of you know, the eSCIP is a new online tool that we developed based on your input. When the eSCIP is released, it will provide an online resource for SCIP preparations that will streamline the process for updates and annual reports.

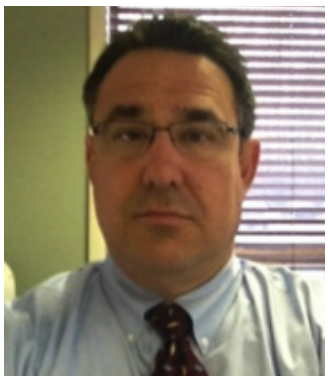
Finally, our OEC team has been working closely with Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) and Wireless Priority Service (WPS) users. In response to their input, OEC has implemented the following updates: upgraded the appearance and content of the GETS card; added ability to reach toll-free destination numbers using GETS; changes to the layout of the secure web pages points of contacts (POC) used to manage their GETS and WPS user accounts; and updated fact sheets that provide useful information for those who manage and use GETS and WPS. These changes should allow for easier use of the GETS and WPS services, particularly for new or infrequent users. Furthermore, we are working to ensure that GETS and WPS are taken into consideration during the development of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN).

Across the office, we are working to ensure that the emergency communications needs of our public safety and first responder partners are being met. On behalf of OEC, thank you all for your hard work and efforts. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you to address the issues of today and to prepare for the future. ■

About the SWIC Newsletter

The *SWIC Newsletter* serves as a source of information, news, and updates for SWICs and their staff. We hope that it will be a valuable resource as you lead your SCIP revision efforts, future Statewide planning, and alignment to the NECP.

inside this issue



Note from the NCSWIC Chair

***By: Mark Grubb**, Delaware SWIC*

I would like to thank everyone who participated at the NCSWIC in-person meeting earlier this month in Westminster, Colorado. My sincerest apologies for missing the meeting due to a family commitment; however, I heard from Steve Noel, NCSWIC Vice Chair, that it was a very productive meeting, and I am thankful for the input we received from each of you on current and upcoming work products. I am proud of the progress we have made so far this year, and look forward to continuing to implement the initiatives laid out in the NCSWIC Strategic Plan.

As was mentioned in Colorado, we have a number of new SWICs that have joined the NCSWIC in 2014, including Jeremy Knoll, Arizona; Jack Cobb, Colorado; Robert Little, Florida; Craig Allen, Iowa; Jeffrey Childs, North Carolina; Brandon Smith, Virginia; Reuben Molloy, Virgin Islands; and, Tim Pierce, Washington. I would like to welcome each of you again, and remind new members to reach out to me or other SWICs in your region with any questions you may have on the position.

It was a packed agenda for our in-person meeting. Session titles included "Integrating Social Media and Public Data into Disaster Response," "Cyber Implications of Next Generation (NG) 9-1-1," and "Practical Investments to Further Interoperability." You also participated in a working session to begin development of the SWIC Elevator Speech, a promotional product aimed at improving knowledge on and acceptance of the necessity of the SWIC Role. I also hope that each of you came away from the meeting with the necessary SWIC contacts to help facilitate the development of programs and products, and that you found the "Requests and Offerings" table useful.

The SWIC community should continue to collaborate and share best practices to ensure our individual and collective success; this collaboration will be particularly important when dealing with the transitions that come from our increased focus on FirstNet, the State consultation process, and the NPSBN. I'd like to reiterate the need to use the designated Document Library on the NCSWIC Homeland Security Information (HISN) Portal to share best practices, lessons learned, training and educational tools, and to collaborate with your fellow SWICs on upcoming projects.

I look forward to our continued work in the coming year in support of the NCSWIC Strategic Plan and the NECP. ■

NCSWIC In-Person Meeting Highlights

Westminster, Colorado; June 2, 2014

- National Protection and Programs Directorate Under Secretary Suzanne Spaulding gave the keynote, thanking SWICs for their service and providing information on recent OEC initiatives and FirstNet's State consultation process
- Chris Essid, OEC Deputy Director, provided an update on recent OEC activities, including a status update on the 2014 NECP and Fiscal Year 2014 Grants
- Michael Varney provided an update on recent Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) and FirstNet activities, and Steve Noel, NCSWIC Vice Chair and SAFECOM representative, provided an update on recent SAFECOM activities
- Bill Schrier, Senior Policy Advisor in the Washington Office of the Chief Information Officer, presented on official uses of social media and public data before, during, and after response to emergencies and disasters; specifically noting the response to the Washington State landslide and use of social media by the Seattle Police Department
- Jim Downes, OEC, provided an update on the Federal Partnership for Interoperable Communications and standards development
- During lunch, States discussed current challenges and accomplishments with their regions. OEC's Coordinators filled out a worksheet that will help populate the 2014 NCSWIC Annual Report
- The NCSWIC reviewed the Strategic Plan and conducted a role-playing exercise to develop the SWIC Elevator Speech. As part of a small group exercise, participants practiced delivering a five-minute synopsis on the importance of the SWIC role, highlighting challenges and accomplishments
- Dusty Rhoads, OEC, and Trey Forgety, National Emergency Number Association, reviewed the current status of emergency communications initiatives and issues related to governance and NG 9-1-1
- Steve Williams, Florida Highway Patrol; Mark Wrightstone, Pennsylvania SWIC; and Matt Leveque, Alaska SWIC, participated on a panel session to discuss practical investments for furthering interoperability ■

