

Interoperability & Emergency Communications News Clips
February 6, 2009 – February 20, 2009

Tough economic climate may drive PSAP consolidation..... 2
Public safety hopes for piece of \$787 billion stimulus package..... 3
Panel: Bad economy not expected to slow 800 MHz rebanding 4
Satellite coalition seeks new public-safety grant rules 5
Golden Gate Bridge to get P25, wireless communication systems 6
Circling the wagons 7
National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP): Moving Emergency
Communications Forward..... 11

Tough economic climate may drive PSAP consolidation

February 18, 2009

Urgent Communications

By Mary Rose Roberts

URL: http://urgentcomm.com/policy_and_law/news/psap-consolidation-0218/

In today's economic climate, government officials are grappling with ways to save money. One way is to consolidate the dispatch and call-taking functions of multiple first-responder agencies under one brick-and-mortar facility. However, to do it right takes planning and the ability to make tough staffing decisions, said Steve Wisely, interim director of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) communications center and 911 services division.

Fewer tax dollars are expected to be collected in 2009 and the coming years, so municipalities are warming up to public safety answering point, or PSAP, consolidation in order to save money and improve efficiencies, Wisely said.

However, several important steps must be taken to achieve a successful consolidation. First and foremost, a working relationship between government officials and public-safety officers is essential from the onset. Wisely advised that a roundtable of sorts be established where PSAP governance can be determined and operational procedures streamlined.

"If the agencies feel they have input to the day-to-day operations, the bigger issues then they will come to the table a little bit easier," he said.

Staffing also must be addressed early in the planning process, according to Wisely. Personnel may have to be retrained because policies, procedures and equipment will be different. Operations managers may have to streamline salaries and titles because sometimes the pay scale of smaller agencies is lower than that of larger agencies. He said since 85 % of nationwide PSAPs employ five people or less, in a smaller center the so-called IT guru may be the person who just happens to be really good on computers. In a large consolidated PSAP, an information technology manager must be hired to manage the more complex computer, GIS, radio and telephony systems.

"In a PSAP center where you have a considerable amount of CAD systems, you may have to hire a dedicated person for technical support," Wisely said. "Technical support is very important especially if you get into a larger CAD system and into GIS."

He also believes the ability to share both voice and data information over one, interoperable system will be an important driving factor of PSAP consolidation.

"Since 911 we've heard of interoperability. In most people's mind they think of radio and push-to-talk to other agencies," he said. "But interoperable data is just as important and in some cases it may be more important. And it certainly is important in a larger center

deploying multiple fire, police and EMS agencies, who then can share data a little bit easier.”

###

Public safety hopes for piece of \$787 billion stimulus package

February 17, 2009

Urgent Communications

By Donny Jackson

URL: http://urgentcomm.com/policy_and_law/news/public-safety-economic-stimulus-0217/

Both houses of Congress on Friday approved legislation calling for \$787 billion in economic-stimulus funds. The package includes more than \$6 billion for broadband deployments—a portion of which public-safety officials are hopeful will be used to build networks that are used to support first-responder communications.

Negotiated in a conference committee of House and Senate representatives last week, the language in the stimulus legislation indicates that some of the funds dedicated to broadband deployment can be used to “improve access to, and use of, broadband service by public-safety agencies.” However, there are several other categories of potential users that also are expected to vie for the broadband monies.

“We didn’t get what we asked for, but there’s language in there that helps [public-safety communications],” Harlin McEwen, chairman of the technology committee for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) said during an interview with Urgent Communications. “There is language in there that allows us to be eligible for some of the broadband funding.”

When the stimulus package first was discussed, some Beltway sources said that as much as \$50 billion could be dedicated to broadband deployments, but that number dipped under \$9 billion when the initial bills were approved by the House and the Senate.

Under the conference agreement, the Rural Utilities Services (RUS) would oversee \$2.5 billion in broadband grants targeted for distance learning, telemedicine and broadband programs. Another \$4.7 billion would be disbursed by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to accelerate broadband deployment in underserved areas, and to create jobs or provide significant public benefits.

Other items in the legislation include \$650 million for coupons to pay for digital-to-analog converter boxes associated with the DTV transition, \$2.765 billion in state and local law-enforcement grants, \$1 billion for community-oriented policing services for the hiring of additional law-enforcement officers, \$500 million for the U.S. Forest Service’s Wildland Fire Management program and \$210 million for fire-station construction.

