

Alaska Interoperable Communications Committee

AKICC

January 21, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Anchorage-AST Meeting Room

Chris Bushoe, Anchorage FD
Kathy Day, DHS&EM
Major Leveque, Co-Chair DPS
Peter Murphy, ALMR User's Group
Barry Wilson, DPS
John Dickens, ASEC

Juneau Telephonic

Jim Kohler, DOA
Bryan Fisher, Co-Chair DHS&EM
Rusty Lassell, Rural LEPC
Ted Smith, DHSS
Mike Paschall, Rural LEPC

At -Large Telephonic

Kathryn Pyne, DOF
Brad Johnson, Fire Chiefs
Tom Smayda, Mat-Su Borough
Jeff Tucker, Fire Chiefs

Call to Order 10:10

Roll Call and Introductions

Guest Speaker: Tom Vaden

Chair SERC Training Committee

Bryan introduced Tom Vaden by stating that he would like to have interface between the AKICC and Tom's committee so that the interoperability of equipment can be better linked to the State's training initiatives.

Tom stated that his committee is working on a training matrix, which is currently an unfunded Federal mandate, so jurisdictions know what's required of them. He believes this will make an incident commander's job easier, especially in rural areas. Their committee is also working on the credentialing process for incident commanders and are working on how individuals can start the credentialing process at the rural and state levels. He would like to see more classes being offered. They are also working on inventorying capabilities for NIMS compliance. On another note Tom is also looking into the concept of whether there is a need to do background checks on trainers. He said he has run into situations in rural Alaska where pedophiles are applying for training and to be trainers and Tom is very sensitive to this issue. He also believes that if you're a trainer you should be competent in ICS. However currently, at the State and local level, trainers still don't have the capability to give tests or certificates. The committee's goal is to conduct a few ICS classes a month at the local level so that individuals who need the classes can get them, without having to fly trainers in. Currently they're telling people to join their LEPCs in order to get free training and to know what's going on. Additionally, by credentialing trainers they can keep track of resources. They're currently working on issues with the Alaska Council on Emergency Medical Services (ACEMS) as to who is EMT trained and also on how to inventory resources. They are also looking into how they can help communities meet requirements for NIMSCAST, etc.

Bryan added that he thought it was more important to be NIMS competent rather than compliant.

Tom stated that most folks have been to the ICS classes but don't know how to do the paperwork during an incident. No one is putting scribes or recorders into the ICS structure. So he wants to see not only how people can meet the NIMS compliance but also how to actually know how to work during an incident.

Bryan stated that usually taking online classes in ICS doesn't work.

Barry Wilson added that everyone needs tabletops which are important to identify needs because, you just can't have a person designated as a particular ICS position on paper. Through tabletops and exercises everyone learns how to implement the ICS system.

Bryan then stated that he wanted to share with Tom and the training committee what the AKICC and DHS&EM are doing in terms of training. He stated that he didn't like how training was just done ad hoc, so as part of the PSIC grant funding DHS&EM is hiring a contractor to develop the Statewide Interoperable Communications Training and Exercise Plan (SICTEP) which is a multi-year plan that will address not only interoperable communications training but exercises as well. Also, in the IECGP funding quite a bit of money is reserved for the AKICC to re-allocate for NIMS training which will be prioritized. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was written for the SICTEP and should be out to contractors in the next week or so. The contractor will then have nine months to complete it. Bryan added that in the PSIC grant, NIMS training at the 300 and 400 level was offered as well as the Communications Unit Leader (COML) class and another FEMA Interoperable Communications class. Part of the contract for the SICTEP includes the vendor finding out what other training is available. We're also working with APCO and NENA to see what they need. For the IECGP '09 grant, COML training was prioritized. As a result, hopefully there will be an ICS position for trained and credentialed individuals to be able to do the interoperable communication end of things. There is also money allotted for communities and jurisdictions to add communications to their exercises in PSIC. The SICTEP will also be an annex to DHS&EM's training and exercise plan. Bryan wants the SERC Training Committee to have information on what the AKICC is doing in the realm of training. Bryan stated that he would like someone from AKICC on the training committee.

