

# Statewide Interoperability Coordinators Newsletter

volume three, march 2009



## A Note from Chris Essid



As we look toward the spring, much of the focus of the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is on bolstering multi-jurisdictional coordination efforts and developing strong partnerships with Federal, State, local, and tribal stakeholders to advance emergency communications interoperability nationwide. As such, we look forward to the participation of all of the Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) in the many activities planned over the coming months.

OEC is continuing to make stakeholder engagement a priority through several exciting new initiatives. In the last issue of the Statewide Interoperability Coordinators Newsletter we announced that OEC will hold the first National Conference on Emergency Communications on April 22-24, 2009.

see "chris" page 3

## National Summary of SCIPs Released

The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) recently released the National Summary of Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIPs), available [here](#). The document provides the common themes, gaps, initiatives, and a sample of best practices identified in the 56 SCIPs and updated SCIP Implementation Reports. It also provides links to several resources for additional guidance. In developing this document, OEC has gained a better understanding of the areas that will need continued attention and support. OEC is using the information to design and enhance its future projects, tools, and technical assistance efforts. ■

## NPSTC Rolls Out SWIC Community on NIIX

In late January, the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) invited the Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) to become registered users of the National Interoperability Information eXchange (NIIX) website. NPSTC, through NIIX, developed an online SWIC Community specific to SWIC needs. The SWIC Community provides a forum to assist SWICs and Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan Points of Contact in sharing documents, downloading resources and guides, and building relationships. If you are not yet an authorized member of NIIX, NPSTC encourages you to register by going to [www.NIIX.org](http://www.NIIX.org) and clicking "Register for NIIX." ■

## Mark your Calendars for OEC's National Conference!

As a reminder, the Office of Emergency Communications' (OEC) National Conference on Emergency Communications will take place April 22-24, 2009, in downtown Chicago, Illinois. Highly anticipated in the public safety community, this conference will attract nearly 400 multi-disciplinary practitioners, government officials, and industry representatives from around the country.

This year's focus, "Effective Communications for a Secure Nation," will promote coordination between Federal, State, local, and tribal emergency responders and private-sector personnel for emergency communications during natural disasters and man-made incidents. The conference will enable participants to discuss tangible ideas to address the critical challenges facing the emergency communications community and to identify real-time recommendations and solutions to increase practitioner involvement, coordination, and partnerships.

Please [register online](#) by accessing the conference website. The advance registration deadline is April 10, 2009 and space is limited. For those traveling to Chicago, we have arranged a special guest rate with the [Hilton Chicago](#) located downtown. Rooms are available on a first-come first-served basis, and must be made by April 7, 2009 to guarantee the conference rate of \$157 per night. If you have any questions, please contact Peter Kim at OEC, 703-235-5498 or [peter.kim@dhs.gov](mailto:peter.kim@dhs.gov). ■

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## NACo Announces Interoperability Policy Forums

The National Association of Counties (NACo), in partnership with the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), will host two Interoperability Policy Forums in 2009. The first forum is scheduled for April 30-May 1, 2009 in Kansas City, Missouri, and the second will be held in September 2009 in Phoenix, Arizona. These forums will cover a range of interoperability issues including overviews of the Interoperability Continuum and the National Emergency Communications Plan, examples of successful regional and local interoperability coordination, tips on securing interoperability funding, and considerations when evaluating and purchasing new equipment.

The forums are open to two-to-three person teams composed of representatives from cities and at least one county, and reflect multiple disciplines (such as emergency management, fire, law enforcement, public health, transportation, etc.). At least one member of the team must be a publicly elected official in a governing position. An optional fourth member of the team may be someone who has responsibility for development and coordination of the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan. Team members must be from member counties of NACo or member cities of the National League of Cities. Applications can be found on NACo's website [here](#) or contact project manager Rocky Lopes via e-mail at [rlopes@naco.org](mailto:rlopes@naco.org). ■

## Meet the Coordinators



### Arkansas - Penny Rubow

*Statewide Interoperability Coordinator  
Director, Arkansas Wireless Information Network*

I have worked in State government for 15+ years and have 10 years project/program management experience in the information technology field. In 2004, I was selected to assist with the implementation of the Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN). Prior to coming to AWIN, I was the Program Manager for Disaster Recovery and Continuity of Operations for the Department of Information Systems. I am a Certified Project Manager, a Certified Public Manager, and a Certified Business Continuity Manager.