New Leadership for OEC's Partnerships Branch

The spring ushered in a strong leadership team for DHS OEC's Partnerships Branch. In late April, 2014, Robert (Dusty) Rhoads was named Branch Chief of the Partnerships Branch, which is made up of two teams focused on stakeholder engagement: the Federal and International Partnerships Section and the State, Local, and Tribal Partnerships Section. Richard Bourdon assumed responsibility for the Federal and International Partnerships Section, with Christopher Alexander moving to the DHS OEC Architecture and Advance Technology Branch. Lastly, Adrienne Roughgarden assumed responsibility for the State, Tribal, and Local Partnerships Section. Below, you will find brief biographies of each member of the new leadership team.

Dusty Rhoads: Dusty joined OEC in 2008 to support operable and interoperable emergency communications among public safety agencies across Federal, State, local, and tribal governments. Prior to joining OEC, Dusty served for 33 years in the Fairfax County, Virginia, Fire and Rescue Department, where he retired as a Battalion Chief. During his tenure with the Department, he managed emergencies involving both single and multiple jurisdictions and helped develop regional efforts to improve communications and response. Dusty has also worked as an engineer in the private sector integrating, testing, and demonstrating public safety voice and data systems and applications, including computer-aided dispatch, situational awareness, and incident management applications.

Rick Bourdon: Rick joined OEC in 2012 as Chief of the Office's Architecture and Advanced Technologies Branch, leading OEC's team of engineers who support priority services programs. Prior to joining OEC, Rick served as the Chief of Technology and Programs at the National Communications System, where he assisted in the development and implementation of policies and procedures designed to secure and enhance the resiliency of the Nation's critical communication infrastructures, networks, and systems. He also worked for the Defense Information Systems Agency as the Chief of the Commercial Satellite Services Branch, where he was responsible for leasing commercial satellite bandwidth for the Department of Defense and other government agencies. Rick served more than 20 years in the U.S. Navy in a variety of communications positions worldwide, where he retired in 1992 as a Master Chief Radioman.

Adrienne Roughgarden: Adrienne joined OEC in 2009, serving as a member of the OEC State, Local, and Tribal team to establish and strengthen relationships with public safety stakeholders and assist them with improving governance, strategic planning, and training for interoperable and emergency communications. During her time at OEC, she has helped to establish the NCSWIC and has managed various initiatives, including quarterly NCSWIC Executive Committee meetings, NCSWIC and Joint SAFECOM-NCSWIC bi-annual in-person meetings, and the NCSWIC HSIN Portal.

Prior to joining OEC, Adrienne earned a Master's in Homeland Security from the Naval Postgraduate School and a Master's in Public Policy from George Mason University.

This is an exciting time for the Partnerships Branch as we continue to support the NCSWIC and SAFECOM programs through the administration of the executive committees, the execution of bi-annual in-person meetings, educational webinars, working group products, and strategic planning for emergency communications. A comprehensive outline of planned work products and initiatives for the next three years is detailed in the NCSWIC and SAFECOM Strategic Plans. Initiated at in-person meetings in Brunswick, Georgia in December 2013, work on these strategic plans is the culmination of NCSWIC's and SAFECOM's hard work and strategic planning for improving emergency communications. As public safety is entering a period of communications advancement at a pace never before seen in history, our partnerships with you and other members of the public safety community continue to be critical for improving emergency communications at all levels of government. As the office charged to lead coordination and planning efforts for emergency communications, we, as a leadership team, look forward to working closely with our stakeholders to address current and new challenges to achieving reliable, interoperable emergency communications. ■

From left to right: Toby Lux, Ted Lawson, Darrel Smith, Robin Beatty, Ken Bradley, Rick Bourdon, Pam King, Brenda McMahon, Adrienne Roughgarden, Mike Zimmerman, Dusty Rhoads. (Not pictured: Ralph Barnett, III, Juan Rivera, Arlene Torres, Mike Wendling)

FirstNet in Illinois: How the FirstNet Business Model May Already Exist in Illinois

***By: Joe Galvin**, Illinois SWIC*

Illinois "A State of Interoperability"

Interoperable communications has been a priority in Illinois for more than 45 years. The Illinois State Police Emergency Radio Network (ISPERN), is the Nation's first Statewide emergency radio network and was established in Illinois in 1965. The foresight of Illinois' officials sets the standards for the State's national role as a leader in the field of interoperable communications. With its rich tradition of success, coupled with today's climate of opportunity and technological growth, Illinois' commitment to its role as "A State of Interoperability" has been replicated across the Nation. The ISPERN is still operational today. In fact, over the past half-century, Illinois' interoperable communications networks and channels now include the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System's Fireground channel concept, which many States are beginning to adopt.