On Friday night, the U.S. Senate passed the stimulus legislation by a 60-38 vote. Earlier on Friday, the House passed the same legislation by a 246-183 margin, with no Republican representatives casting a supporting vote. The measure has been sent to President Barack Obama, who is expected to sign the legislation into law later today in Denver.

###

Panel: Bad economy not expected to slow 800 MHz rebanding

February 17, 2009

Urgent Communications

By Donny Jackson

URL: http://urgentcomm.com/policy_and_law/news/economy-wont-slow-800mhz-rebanding-0217/

ORLANDO—Key players in 800 MHz rebanding may face uncertain futures amid the economic downturn, but even worst-case scenarios should not jeopardize the reconfiguration process in the band, representatives of the 800 MHz Transition Administrator said yesterday during a panel discussion at the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Winter Summit.

Moderator Alan Tilles—a partner in the law firm of Shulman Rogers Gandal Pordy & Ecker—noted that the letter of credit that Sprint Nextel has used to guarantee its ability to fund rebanding expires in June. Sprint Nextel’s John Wehmann said public-safety agencies do not have to worry about the massive rebanding project lacking funds in the future.

“Those letters of credit will be renewed, and that process has already started—they fall under a larger bank-credit facility that Sprint Nextel has set up with a consortium of banks,” Wehmann said. “There is no uncertainty about it—it will be renewed.”

When the FCC approved the rebanding order in 2004, it required the carrier—then Nextel Communications—to establish a \$2.5 billion letter of credit to ensure that rebanding funds would be available, even if the carrier went bankrupt. As the rebanding has progressed, the FCC has allowed Sprint Nextel to reduce the debt obligation in the letter of credit while ensuring that money will be available to finish the reconfiguration effort.

Even if one of the banks supporting the letter of credit were to fail—a hypothetical scenario mentioned by Tilles—800 MHz public-safety licensees would still have the funds necessary to complete rebanding, Wehmann said.

“There are a large number of banks participating, and if one happens to have issues, the others have agreements in place to step up and cover that,” he said.

Meanwhile, BearingPoint—the firm heading the project management of rebanding—has struggled financially during the past year, with the company’s stock price dipping below

50 cents per share. When Tilles asked whether the TA could continue to operate if BearingPoint has problems, TA attorney Robert Kelly said he does not believe it is something public-safety licensees need to worry about.

“I think it is probably inappropriate to speculate about BearingPoint, but we’re confident that the TA can perform its obligations under any circumstances that may reasonably arise,” Kelly said. “Really, there should be no basis for any anxiety about that.”

###

Satellite coalition seeks new public-safety grant rules

February 12, 2009

Urgent Communications

By Donny Jackson

URL: http://urgentcomm.com/networks_and_systems/news/satellite-public-safety-grant-rules-0212/index.html

A coalition of satellite-communications providers preparing to offer next-generation services recently sent a letter to Congress requesting that emergency networks supported in part by federal funds be required to use devices that are capable of operating both on terrestrial and satellite networks.

Historically, first responders have used satellite phones, but typically as a last resort when terrestrial networks are unavailable—the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 being a prime example. But many first responders on the Gulf Coast at the time were unfamiliar with the current generation of satellite devices, which some claimed to be too cumbersome to use effectively.

In its letter to Congress, the MSS (Mobile Satellite Service) & ATC (Ancillary Terrestrial Components) Coalition said the launching of next-generation satellites will change this dynamic.

“Historically, mobile satellite communications technology required cumbersome devices and was prohibitively expensive. This is no longer the case,” the letter reads. “Technology has advanced dramatically, and satellite capability can be integrated into the very smart phones and laptops that are available today at only minimal incremental cost.”

These satellite-enabling chipsets are not limited to being integrated only into commercial devices, said Jennifer Manner of the MSS & ATC Coalition.

“LMR should be included. It [satellite capability] can go into any wireless device,” Manner said during an interview with Urgent Communications. “It’s really just a chipset issue. Once you have the chipsets, it’s really just a matter of some filters.”