My advice to the other coordinators is: be ready for ANYthing! My experience managing information technology projects did not prepare me for some of the special "challenges" of implementing a statewide public safety radio system. During the build out of AWIN, we had to figure out how to pay a land owner for a cow that got killed when a technician left a pasture gate open. The cow wandered out of the pasture, tripped in a rut in a muddy road, suffered a broken leg, and died. Then there was the HUGE bull-dozer that got stuck in a muddy pit that was being prepared for the base of a tower. Yeah, it is the glamour of my job that I love.



### Massachusetts - Rick Andreano

*Statewide Interoperability Coordinator  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety & Security*

I am currently serving as the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Executive Office of Public Safety & Security. Prior to Massachusetts, I served with the State of Rhode Island in interoperable communications and with the City of Warwick, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. I have also worked in Florida. My background has been primarily in emergency communications.

In Massachusetts, we are working aggressively to enhance our interoperable governance process and participated in the National Governors Association policy academy on governance. We are developing a comprehensive enterprise-architecture plan to our communications systems, following the "system of systems" approach. We are also beginning work with our neighboring States for cross-border interoperable communications plans.



### Nevada - Dennis Cobb

*Interoperable Communications Coordinator  
Nevada Office of Homeland Security*

I have served as Nevada's Interoperable Communications Coordinator (ICC) since July 2008. Prior to the State establishing the position, I served as a member of the Nevada Communications Steering Committee (NCSC – Nevada's statewide interoperability governance body) since 2003, and chaired that committee since 2007. After a public safety career that included a short time as a firefighter in Clark County, Nevada and 24 years as an officer with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, I retired in 2007 and now staff the Nevada ICC position on a full-time basis. The NCSC produced Nevada's first statewide interoperable communications plan in 2004, emphasizing building a communications "system of systems" based on mature, robust radio systems, called the Core Systems Strategy. Nevada has engineered, and is in the process of acquiring and deploying, interconnects between those Core Systems and radio links to rural 150 megahertz (MHz) systems throughout the State. The immediate focus for Nevada interoperability has moved from "things" to "people" in recent months. Nevada has directed recent Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program requests to building shared capabilities among public safety responders and anticipates maintaining that effort for the next several years. As systems and user requirements evolve, all members of the NCSC recognize Nevada will need effective lifecycle planning to support those changes. The NCSC is working to develop that now. ■

## OEC Staff Spotlight



### Billy Bob Brown, Jr.

Billy Bob Brown, Jr. joined the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) in August 2008 as a Program Analyst within OEC's Multi-Jurisdictional Communications Services division. In this capacity, Billy Bob supports OEC's efforts to

provide technical assistance to State and local agencies across the Nation. He came to OEC from the defense industry where he most recently worked as a contractor and provided subject matter expertise in support of the Secretary of the Air Force and Smart Operations-21. A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Billy Bob spent 20 years as a Marine Corps Infantry Officer with worldwide operational experiences ranging from the Infantry Platoon to the Marine Expeditionary Force level.



### Kendall Carpenter

Kendall (Ken) Carpenter began work in October 2008 as a Program Analyst in the Multi-Jurisdictional Communications Services Division of the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC). In this capacity, Ken works directly with the

Statewide Interoperability Coordinators from all 56 States and territories and supports State, local, and tribal stakeholder engagement and outreach initiatives. Prior to joining OEC as a Federal employee, Ken worked 11 years providing contract support for the National Communications System's (NCS) emergency communications programs and served as the Program Manager for the NCS SHARES HF Radio Program from 1998 until 2005. Ken is a former U.S. Marine Corps Radio Chief with experience in radio, satellite, fixed site, and mobile communications systems supporting military operations worldwide and back-up emergency communications during all-hazards situations. ■

### "chris" from page 1

We hope to see all of you there as we build relationships, share resources and information, and discuss implementation of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP). We are also designing a few panel sessions specific to your needs as SWICs.

In addition to the National Conference, OEC is engaging stakeholders in major U.S. metropolitan communities through the creation of the Metropolitan Area Working Group (MAWG). We know that stakeholder input is central to ensuring that we provide effective resources to support the interoperability efforts of the metropolitan communities. You can read more about the MAWG on page 5.

