

Alaska Interoperable Communications Committee

AKICC

Meetings Minutes December 17, 2008

Next Meetings: January 21, 2009

Call to order was conducted at 9:30 a.m. Those present at the meeting located at AST Headquarters, Anchorage Alaska were the following:

Major Matthew Leveque, Co-Chair DPS
John Dickens, ASEC
Mike Paschall, Rural LEPC
Peter Murphy, ALMR User's Group
Kathy Day, DHS&EM

Those attending telephonically were:

Bryan Fisher, Co-Chair DHS&EM
Frank Wesser, DEC
Tom Smayda, Mat-Su Borough
Rusty Lassell, Rural LEPC
Brad Johnson, North Star VFD
Jeff Tucker, Fire Chief
Chris Bushoe, Anchorage FD

Guest present at the meeting was:

David Kang, DHS&EM representing the SERC All-Hazard Planning Committee

Welcome and Introductions

Bryan Fisher introduced two new committee members, John Dickens and Ronald Bowers who are from ASEC and who will be representing the concerns of rural Alaska. John is based out of Emmonak and Ronald, his alternate, is based out of Dillingham.

Review and Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes from the November 20, 2008 meeting were distributed to everyone prior to the meeting. Bryan asked if anyone had any comments on them. There were no comments so the minutes were considered accepted.

-Bryan stated that eventually the intent is to get the committee minutes posted online under the SERC Website until the committee can get their own website.

Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG)

Bryan stated that every region has a RECCWG under mandate from Congress. FEMA Region 10 conducted their first meeting in September, 2008. The RECCWG will meet two times a year. They are looking for State and local representatives. Kathy Day and Chief Bushoe will be on the committee in addition to Bryan Fisher and Major Leveque. Travel will be paid by FEMA and if not will be paid by AKICC funding. Bryan said the real value in being part of this group is working with peers throughout Region 10 on communication issues. It is anticipated that the next meeting will be in Idaho. Brad Johnson stated he would be interested.

Charter and Bylaws

Bryan stated that each SERC committee has its own charter and bylaws. Kathy put together the documents for AKICC in draft form for comment. These were based on the format recommended by SAFECOM and the Department of Homeland Security. Kathy stated that on the national level, the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is trying to standardize all of the charters and bylaws for the Interoperability Committees in each state. Kathy sent everyone a copy of the document published called "Creating a Charter for a Multi-Agency Communications Interoperability Committee: Template and Questions to Consider". Kathy also sent everyone a draft of the AKICC's charter and bylaws using the format they suggested. They will require some modification and the expectation is that a final draft will be available before the next meeting when they can be voted on. The procedures for voting are also included in the draft document.

IECGP Grant

Bryan spoke about the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP). As was stated last month, the IECGP 2009 application has to be submitted by January 13, 2009. The amount awarded to Alaska

was \$286,624.00. It mandates an 80%-20% split meaning that the State can keep 20% but that the remaining 80% needs to be passed through to local jurisdictions. When the management amount is taken out, \$49,726.00 will be available at the State level, while \$229,300.00 will be available for locals. The State portion will focus on outreach and will fund a website for the AKICC as well as an interoperability video as part of our outreach efforts. With the 80% left for the locals, 50% will go towards equipment and the other 50% will go towards the All- Hazards Communication Unite Leader (COML) training. Bryan stressed that we are trying to achieve operability first in some of the smaller jurisdictions, before we can get to interoperability. He also said that for this 2009 grant, all attempts will be made to make the local application process much simpler than it was for the PSIC grant.

Mike Paschall commented on the lack of response from rural groups for PSIC. He brought up the idea that once we have a mechanism to get out information about grants and other information pertaining to interoperability, we should make sure that each rural trooper post gets the information so that it can be better distributed to the locals.

John Dickens spoke about wanting to get 911 services for Emmonak and outlying villages. He stated that they bought the most powerful phones and had them outfitted as best as possible. He would like to see an enhanced 911 center for the lower Yukon area.

Rusty Lasell stated that they are also working on getting a 911 system up for the Denali Borough.

Mike Paschall stated that they have been negotiating with the Fairbanks North Star Borough for an enhanced PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) and Mike told Rusty to look into one.

John Dickens also addressed Rusty's problem. Rusty said there are two fire departments under contract with University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF) on a per call basis. John stated that in Bethel to get basic 911 and everyone agreed to pay .75 cents on their phone bill to make it happen.

Major Leveque stated that Alaska APCO/NENA is working hard to put together a legislative package to reshape how 911 is handled across the State. They're looking at next generation 911 for communities that can be

answered from anywhere in the state. In some places there wouldn't be enough support for a 24/7 911 system.

Rusty stated that he created a partnership with Denali Park for dispatch but they needed more call volume. He also said that maybe they could combine it with another area. Kathy said she would send Rusty out a copy of what she received from APCO/NENA on their legislative efforts.

Bryan stated that 2008 IECGP funding will be sponsoring part of training at APCO/NENA conferences but to fall within grant guidelines it can only address dispatch issues having to do with emergency services.

Bryan added that stated that there was quite a bit of discussion at the grants meeting he was at in Washington D.C. about PSIC and how there are huge delays in projects due to NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) since some projects have to comply with NEPA guidelines. The Department of Commerce has gone to Congress to ask that the PSIC grant schedule be extended due to various problems with implementation.