Illinois Vision—Communications

Illinois will have a continuing and sustainable interoperable and emergency voice and data communications environment in which all public service providers will be able to seamlessly communicate across disciplines and jurisdictions when necessary and appropriate, while maintaining awareness of new and emerging technologies.

A Glance to the Future: STARCOM21

Today, Illinois' public safety agencies are served by multiple interoperability systems, providing effective, efficient data and voice communications platforms among service-aligned agencies as well as in cross-disciplinary applications. The implementation of Illinois' State Radio Communications for the 21st Century (STARCOM21) radio platform continues to raise the state of interoperability in Illinois to an unprecedented level. This state-of-the-art 700/800 megahertz (MHz) Association of Public Safety Communications Official's Project 25 (P25) radio platform is bringing interoperability into the mainstream of police, fire, emergency medical response, and other public safety agencies throughout Illinois.

STARCOM21 links the State government to local agencies and Statewide response teams. STARCOM21 has over 40,000 users and 245 sites, and is widely used as the primary command and control interoperability system in the State. In 1991, the State of Illinois began creating their vision of a Statewide communications network. After 10 years of planning it was decided to build a P25 Statewide network; but, as further investigations uncovered, funding for the capital procurement and sustainment of operating expenses was a challenge that the State's budgets could not absorb. The State elected to pursue a "build, own, and operate model," where a third-party vendor would construct the constellation of terrestrial towers, connect them together with backhaul, maintain the repeaters, refresh the technology every couple of years, and manage the day-to-day operations of keeping the network online and available 99.99% of the time.

In 2001, the State of Illinois signed a contract with a large LMR manufacturer to construct the network. The fees for service ranged from $10 to $65/radio/month depending on requirements. The network was designed around the needs of the users and not how efficiently the system would be built. Guaranteed coverage, robust redundancy, and system availability were negotiated into the contract. Illinois was out of the Statewide LMR business to become a consumer of services.

Tie to FirstNet

Technological advances often promise to resolve existing issues, but it is each State's responsibility to move cautiously and evaluate the options. Embracing change is the key to success, but only after careful consideration and planning. FirstNet will deliver nationwide data (and voice) communications services similar to cellular but dedicated to public safety and public service. Illinois is positioned to begin evaluating this next generation technology. The similarities to the STARCOM21 planning process described above will assist us in our planning efforts for the delivery of FirstNet in Illinois.

Key Elements:

- To build a network above and beyond your own capabilities will require partnerships;
- It should be considered as another tool in the toolbox, and will run in conjunction with legacy systems;
- Built on standards–have multiple vendors for sourcing and competition;
- Technology is the easy component–it boils down to governance and funding;
- Consumer of a service, not an owner of a network;
- Use State and local assets (towers, fiber); and
- Monthly fees are paid directly to a vendor for the building and maintenance of the network.

Embracing these changes will require a complete paradigm shift in attitude and willingness to embrace the private sector. With limited budgets and increasing scrutiny on spending, there must be a shift in thinking as States make the jump from today to tomorrow in order to continue taking advantage of the technological advances.

Conclusion

Achieving effective mission critical communications requires more than technology, it requires a complete shift from traditional thinking to a more comprehensive, coordinated strategy. Effective mission-critical communications planning is about change, including technological, strategic, tactical, and cultural elements. The Illinois vision quoted above, although written around traditional LMR technologies, is based on principles and values that are "future-proof" and will continue. There is no "finish line;" as communications continue to evolve, we must select and implement those technologies that will improve our ability to effectively communicate with each other. To better understand the future, we need to start by looking at our past. STARCOM21 offers that link for Illinois. ■

NPSBN Implementation and Rural First Responders

***By: Steve Devine**, Interoperability Program Manager, Missouri Department of Public Safety*

As FirstNet considers its approach for a NPSBN, rural America's first responders consider their needs and requirements unique to their operating environments. Rural first responders face a greater variety of obstacles implementing mobile data than their suburban and urban counterparts. Historically, these obstacles include:

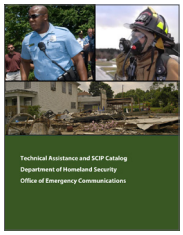
- **Few Users**: Rural agencies are often made up of fewer users than suburban or urban public safety agencies. They also have less leverage when negotiating pricing for commercial wireless services as more cost-effective subscriber rates "per user" can be obtained with a higher number of subscribers. Having fewer users means less buying power when negotiating pricing with commercial carriers for equipment or services.
- **Fewer Commercial Service Options**: In trying to utilize commercial wireless service for connectivity of mobile data applications in sparsely-populated areas, rural departments often have fewer carrier options resulting in less competition among providers.
- **Rural Mobile Data Coverage Inconsistencies**: Rural departments may not have ubiquitous commercial wireless coverage throughout their entire service area, making some of the benefits associated with mobile data usage (i.e., easier access to greater information) more difficult to justify the cost of the service, both initial and ongoing.
- **Cost**: Many rural agencies consider mobile data services as tools that are beyond their reach due to cost (initial and ongoing) of equipment and services. Many users acknowledge that the application's mobile data services bring value to first responders and promote safety of first responders and those they serve. However, associated service costs are often too expensive for smaller agencies operating on even smaller budgets.