This satellite capability can be integrated into devices so cheaply—for less than \$5 per device, according to one filing with the FCC—because the next-generation satellites are

so large that the devices receiving the satellite signals no longer need large antennas that don't conform to the form factors used in modern wireless devices.

By having satellite-enabled handsets, first responders no longer would be solely dependent on terrestrial networks for their communications.

“By requiring seamless dual-mode operation on both terrestrial and satellite networks in end-user devices used on emergency networks that receive federal funding, Congress can ensure that--during times of emergency and when otherwise required for coverage—emergency responders would have an interoperable, reliable and ubiquitous means of communicating,” the coalition’s letter states.

“With such capability, emergency responders would never face a situation in which they lack access while some recovery protocol is implemented,” the letter continues. “The first hours after a disaster are critical and integrated satellite communications ensure network availability at all times.”

Members of the coalition expect to have next-generation satellites in operation within the next year. ICO Global Communication already has launched a next-generation satellite, and TerreStar Networks is set to launch a next-generation satellite in the spring, Manner said. Skyterra Communications and Globalstar are preparing to launch next-generation satellites later this year and next year.

“So you’d be able to see some competition,” Manner said. “We’re not just talking about one company; there will be several companies that will be competitors, which we thought was important to public safety.”

Of course, while integrating satellite capability into devices has become relatively inexpensive, public-safety users would have to subscribe to satellite services offered by one of the satellite-communications providers to use the capability. Skyterra spokesman Tom Surface said it is too early to determine the price ranges for such services.

“The pricing is going to have to be in such a place that it’s going to be attractive to mass consumers—in government, in enterprise and for consumers,” Surface said during an interview with Urgent Communications. “It’s going to be competitively priced, so that it will be attractive for the markets that are going to want and need this service.”

###

Golden Gate Bridge to get P25, wireless communication systems

February 12, 2009

Urgent Communications

By Mary Rose Roberts

URL: http://urgentcomm.com/networks_and_systems/news/golden-gate-p25-wireless-system-0212/?smte=wr

The Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District awarded GE Transportation, a unit of the General Electric Co., a \$15.5 million contract for an advanced communications and information system (ACIS). The system will be used to integrate transportation and security data used by the bridge and collaborating law-enforcement agencies, said Mary Currie, the Golden Gate Bridge's spokesperson.

"Security is our primary mission," Currie said. "So we need to implement new communication technologies to fundamentally improve our communications at the bridge, especially as a potential terror target identified in 2002."

The new ACIS is designed to improve communications for the three operating divisions: the Golden Gate Bridge, the Golden Gate Ferry and the Golden Gate Transit. It includes a public-safety radio communications component, automatic vehicle location, transit fleet mobile data capabilities, new computer-aided bus dispatch systems and new real-time announcement and information systems that can be accessed by transit customers. It also will deploy a Project 25 digital trunked radio system provided by EADS Secure Networks North America, to enhance communications interoperability between the district's three operating divisions and coordinating agencies, as well as with external public-safety entities, said a GE spokesperson.

Currie said the system specifically will enhance communications with the U.S. Coast Guard, the California Highway Patrol, and the U.S. Park Police, as well as with Golden Gate National Recreation Area rangers. She added that the project may take more than two years to build.

"It could take longer," Currie said. "Because this is a big project, one of the biggest we've ever undertaken."

###

Circling the wagons

February 9, 2009

Federal Computer Week

By Alan Joch

URL: <http://fcw.com/articles/2009/02/09/officials-team-up-on-security.aspx>

Scott Appleby knows how to do more with less. He has to because, as director of emergency management and homeland security for Bridgeport, Conn., he's seen the federal investment in his community's safety drop dramatically.

Bridgeport got \$938,000 in federal homeland security grants in 2004, and only \$136,860 in 2006, the most recent year for which figures are available. And Appleby is not alone. After reaching a peak of \$2.9 billion in 2004, grants to state and local governments dropped to \$1.8 billion last year.

So local officials have devised new strategies to keep essential services in place. Rather than halt or delay important projects in the face of such cutbacks, Bridgeport joined forces in 2007 with first responders and related agencies from 13 surrounding municipalities. The effort will soon result in a regional communications system that will serve a wide range of public agencies.

“When a response is required, we’re the ones that will be sending our men and women into” harm’s way, Appleby said, adding that regional planning represents a more effective approach for homeland security. “It’s been very positive to focus on where the money is actually needed in our region,” he said.