Tom Vaden stated that the AKICC should get a recommendation for committee nomination and didn't see a problem with that.

Minutes Accepted

Bryan then called for last month's minutes to be accepted. There was a motion and it was added that on page 4 it should be amended to read Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Bryan stated that there's a new webmaster at DHS&EM and will try and get the notes posted on the SERC website once he settles in.

Charter and Bylaws Revisions/Input

Mike Paschall motioned to take out the term "Old Business" on pg 12. He said there is no such thing. The motion was accepted. Bryan added that on pg. 10 the box should include "Tribal Representation". Additionally, on that same page the committee may need to also add more federal agencies. Bryan commented that the voting section was pretty straight forward. It was added that Peter Murphy may have to abstain from voting on Federal issues due to his job.

Jim Kohler commented on the intent of the bylaws. He said he would like to offer for consideration an amendment to be considered at a later date. He thought that the current AKICC is large in number and proposed that there also be an executive committee for times when a vote needed to be taken and all the members were not available. He added he didn't want to put it on the table immediately because he wanted the charter and bylaws to be ratified.

Kathy added that there are other states that also have an interoperability committee as well as an executive committee.

Jim Kohler stated that several meetings ago there were mention of sub-committees with chairs. He added that he didn't want to offer the executive committee as an amendment but would like to bring the subject back for discussion at a later date.

Barry Wilson asked what mechanism is in place if changes in the bylaws and charter needed to be made.

Bryan stated that subject was actually addressed in the bylaws.

Everyone agreed to the motion to accept the charter and bylaws.

Bryan stated he will report to the SERC Commission that the AKICC now has very strong bylaws. Jim Kohler motioned that non-sustentative changes (typos, etc) should be made without a vote. That was agreed.

Mike Paschall stated he would like a blog where such matters could be discussed. He was not in favor of an executive committee.

Brad Johnson added that the problems with an executive committee are that it can actually render the main body moot and he felt that AKICC was not that large as to hinder any kind of vote.

Bryan agreed. He added that there still needed to be working groups like one for technical standards as well as a grant review sub-committee. He added that it wasn't just Bryan, Major Leveque and Kathy running the committee. But he thought that the discussion could be continued at a later date.

Grants

Bryan then began a discussion of the various grants the committee needs to oversee. For the IECGP '08 he mentioned that they were only given three weeks for the grant submission and that's how it was determined that DHS&EM would keep the money at the State level. Additionally, no equipment purchases were allowed for IECGP '08. For IECGP '09 money was allocated that will be put out for competitive grants to local jurisdictions for equipment.

Kathy then summarized the IECGP '09 projects stating that the total amount of the award was \$286,624.00. The State could keep 20%, but 80% had to be passed on to the locals. The State will use it's share or \$48,726.00 for an Interoperable Communications DVD with the remaining funds going to an Alaska Interoperable Website that not only will contain all information generated by the AKICC but will also share information about training, links, etc. The DVD will cost approximately \$45,000.00 or \$3,000 a minute for 15 minutes. Alaska will be modeling our video from one put out by Maine, and the AKICC will work with the vendor on all the content. The intent is to not only use it as an introduction to interoperability but also give first responders information on how and when to access the various emergency frequencies.

With the 80% pass through, half, or, approximately \$143,312 will go towards offering the COML Unit Leader training in various regions of Alaska. Currently contractors are charging a ballpark figure of \$20,000 a class that includes three days of instruction. Right now no "train the trainer"

class has been developed. The intent is to not only offer the class but also initiate a COML Unit Leader certification process in Alaska. Once again, the committee will take the lead in determining the criteria based on some national standards that currently consist of taking a number of ICS courses but also by demonstrating on the job communications proficiency. The remaining \$143,312.00 will be open for interoperable equipment and the various jurisdictions will have to submit a grant application to be considered.