Some experts claim the NPSBN will be a metropolitan solution that will not provide terrestrial public safety broadband coverage in rural areas of the U.S. While initial rollout of FirstNet will, for many reasons, begin in the more populated areas of our country, rural public safety deployment is critical for FirstNet for several reasons:

- Provides initial service in areas where there is none: FirstNet can provide effective mobile data rates in areas of the country with little or no terrestrial coverage today by implementing a baseline level of coverage with Long Term Evolution in sparsely populated areas. This coverage, while not meeting the definition of "broadband," can make a difference in the day-to-day operations of first responders, allowing them regular access to a greater degree of information and meeting their operational needs. NPSBN has the capability to implement a degree of mobile data coverage throughout rural America that greatly exceeds what is available today.
- Supports increased overall access by users: To meet the day-to-day needs of rural public safety agency users, data service solutions can be implemented in a variety of ways to meet user needs. Terrestrial solutions can leverage existing infrastructure (e.g., existing commercial towers or backhaul, locally-owned towers, connectivity) to offset the cost of implementing service. Non-terrestrial solutions, such as mobile satellite data and deployable solutions can also support first responders' needs.

For rural agencies that have been unable to utilize mobile data services due to the obstacles listed above, FirstNet offers a unique opportunity. The NPSBN can provide agencies the ability to quickly access more information. The data services provided to rural public safety agencies by the NPSBN will add to their current voice capabilities and will become critical for day-to-day operations. FirstNet will soon create an environment which will raise mobile data expectations and the concept of "minimum equipment" that all first responders will need to have available to them. Today, many first responders only have voice capability and when exposed to the applications FirstNet will be providing, many will begin to think that having access to certain mobile data applications will not be a luxury but rather a necessity. The creation of the NPSBN will allow management of rural public safety agencies the ability to make the "public safety toolbox" utilized by their users more effective. ■

FY 2015 Technical Assistance Process



OEC kicked off the FY 2015 Technical Assistance (TA) two-part request process that will closely align the TA and workshops at the June NCSWSIC Meeting in Westminster, Colorado.

Serena Maxey, TA Branch Chief, discussed the updated TA Catalog, the new request process, and the revised automated TA Request form, which is available on the PSTools website. In addition to linking the TA and SCIP request process, the Catalog will feature several new offerings in the areas of communications unit training, dispatch operations, broadband, and NG 9-1-1.

The first round of requests must be submitted by August 1, 2014, with an expected execution no later than January 2015. The submission date for the second round of TA and SCIP requests will take place during the fall of 2014, with expected workshop executions through May 2015.

As in the past, SWICs should prioritize their TA requests one through five. Requests for SCIP workshops may also include various modules: governance; training and exercises; standard operating procedures and usage; funding; technology (cybersecurity, broadband, NG 9-1-1, Land Mobile Radio (LMR)). These modules will be available as selections under the SCIP section of the new TA/SCIP Request Form. SWICs may request one SCIP workshop and specify one of the various modules and up to five separate TA offerings.

TA requests can be divided between each round of submissions. During the second round of requests, SWICs can reprioritize or change previously-listed requests that have not been scheduled. SCIP workshops may be requested at any time. ■

Protecting Emergency Communications Through the Telecommunications Service Priority Program

***By Deborah Bea**, Telecommunications Service Priority Program Manager*

Natural disasters, such as floods, fires, earthquakes, tornados, and hurricanes, affect thousands of people every year. A single hurricane can cause catastrophic damage to coastline and points inland, including extensive damage to wired lines and circuits supporting continuity communications. Effective continuity planning and programs, such as the Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program, can help organizations take effective steps to protect mission-critical circuits before disasters and aid in recovery after an event. In telecommunications, a circuit is a complete path between two or more points, over which one-way or two-way communications may be provided. Circuits are used to support telephone, data, internet services, networks, radios, microwave transmissions, fiber optics, and satellites. In 2012, TSP helped install over 200 emergency circuits for more than ten organizations, including 9-1-1 call centers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Red Cross. These circuits helped support disaster relief efforts following Hurricane Sandy.

The TSP program authorizes public safety and National Security and Emergency Preparedness organizations to receive priority restoration and installation of vital voice and data circuits and other telecommunications services that may be damaged as a result of natural or man-made disasters. TSP enables telecommunications carriers to prioritize the restoration, recovery, and installation of critical circuits in the event of a disaster or threat to the security of the U.S. The large number of calls to 9-1-1 call centers during emergencies increases the necessity of call center continuity. Securing TSP on all mission critical circuits, including 9-1-1 call centers and trunked LMR circuits is a necessary step to supporting continuous communications for the public safety community.