Coastal Connecticut isn’t the only area finding strength in numbers for homeland security projects. Agencies elsewhere are joining with surrounding jurisdictions and commercial companies to fund large-scale technology projects, such as interoperable regional radio communications systems, and develop cybersecurity safeguards.

Such collaboration might become the new model for homeland security projects, but it also poses risks. Competing priorities or poorly assigned responsibilities can bog down projects with many partners, so officials who were accustomed to making their decisions must learn new ways to get things done.

“A lack of funds is going to drive agencies to collaborate more with partners to pool what funding they have on a regional basis,” said Arnold Bogis, a research fellow at Harvard University’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Research firm Input recently reported that 37 states and the District of Columbia are now bracing for a combined \$31.2 billion in budget shortfalls by midyear. It added that a majority of city and county information technology managers expect their technology budgets will likely remain flat or decrease during the next two years, which will contribute to a decline in \$30 billion in cumulative IT spending during the next five years.

When budget cuts hit state and local homeland security efforts, the first victims typically are cutting-edge technologies for first responders, sophisticated tools used in cross-agency fusion centers, or analytical software designed to scour raw data for terrorist plots, said Chris Dixon, Input’s manager of state and local industry analysis.

Meanwhile, current and future shortfalls can also dilute the benefits of previous investments.

For example, earlier in this decade, Massachusetts bought custom trailers for mass casualty incidents that house supplies and equipment essential for helping first responders treat victims of a large-scale terrorist attack. But when the inspector general’s office recently tested the trailers’ effectiveness, investigators uncovered several problems. The problems included basic things, such as knowing who carries the keys to individual trailers to lapses in regular maintenance needed to keep the equipment in working order.

“I wouldn’t be shocked to find a similar case elsewhere where specialized equipment has been purchased,” Bogis said. “With stresses on budgets, there isn’t the manpower to test it, practice with it and do the upkeep.”

Coordinated cybersecurity

Pooling resources is becoming an increasingly flexible option to overcoming budgetary stress. And some agencies, such as New York’s cybersecurity department, are looking beyond their borders for collaboration opportunities.

A cyberattack in one state could ripple effects into other jurisdictions, said William Pelgrin, director of New York state’s Office of Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Coordination. “We’re so interconnected, let’s all pull together and share,” he said.

As a result, New York teamed with Michigan and New Jersey on an application that helps local governments perform internal cybersecurity assessments. The application also will collect data — with personal information redacted — from local entities for aggregation and analysis by the state sponsors to identify and track cyberattacks as they unfold.

“This project goes across state lines,” Pelgrin said. “It’s a very collaborative effort.”

New York also looked for partnering opportunities with the federal government to help meet the state’s deadline to encrypt the data stored on all mobile devices by the end of last year. Pelgrin worked with Karen Evans, the recently retired administrator of the Office of E-Government and Information Technology at the Office of Management and Budget, to piggyback on a federal procurement contract for the data-scrambling technology.

Pelgrin’s group negotiated a volume discount that saved the state \$3 million, he said.

Meanwhile, the 14-town regional approach that Bridgeport belongs to pools DHS funds of about \$1 million from the State Homeland Security Program and more than \$1 million from the Urban Area Security Initiative, in addition to Bridgeport’s port security funding. The smaller communities, with only small grants to contribute, benefit from pooling resources. “They really couldn’t do enough with it” alone, Appleby said.

One of the first beneficiaries of regional collaboration was the emerging interoperable communications system, which received \$6 million from the Justice Department’s Community Oriented Policing Services grants. The original goal was to enhance interoperability among Bridgeport’s various departments and then gradually add any outside support agencies that would likely respond if the city needed help. But in 2007, after the city was invited to apply for an additional COPS grant, it earmarked funds to broaden the use of the Fairfield County police frequency.

“The smaller towns may not have had the money to enhance that frequency, so that in itself has been part of the push to show that we are in this together, especially after what we saw [with communications breakdowns] during Katrina and Sept. 11,” Appleby said.

The region is now working to ensure that its fire and emergency medial services departments can use the same frequency.