Bryan added that he is already working with the grants section of DHS&EM to make the application much simpler than the one used in PSIC. He said that we will need input from the smaller communities on this process. Additionally, there is a 25% cost share for all equipment which the State will absorb. The grant will be for two years.

Mike Paschall added that he would like a short synopsis of all the grants of the grants in terms of; year, title, how much money was awarded, and how much has been spent so that the committee can have a better understanding of the process. He also would like to see what's competitive and noncompetitive. Kathy thought that she could put something together for this.

Bryan added that the function of the AKICC will be to oversee the prudent use of all funding.

Rusty Lassell wanted to know where to find the quarterly reports that needed be filed and Kathy gave him the information.

Bryan added that every year Alaska could expect to get IECGP funding, at least for the next five years. Originally the amount was supposed to be a lot more (millions), but then it changed to much less. He stated that hopefully the amount will remain stable during the new administration and our goal is to get the money out to local communities as much as possible when we can.

Tribal Representation

Bryan once again spoke of tribal representation and thought the committee could like to AFN or Tanana Chiefs and to call Kathy if anyone had any suggestions. He said we now have rural and remote representation but that we really needed tribal.

Upcoming Workshops

Bryan spoke about the upcoming SCIP Workshops and stated that we were awarded technical assistance from DHS for two days of workshops. The first is February 10 and will include the AKICC as well as other stakeholders from around the State. The first day will concentrate on coming up with a SCIP implementation plan at which time we'll also look at the strategic initiatives. On Day 2 the attendees will primarily be the AKICC and will entail the SCIP update. There are two different contractors but they'll be working together during these two days. The goal for day 2 will be a laundry list of modifications to the State plan. On day 2 we'll also have a regular AKICC meeting. If you can't make it please send an alternate.

Pete Murphy asked if someone could teleconference in for the meeting if they weren't at the workshops. Bryan said yes.

Kathy then gave an update of the PSIC and IECGP grants. (A subsequent mailing was done with a listing of the grants and the actual amounts awarded for various projects and jurisdictions)

Bryan stated that our expectation is that all PSIC equipment money that has been distributed to the various jurisdictions should be spent by September 2009 so that money not spent can be reallocated to other jurisdictions.

Rusty asked how it would work for training. Bryan stated that it was not an issue for State managed training and that we would find contractors to give the training. Bryan also stated that the Department of Administration matched over 1 million dollars in PSIC funding.

The National Emergency Communication Plan (NECP)

Bryan stated that this past summer DHS published NECP. Each FEMA region has to do a regional annex to it. There was short notice from a contractor working with FEMA Region 10 and they're interested in learning how to talk to Alaska during a disaster. There will be a kickoff meeting on January 27, 2009 at 9:00 at DHS&EM. Various State agencies will be represented and from there they'll be conducting interviews with other individuals.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be February 11, 2009 during the SCIP Update Workshop.

DHS&EM Mobile Command Center

Bryan spoke about the new DHS&EM Mobile Command Center that is being built. Bryan and Karl Edwards traveled to Florida to work with the vendor. It will be 45 feet long, have 5 dispatch positions, 4 slide outs and is scheduled to be delivered in August of 2009. Due to its size, it will only be used on the road system. Bryan added that it was be a big chunk of our Strategic Stockpile Reserve funding with almost a million dollars of it coming from a Buffer Zone Grant. As a result, Bryan doesn't want it to be in storage and instead wants it available for anyone who needs it, like AST during Arctic Man.

Chris Bushue asked if it will be based out of Anchorage, Bryan said yes. Bryan would like to see it out 6 or 7 months of the year and would like to see it at exercises.

Other Comments

John Dickens wanted to know what the strategic long term planning is for Western Alaska. He said their communications needs are not being met.

Bryan stated that in the Strategic plan they prioritized the unserved and under-served sections of Alaska. Bryan also felt that DHS&EM needed a better way to get the word out to the communities.

John wanted to know more about the reorganization of the National Guard and how that might affect his region. He said they have a lot of towers but also needed repeaters. Bryan said he was not aware of the National Guard having any plans for improving capital infrastructure in the works.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30