For emergencies, communications restoration is dependent upon the extent of damage to the critical telecommunications infrastructure and the amount of resources (i.e., personnel and inventory) available to the service provider to repair the damage. Service providers are required by the Federal Communications Commission to restore all TSP-designated services, on a priority basis, before repairs to non-TSP services are made. In order to be considered a TSP-designated service, a qualifying organization must enroll its essential telecommunications lines in the TSP program. Each 9-1-1 call center must ensure an adequate number of lines to maintain continuity of operations.

The TSP program is divided into two sections: restoration and provisioning. There are five TSP priority restoration levels. First responder organizations typically qualify for level three, which includes communications lines necessary for public health, safety, and maintenance of law and order. The higher priority levels, i.e., levels one and two, include national security leadership and certain high-level military communications lines. Less than one-tenth of one percent of the Nation's access lines has been assigned a TSP priority level of one or two. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that restoration of higher priority TSP lines will appreciably slow restoration of level-three TSP lines.

Cable Vault in Lower Manhattan after 9/11

Qualifying organizations can also use the TSP program to have essential communications services installed on a priority basis. This can ensure that essential communications services are available without lengthy delays. For example, if the existing communications circuits for a 9-1-1 center are inadequate to accommodate all of the 9-1-1 traffic, and additional circuits are needed to prevent the loss of emergency calls, the administrator can request priority provisioning of additional lines through the TSP program.

Lower Manhattan in New York City, New York, following the attacks of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, is a prime example highlighting the effectiveness of the TSP program's restoration process (see photo). Despite unprecedented damage to the telecommunications infrastructure that took many weeks to restore, the TSP services supporting the New York Stock Exchange were back in operation in just three days.

For more information, or to sign up for the TSP program, please visit www.dhs.gov/tsp or contact the DHS Priority Telecommunications Service Center at 866-627-2255. Restoration priority will only work if it is assigned prior to a circuit going out of service. Consult with your telecommunications service provider for help determining which circuits are mission critical and to discuss any associated costs. ■

Southwest Border Communications Working Group Update

The Southwest Border Communications Working Group (SWBCWG) serves as a forum for Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. The working group shares information on common issues, collaborates on existing and planned activities, and facilitates Federal involvement in multi-agency projects within the Southwest Border Region.

The SWBCWG continues to work on a number of member-identified initiatives, including:

- The Southwest Border Region Considerations for the NPSBN Planning and Development document, which presents a collective regional perspective to the challenges and unique requirements needed for public safety practitioners in the region.
- The 700 MHz Public Safety Broadband Spectrum document and fact sheet that discuss cross-border interoperability channels for certain narrowband frequency bands.
- The Cross Border Security Communications Network User Policy and Implementation Strategy that discusses methods for allowing State and local stakeholders to join the network.

Topics of upcoming webinars include:

- Technical Assistance, June 18, 2014
- Priority Telecommunications Services Offerings—GETS, WPS, TSP, July 15, 2014
- Canada-United States Communications Interoperability Working Group, August 19, 2014

More recently, the SWBCWG held its quarterly meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, on May 20, 2014. Meeting highlights included:

- The Arizona Department of Public Safety provided an overview of Arizona border communications initiatives and activities.
- Customs and Border Protection provided an update of the Cross Border Security Communications Network, and addressed member questions about the addition of Federal, State, local, and tribal users to the network.
- The New Mexico Department of Information Technology provided members an overview of the State's Border Technology Opportunities Project.
- OEC provided a progress report on the Accelerating Broadband Infrastructure Deployment on Federal Property Working Group.
- FirstNet discussed the State consultation process for the NPSBN.

For more information on the SWBCWG, contact Robin Beatty, 703-235-4024, robin.beatty@hq.dhs.gov. ■

PSAC Meeting Highlights

March 13 and June 2, 2014

PSAC held a webinar on March 13, 2014. PSAC Chair, Chief Harlin McEwen, provided an update on PSAC activities, including an overview of his presentation of the Human Factors report to the FirstNet Board during the March 11 meeting in New York. During the board meeting, the Board voted to accept the report, which can be found on the newly launched FirstNet website. PSAC also held an in-person meeting on June 2, 2014, in Westminster, Colorado. Members held a working session on the FirstNet roadmap, received an update from the Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) Program, and reviewed and discussed the current draft of the PSAC charter. The next PSAC webinar will be on September 9, 2014.

SAFECOM Meeting Highlights

June 6, 2014

The SAFECOM Emergency Response Council met in Westminster, Colorado, to discuss critical and emerging public safety issues, a proposed new organization structure, and strategic priorities moving forward. Meeting highlights included:

- A keynote address from Mark Hall, Rocky Mountain Fire District Communications Officer, highlighting lessons learned from past disaster response in Colorado
- Updates from the Governance, Funding and Sustainment, Education and Outreach, and Technology Policy Committees
- A role-playing session aimed at updating the SAFECOM 101 presentation, a promotional tool to educate stakeholders and policy makers on the importance of SAFECOM
- Two working sessions soliciting input the SAFECOM Strategic Plan and coordinating governance and sustaining funding among 9-1-1, LMR, and broadband
- A presentation from Chief Gerald Reardon highlighting lessons learned from the Boston Marathon Bombing implemented on the one-year anniversary of the attack
- Updates from OEC and Federal partners regarding the NECP, Grants, recent activities from the Office for Interoperability, and a debrief of the PSCR conference.