Although regional collaboration makes intuitive sense, Appleby warned that it requires regular involvement by a wide range of officials to succeed. Nearly 75 agencies, including representatives from the area’s airports, railroads and ferryboat services, participate in various subgroups that meet at least once a month. It’s an admittedly large but necessary coalition, he said.

“You can’t have an entire committee filled with police, fire and EMS officials,” he said. “We have to prioritize ourselves as a community, as a region, and not just as individual disciplines.”

To iron out conflicting requirements, the committee bases its decisions on a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis, he added. “If we start to diverge from that, it becomes a wish list.”

Wide representation can also help uncover new funding sources when federal funding alone falls short. “If a need doesn’t get met through [the] Homeland Security [Department], we look for another grant to go after,” Appleby said. “And if there isn’t a grant out there, but there’s an important project, we find ways for the towns to collaborate with \$1,000 or \$5,000 each to get the project up and running.”

Mixed results

As federal funds run dry, some regional groups are looking outside the public sector for aid. One model in this area cultivates increased collaboration among agencies and commercial companies where agencies agree to act as showcases for new installations in exchange for low-cost or no-cost technology and services.

The Piedmont Regional Voice over IP Pilot Project chose that route three years ago. The group is working to bring about interoperable communications among Virginia’s Pittsylvania County; Danville and South Boston & Halifax, Va.; Virginia’s state police; Caswell County, N.C.; and North Carolina’s highway patrol. Planners wanted a communications system that serves law enforcement along with the public safety agencies and utilities in that area.

So participants partnered with Cisco Systems for communications equipment based on widely used IP standards rather than the proprietary technologies commonly used in older systems. If each entity uses equipment that supports the standard, departments can communicate with one another, even if they have equipment from different vendors.

Cisco offered the equipment and implementation services in return for using the group to show other public-sector agencies how the technology works outside controlled laboratory conditions. Cisco officials were particularly interested in the Piedmont project because participants spanned multiple levels of state, county and municipal agencies. In return for the communications gear and expertise, “we were able to give them a test bed and sweat equity,” said Maj. Dean Hairston, an officer with the Danville police and its Services Division commander when the project began.

The project's total cost could have risen to hundreds of thousands of dollars, but because of free technology and services from commercial vendors, the regional consortium expects to pay only a fraction of that when a system comes online later this year.

However, public/private partnerships can be frustrating, even if they save money. “It’s not for the faint of heart,” Hairston said.

Problems arose when commercial customers took priority over the showcase group’s needs. Technical staff members sometimes weren’t available to solve implementation problems, which led to scheduling difficulties and unmet milestones. Delays risk waning interest in launching a complex interoperability project when multiple agencies are involved, he said.

As a result, the system hasn’t been fully implemented after three years. Up to now, it’s been used primarily for demonstrations and nonemergencies. The project coordinators didn’t want people to rely with their lives “on a system that wasn’t 100 percent,” Hairston said.

Are the benefits of a commercial partnership enough to consider the approach? Hairston thinks so, but with some caveats. Instead of relying on a vendor’s project manager, he said it’s important to designate someone from the public sector in that role, or at a minimum, as a co-manager. This assures a single point of contact, and someone who can focus all of his or her energies on the program.

“You really need someone from the agency who’s the driving force to say, ‘Here is the schedule. I need this by this date,’ ” Hairston said.

Before finalizing an agreement, agencies also need to identify hidden costs and negotiate who will be responsible for them. It is much better to resolve those issues in the beginning than risk having them later derail the project.

###

National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP): Moving Emergency Communications Forward

January/February 2009 Issue

Emergency Number Professional

By Chris Essid

URL: http://www.enpmagazine.com/Magazine/Current_Issue.html

Released in July 2008, the NECP provides a national roadmap to improve emergency communications. It is a comprehensive strategic plan aimed at assisting emergency response providers and government officials to make measurable improvements in emergency communications over the next three years.

“Virtually every emergency response begins with a 9-1-1 call,” says Steve Souder, Director of the Fairfax County, Virginia Department of 9-1-1/Public Safety Communications. Souder heads the largest Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in Virginia with a staff of 204 call takers, dispatchers, supervisors and support personnel. “We are the first of the first responders,” explains Souder. Since the 9-1-1 system receives the initial notification for most emergencies, it plays an important role in advancing operable and interoperable emergency communications nationwide.