Rusty added that he didn't understand all the requirements of NEPA, and didn't understand why jurisdictions had to fill out NEPA paperwork just to put in a repeater. Bryan stated he learned at the National Grants Meeting the main problem with the NEPA requirements for construction have to do with how the Department of Commerce failed to negotiate to have this done by FEMA. It could have been a lot easier if this had been done. That is one of the reasons they were asking for an extension. They could have had FEMA designate some projects as having "no significant impact" which would have really shortened the process.

Tribal Representation

Bryan stated that this item was discussed during the November 2008 meeting. Bryan would still like to have tribal representation on the AKICC. He felt that this item should be left on the agenda until it's done.

January 2009 Meeting

The next meeting will be January 21, 2009. We were hoping to bring people down to Juneau since the meeting time corresponds with the SERC meeting. However, Bryan stated at this point there are too many people attending the

SERC and DHS&EM staff would not be able to make travel arrangements and take care of the other logistical issues in time. So, it appears that the January '09 AKICC meeting will be held in Anchorage for those who can attend, and telephonically for those who cannot.

Guest Speaker

David Kang from DHS&EM was participating in the meeting telephonically. He spoke about the All-Hazard Planning Committee of the SERC. He said that their mission is to review plans on the federal and state level and take on planning topics and items of interest that need to go through the planning process. The committee deals with topics such as Comprehensive Planning Guides, Resource Management and Continuity of Business Operations. He wants to make the committee a venue for planners to get involved in the operational process. He also wants the committee to serve as a forum for resources that can be shared so topics like the interoperable communication planning process can be vetted from the planning perspective.

Bryan stated that we should look to the Planning Committee as we deal with the Tactical Interoperable Communication (TIC) Plans. We can also use them on issues where we're dealing with such as mutual aid and make sure these types of agreements are in synch with local emergency plans. Dave agreed we should probably start collaborating with them beginning with TIC Plans. He will put it on their agenda for their January meeting which is Jan. 20, 2009 at 10:a.m.

SCIP Workshop

Bryan then spoke about the upcoming SCIP workshop on February 10 and 11, 2009. These will be two separate workshops. On February 10 contractors from Homeland Security will be meeting with AKICC members as well as the other stakeholders who were involved in writing the SCIP for a SCIP Implementation Workshop. The second day, February 11, will be primarily for AKICC members and will focus on updating the SCIP. Bryan stated that when the SCIP plan was written, it was done in a manner so that it would fit the criteria needed for the PSIC grant. Now, he wants the SCIP to be more relevant. Bryan also thought that during the second day there should be enough time to conduct the February AKICC meeting. Everyone will need to fill out an invitational travel form if they want to come to Anchorage for the workshops.

Kathy also mentioned that on December 17, 2008 there was a telephonic meeting with the contractors who will be putting on the workshop. They wanted to be able to interview five other committee members for additional input workshops and were looking for volunteers they could interview. John Dickens, Mike Pascall, Major Leveque and Rusty Lassell volunteered.

Additional Comments

John Dickens stated that he wanted to bring up issues in Western Alaska. He stated that his area was getting a lot of probing by the Russians and Chinese and that he was not sure who to report this to. He stated they had 14 towers, and due to the increased in Russian activity, he thought that the Department of Defense (DOD) should be brought into some of the interoperable planning. He said that AST have radios but can't talk to DOD personnel when these issues come up. The Russians are coming at them daily and he stated they need an ALMR repeater so that there is sharing of information about security issues.

Bryan stated that DHS&EM is working with DOD folks like the Coast Guard, who are ramping up activity in the Arctic. With climactic changes in Northern Alaska, there will be more activity in the area. Bryan stated that there's a huge transformation going on with the National Guard and they've reorganized their battlefield surveillance brigade. The Colonel who is responsible is very interested in making sure they have good communication with folks who need to talk to one another.

John stated he needed to know where to file such reports.

Bryan stated he will look into this and get John the information.

Frank Wesser of DEC stated that he needed more outreach and training because but his hazard response teams never hear about the any DHS&EM training. Bryan stated that whenever DHS&EM conducts training, it's open to everyone, although folks don't always here about it.

Frank stated he would like to make sure that his hazard response personnel take advantage of some of the training that is and will be offered.

Bryan stated that DHS&EM hasn't always done a good job of getting things advertised and that's another way the AKICC can work with the SERC Training Committee in order to better coordinate existing and future training and exercises.

Frank stated that they are always testing contingency plans and exercises and it would be good practice to include his personnel in communication exercises with ALMR users.

Major Leveque said he would send Frank an email to help identify what resources are available for ALMR and how to use the system.

Frank said that they are working on oversight issues for emergency response, especially for oil and gas issues. He stated that there will be a lot of sulfur being transported on the Dalton Highway and that the response teams will need to be caught up on how to communicate in case of an emergency.

Tom Smayda stated that they have put together an ALMR user training at Mat-Su.

Major Leveque stated that Mat-Su may have done a more sophisticated job than the training he's aware of. Tom Smayda also spoke about the small flip charts that ALMR folks have produced. Major Leveque stated that he's seen them and they can be a bit overwhelming although the radio operation is pretty straight forward.

Bryan then stated that we were moving ahead on the State Interoperable Communications Training and Exercise Plan (SICTEP) and will be looking for a vendor soon. He feels that we DHS&EM doesn't always advertise and document training well. The RFP for the SICTEP specifically states that the contractor will have to report to the AKICC during the formulation of the SICTEP and will also have to come up with performance benchmarks. There was then a short discussion about how benchmarks are needed in general to determine how Alaska is doing on interoperability issues and meeting objectives. Bryan stated that he just sat in on a committee meeting about benchmarks since Congress is concerned about how PSIC money is being spent.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:00.