Please contact Michael Varney, the NCSWIC PSAC representative, for more information on the PSAC, and NCSWIC Vice Chair, Steve Noel for more information on SAFECOM. ■

Communications Lessons from the SR530 Landslide

By Bill Schrier, *Chair, Washington State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC)*
in collaboration with ***Crystal Ayco, Scott Honaker, Chris Lombard, Mark McDermott and Karl Wright***

On Saturday, March 22, 2014, at 10:37 AM Pacific Time, a hillside near the village of Oso in Snohomish County, Washington, liquefied and sent a wall of mud and debris down into the North Fork Stillaguamish River valley. The landslide covered State Highway 530, closing it, and isolating the community of Darrington from the remainder of the county. A total of 43 residents died and 49 homes were destroyed. The debris field covered over one square mile. In the ensuing six weeks, public safety agencies and volunteers mounted a major rescue and recovery operation which involved, at some points, up to 700 responders. This event is known in Washington as the State Route 530 (SR530) Landslide.

As with any major disaster, wired and wireless communications are critical to response and recovery. After the initial landslide, some communications capabilities immediately fell into place, by both design and luck:

Aerial view of the landslide. Photo Courtesy of AP/Ted S. Warren

- The landslide area is well-covered by the Snohomish Emergency Radio System (SERS), a county-wide 800 MHz trunked radio network used by all in-county first responders.
- The Snohomish County Division of Emergency Management (DEM) had previously used grant funds to acquire two communications vehicles. By having two such resources, the County was able to deploy one vehicle to each of two incident command centers: one in isolated Darrington on the east side of the landslide, and another to Arlington on the west side.
- 800 MHz ICall was used throughout the event as a command network. SERS previously built an extensive ICall simulcast network of five sites which covered the landslide area well. Because ICall was in most 800 MHz-capable radios, the incident commanders decided to use it for command and control. In addition, tactical trunked talk groups were used by field operational units.
- Karl Wright, a SERS radio technician, lives in Darrington, and was able to respond and support the incident command post in that community. He was constantly on duty to handle communications training and issues during the event. For example, he reprogrammed responders radios including cache radios shipped in from outside the county.
- A system-key-sharing agreement exists between Snohomish, King (Seattle) and Pierce (Tacoma) counties and the Port of Seattle. This agreement allowed Karl Wright and other technicians to rapidly reprogram radios as they were shipped to SR530 landslide incident.
- The Alaska Shield Exercise was scheduled to start on March 27, 2014, timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Alaska earthquake. Luckily, the area's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team, the type III Northwest Washington Incident Management Team (NWIMT) and the FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) Team based in FEMA Region 10 were already preparing to deploy for this exercise. Once authorized, they quickly redirected their mobilization to the SR530 landslide.
- The MERS team is a major disaster resource. The MERS team deployed to incident command posts on both sides of the landslide and provided significant capabilities, for example, several daily video conferences between incident commanders on each side of the county.

While there were many success, there were, invariably, some communications problems that occurred during the response and recovery efforts. These problems were largely overcome by the training and diligence of the communications leaders responding to the event. The following list highlights lessons learned from the incident to be utilized by SWICs Nationwide:

- **All regional radios should be programmed with an incident operations zone.** Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties, and the Port of Seattle should all need a zone for major incident operations that is programmed on each of the 20,000+ radios in the region. If all radios in the region have each of the incident operations zones programed, the need for reprogramming during future incidents will be minimal.
- **A comprehensive list of Communications Leaders (COML) and Technicians is needed.** The first meeting of all the COMLs on site did not occur until Sunday, March 30, eight days after the landslide. These lists are available in various online locations, but due to lack of funding at the State level, are not widely available to State responders.

- **Mobilization of the necessary teams took time.** The USAR team, for example, was activated on Monday evening, almost 60 hours after the landslide. The USAR team, a federal asset, was initially mobilized as a Pierce County asset, then, as a State asset. The delay in proper mobilization was due to quirks in State law which only allowed mobilization of such assets during wildfires, not during other disasters. While this is not, technically, a communications issue, it should be addressed through revisions to Washington State Law and its emergency management planning.
- **Radio caches are necessary during disaster response.** The Seattle Urban Area has, through Urban Area Security Initiatives grants, funded small caches of radios (about 50, 800 MHz trunked plus Ultra- and Very-High Frequency caches) which were airlifted to Darrington early in the event and distributed to the Skagit County and other responders. Other jurisdictions contributed spare radios, as did Motorola, but more extensive caches are required.
- **Communications plans must include volunteer management.** Volunteer workers were critical to the SR530 response. The Oso-Darrington area is logging country, composed of close-knit families and neighbors who actively participated in the recovery operation following the landslide. They brought logging equipment which was used to remove the logs and debris clogging the area. While the responder community appreciated the efforts of the volunteers, team members were required to monitor the volunteers to ensure their safety and coordinate radio communications.
- **Training and exercises are invaluable mechanisms.** Many of issues listed above can be mitigated through proper training. Incident management teams should practice taking over command of an incident, with seamless communications transition. Responders and others technicians should be trained on the use of their radios. There is no substitute for all responders knowing each other and learning to work together.