With the advent and proliferation of wireless communication technologies, including cell phones and Web-enabled communication devices, PSAPs are looking for ways to adapt their communications systems to accommodate these technologies, while maintaining efficiency. Americans increasingly use text, data, images and video to communicate, which means that the 9-1-1 system of the 1970s, relying solely on voice communication, is no longer sufficient. Another challenge that PSAPs face since September 11 and Hurricane Katrina, is achieving regional interoperability and redundancy to ensure preparedness and continuity of operations in the case of a large-scale event. “We are a large and diverse nation, and that includes the emergency response community,” says Souder. “I believe it is important to get behind a common vision for emergency communications in the future.”

Last year, in an effort to address the critical need for improved emergency communications nationwide, Congress charged the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) with the development of the first National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP). Released in July 2008, the NECP provides a national roadmap to improve emergency communications. It is a comprehensive strategic plan aimed at assisting emergency response providers and government officials to make measurable improvements in emergency communications over the next three years.

NECP Development

OEC developed the NECP through a process of general requirements collection, validation and analysis that included analyzing all 56 Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP). SCIPs are locally-driven, multi-jurisdictional and multidisciplinary plans to enhance emergency communications interoperability. The SCIPs, national-level after action reports, and input from more than 150 practitioners from various disciplines and jurisdictions, were used in the development of the NECP. “It is a bottom-up plan, not a top-down plan,” says Souder, who provided input into the NECP as a part of a Federal, State and local focus group.

Plan Structure: Vision, Goals, Objectives, Initiatives, and Milestones

The vision of the NECP is to ensure that emergency response personnel at all levels of government and across all disciplines can communicate as needed, on demand, and as authorized, through improvements in communications operability, interoperability and continuity nationwide.

To accomplish this vision DHS, in collaboration with members of the emergency response community, defined a set of specific goals, objectives, initiatives and milestones for Federal, State, local and tribal agencies. The goals provide an initial set of operational targets that will be further defined by OEC through a process that engages Federal, State and local governments, the private sector and emergency responders. They include:

Goal 1—By 2010, 90 percent of all high risk Urban Areas designated within the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) will be able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.

Goal 2—By 2011, 75 percent of non UASI jurisdictions will be able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.

Goal 3—By 2013, 75 percent of all jurisdictions will be able to demonstrate response level emergency communications within three hours of a significant event as outlined in national planning scenarios.

In support of these three goals, one of the NECP's seven objectives focuses on disaster communications capabilities, which includes national integrated preparedness, mitigation, and response and recovery capabilities to communicate during significant events. This objective is further broken down into a variety of initiatives aiming at enhancing disaster communications capabilities. One of these initiatives focuses on the need for implementing disaster communications planning and preparedness activities, including the improvement of PSAPs and 9-1-1 communications centers. Communication is essential during a disaster, and that is when systems are most vulnerable, therefore risk mitigation is a key component of the NECP. Emergency communications system planning must include alternative and backup solutions, as well as diverse and resilient pathways to support communications if primary capabilities become unavailable.

Also, identifying critical communications vulnerabilities and developing mitigation strategies are important for all agencies with operational responsibilities during significant incidents. Agencies should evaluate the readiness posture of communications centers (e.g., PSAP) and emergency response and commercial networks that may be vulnerable to weather damage, flooding, and man-made disasters.

Finally, to improve disaster communications planning and preparedness, the NECP

provides specific milestones for the emergency response community at all levels of government to work toward over the next two years. OEC understands that successful implementation of the NECP requires a nationwide, cross-discipline, cross-jurisdictional, intergovernmental effort on behalf of the emergency response community.

Just as the NECP was developed through coordination and collaboration, we all have a shared responsibility to implement it. OEC's role is to provide guidance and support and to offer a big-picture, national perspective to these efforts to enhance emergency communications.

The Path Forward

The NECP outlines an ambitious, but essential path forward to improve emergency communications operability and interoperability nationwide. Achieving our goals, including the enhancements of 9-1-1 systems and PSAPs, will require the input and consensus of the emergency response community to implement the NECP on the Federal, State, local and tribal levels.

Through a robust partnership between the Federal government and stakeholders across a variety of disciplines and jurisdictions around the country, we are confident that we can improve the effectiveness, efficiency and reliability of emergency communications into the future.

###