The loss of life and damage to property from the SR530 landslide was monumental. The community and responders worked tirelessly to rescue survivors and recover those who perished. The State of Washington will undoubtedly face future disasters, potentially including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and lahars. With diligence and practice, the State's communications capabilities will be ready. A list of all the IMT's in the State is in the Fire Mobilization Plan. ■

SCIP CORNER

SCIP Revision Workshop Spotlight: US Virgin Islands

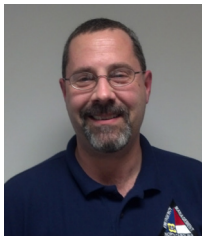
To keep the SCIP current with the changing communications environment, OEC has worked with 38 States and territories across the Nation to revise their plans, to date. On February 26-27, 2014, the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) held their SCIP Revision Workshop where more than 30 participants across the territory gathered on St. Croix to set strategic goals and initiatives for the next five years.

USVI sought to strengthen the collaboration among its stakeholders and to ensure input from stakeholders across the four islands (St. Croix, St. John, St. Thomas, and Water Island). More than 30 participants from various territory agencies attended and helped to revise the SCIP. At the workshop, Reuben Molloy, Director of the Bureau of Information Technology (BIT), spoke to the group about strengthening inter-agency coordination for interoperable and emergency communications capabilities. He emphasized measures to increase collaboration across agencies in the territory, such as the Virgin Island Territorial Emergency Agency and BIT.

In their revised plan, the goals and initiatives set forth for the next five years reflect USVI's need to pursue areas of self-sufficiency. In the event of a major disaster (e.g., hurricane, tsunami), assistance from the United States (U.S.) mainland would take time to reach the Territory islands. USVI aims to pursue public private partnerships to assist with emergency communications by identifying non-traditional and commercial communications assets infrastructure to determine efficiencies. USVI also set governance goals for the upcoming year to strengthen its recently codified interoperable communications governance structure.

OEC continues to work with additional States to revise their SCIP by the end of Fiscal Year 2014. For additional information or to schedule a SCIP Revision Workshop, please contact Jackita Bass at jackita.bass@hq.dhs.gov.

Meet the SWICs



Jeffrey Childs

North Carolina SWIC

Jeffrey Childs became the North Carolina SWIC in March 2014. In regards to his position, Jeffrey says, "it is going to be challenging, but I am looking forward to those challenges and the rewards that will follow. There is a lot of work that needs to be done and a great network of individuals at the State, local and volunteer levels that have the same vision for communications in the State."

Jeffrey was promoted to the SWIC position after working in the North Carolina Emergency Operations Center (EOC) since April 2013, where he allocated State resources at the request of local jurisdictions for incidents or planned events. Prior to joining the EOC, Jeffrey spent three years as the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Richmond Traffic Operation Center (TOC) Project Manager where he managed 45 personnel in the TOC and the Safety Service Patrol program, which responds to incidents on interstates around Richmond. Jeffrey was previously a police dispatcher in Fairfax County, Virginia, and Emergency Coordinators for VDOT and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

Jeffrey's career in public safety began when he was hired, in 1988, as a Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician for Fraser Public Safety, near Detroit, Michigan. After eight years in Fraser, he was hired as Fire Chief in Royal Oak Township, Michigan. In describing his career, Jeffrey states that "in the 26 years I have worked in public safety I have seen that communications has always been an area of concern for responders. Now that I am in a position to make that better, I will work with one question in mind: 'If I were on scene, is the communication to others the best it can be?'"

Jeffrey recently completed his Master's Degree in Emergency Management from the University of Richmond. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration as well as an Associate Emergency Manager certification in Virginia. ■

Jeffrey can be reached at Jeffrey.Childs@ncdps.gov.

Jeremy Knoll

Arizona SWIC

Jeremy Knoll has served in the Wireless Systems Bureau at the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) since May of 1997. Currently, he holds the title of Telecommunications Systems Maintenance Supervisor and on April 1, 2014, he was appointed as Arizona's SWIC.

Jeremy started his career in the Wireless Systems Bureau of as a Telecommunications Technician Trainee and worked his way up to his current position in July of 2006. As the Telecommunications Systems Maintenance Supervisor, Jeremy supervises teams of communications professionals who maintain the State's extensive public safety communications network, utilized by Federal, State, county, and local public safety users for their day-to-day activities. Jeremy also assists with many of the department's special operations in the field as a result of his radio communications expertise, including multi-agency operations and disaster training exercises. He also teaches all Hazards Communication Unit Leaders, and as a subject matter expert in investigations involving electronic communications equipment.

Jeremy currently holds a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Secret clearance and certifications as a recognized "All Hazards" Communications Unit Leader and Communications Unit Leader Trainer. He is a voting member on Arizona's Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee and the Arizona Department of Homeland Security Senior Advisory Council. Jeremy also sits on a number of other communications working groups and committees.

Jeremy received his Associates of Occupational Studies in Avionics/ Telecommunications from High Tech Institute in November of 1996. In March 2007, the Arizona Peace Officers Standards and Training Board sponsored him to take a course and graduate from the International Associations of Chiefs of Police Leadership in Police Organizations Course. Jeremy continues to further his knowledge and capabilities as a leader and expert in his field. Jeremy has also received a number of employee of the year awards and letters of appreciation throughout his career due to his exceptional customer service and expertise. ■

Jeremy can be reached at JKnoll@azdps.gov.

OEC HQ Spotlight

Eric Runnels

***Section Chief**, National Planning OEC Policy and Planning Branch*

Eric Runnels joined OEC's Policy and Planning (P&P) staff in January 2014 as the National Planning Section Chief. He previously worked at FEMA's National Integration Center. Eric currently serves as the Federal lead responsible for leading the NECP planning efforts in addition to NECP's Nationwide implementation. He also serves as one of the POCs for OEC's synchronization with other programs related to National level planning, including the National Incident Management System.

While serving as an active duty member of the U.S. Coast Guard, Eric served as a liaison to a variety of Federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, FEMA, and DHS. In 2001, Eric designed Weapons of Mass Destruction exercises as a liaison to the FBI and served as the Coast Guard representative at the FBI Strategic Information Operations Center following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. As a Liaison for FEMA, Eric helped lead the adoption of the Incident Command System, worked several high-profile incidents, and served as the Operations Section Chief for a force of over 500 personnel during Super Bowl XXXIX. During his last few years with the Coast Guard, Eric served as a liaison to DHS, writing several National level plans before assuming duties as the Deputy for the Contingency Planning and Incident Management Division under the Office of Infrastructure Protection. For his final

tour, Eric served as Chief of the Disaster and Continuity Division in the Office of Incident Management and Preparedness at Coast Guard Headquarters, where he led the service's operational efforts in Communicable Disease Preparedness.

After retiring from the Coast Guard in 2010, Eric accepted a position with FEMA to oversee the National Response Framework and the National Incident Management System. In 2012, he became the Director of the Program Executive Office (PEO) for Presidential Policy Directive 8. Under his leadership, the PEO produced five National Planning Frameworks and their complementary Federal Interagency Operational Plans. ■

Eric can be reached at eric.runnels@hq.dhs.gov.

David Turner

***Branch Chief**, OEC Policy and Planning Branch*

David Turner recently assumed the role of Branch Chief for OEC's P&P Branch, which helps support the advancement of interoperable communications and the adoption of broadband technologies through the implementation of strategic planning, National policy, and the development of stakeholder guidance. P&P develops guidance on emergency communications grant programs, oversees the development and implementation of the NECP, and develops policy strategies and recommendations for the use of LMR, broadband, and other emergency communications technologies by the public safety community.

David began his eleven-year career in the public safety and emergency management community in 2003, when he accepted a position with FEMA's Region 4 office in Atlanta, Georgia. He spent the next several years deployed to federal disaster response and recovery operations across the country. In 2006, David met the woman who would eventually agree to be his wife and decided that spending 10 or 11 months a year on the road was probably not a recipe for a successful relationship.

David relocated to the Washington, D.C. area and accepted a position as a Preparedness Officer in FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate. This position offered David an introduction to the unique administrative, regulatory, and programmatic issues associated with emergency communications projects and activities. In 2010, he assumed FEMA's Lead position on the Public Safety Interoperable Communications program—a $1 billion initiative that funded nearly 7,000 emergency communications projects in all 56 States and territories.

David joined OEC in January of 2013, as the Section Lead for Grant Policy within the P&P Branch. Recognizing that emergency communications programs encompass a wide range of activities—purchasing new equipment, hosting State meetings, and conducting training – David chose to focus the attention of the Grants Team on interagency coordination. He began to advocate for coordinated grant guidance across the federal government and worked with OEC stakeholders to make strategic updates to the SAFECOM Grant Guidance document in support of that objective.

David also serves as OEC's Program Manager for the Border Interoperability Demonstration Project; a $25.5 million one-time, competitive program providing funding and technical assistance to U.S. communities along the Canadian and Mexican borders. ■

David can be reached at david.turner@hq.dhs.gov.

OEC Calendar

JUNE

2	NCSWIC In-Person Meeting
6	SAFECOM ERC In-Person Meeting

Workshops:

SCIP: Colorado, New York, South Carolina

TA: Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas

JULY

8	SAFECOM EC Conference Call
29	NCSWIC EC Conference Call

Workshops:

SCIP: Georgia, Missouri

TA: Colorado, Idaho, Minnesota, Missouri, New York

AUGUST

7	SAFECOM EC In-Person Meeting

Workshops:

SCIP: Tennessee

TA: California, Georgia, Minnesota, Mississippi, Virginia

CONTRIBUTE TO THE SWIC NEWSLETTER

If you would like to contribute articles for upcoming SWIC newsletters to highlight innovative practices in your State or territory, please contact Adrienne Roughgarden.