OEC continues to engage States and localities through its partnerships with the National Governors Association (NGA) and the National Association of Counties (NACo). While NACo is hosting a policy forum for counties and small cities at the end of April, NGA will host the governance policy academies and co-host the SWIC meeting this summer.

This issue of the Statewide Interoperability Coordinators Newsletter provides more detail about the many OEC projects that can help support you and your statewide colleagues. It also kicks off our "Meet the Coordinators" series; we hope to feature many of you over the next year. As always, I hope that you will find this newsletter helpful and informative and I welcome your feedback and suggestions for future issues. ■

## NGA Governance Policy Academy Kicks Off

Teams from the States of Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Massachusetts, New York, and Washington convened in New Orleans, Louisiana on January 8-9, 2009 at the Public Safety Interoperable Communications: Focus on Governance policy academy hosted by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, in partnership with the Office of Emergency Communications. This meeting was the first of two sessions organized to help these States, which were selected based on a competitive grant process, strengthen their interoperable communications governance structures (the second meeting will be held in summer 2009).

In addition to facilitated team sessions, participants heard from Rocky Lopes of the National Association of Counties, who spoke about engaging local stakeholders, and three statewide interoperability coordinators: Constance McGeorge of Virginia, who spoke about regional governance and standing up working groups; Brant Mitchell of Louisiana, who shared what his State did to improve governance following Hurricane Katrina; and Scott Wiggins of Minnesota, who spoke about regional governance, Memoranda of Understanding and charters. ■

## About the SWIC Newsletter

The *Statewide Interoperability Coordinators Newsletter* is designed to be a source of information, news, and updates for Statewide Interoperability Coordinators and their staff. We hope that it will be a valuable resource as you lead your Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan implementation efforts, future statewide planning, and alignment to the National Emergency Communications Plan.

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## Tool Highlight

In order for the guides and resources created by the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) and its partners to have the greatest impact, OEC encourages its stakeholders to share links and/or electronic copies of the guides to practitioners in the field and other interested parties. Please help OEC get the word out about the following tools.

The **Popular Tools Catalog** identifies tools and methodologies created by OEC and other organizations committed to improving communications interoperability nationwide. The catalog provides a brief overview of various tools and guidance documents, demonstrates their alignment to the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), and provides a direct web-link to each resource highlighted in the catalog. These resources identify and promote best practices for interoperable communications by highlighting guidance that helps stakeholders improve their statewide governance, develop standard operating procedures, manage technology, support training and exercises, and encourage usage of interoperable communications practices. The guide can be accessed [here](#).



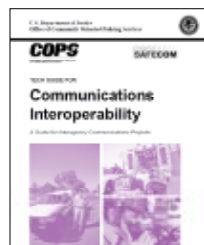
The **Interoperability Business Case: An Introduction to Ongoing Local Funding** guide assists emergency response officials in establishing the need for ongoing local interoperability funding within their community. The document provides information about why interoperability is important as well as key considerations and steps for emergency response officials as they develop their project plan. The guide can be accessed [here](#).

The **National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG)** is a collection of technical reference material for radio technicians who are responsible for radios that will be used in disaster response applications. The guide can be accessed [here](#).



The **System of Systems Approach for Interoperable Communications** brochure is designed to help the emergency response community as well as Federal, State, local, and tribal policy makers understand the system of systems concept, the benefits of applying this concept, and how it can aid agencies in achieving interoperability. The brochure can be accessed [here](#).

The **Law Enforcement Tech Guide for Communications Interoperability** provides background information on the subject of communications interoperability and the tools to carry out the technology initiatives that make interoperability possible. The guide can be accessed [here](#).



The **Data Messaging Standards Guide for Requests for Proposals (RFPs)** assists emergency responders and procurement officers in developing appropriate RFP language that requires data messaging standards when purchasing emergency response-related systems. The guide can be accessed [here](#).

As a reminder, the **Establishing Governance to Achieve Statewide Communications Interoperability**, released in January 2009, and the **National Summary of Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIPs)**, are also available on the SAFECOM website. ■



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## Calendar

### March

**3-5** COML Type III Training  
– Dover, DE  
– Baton Rouge, LA

**10-12** COML Type III Training  
– Harrisburg, PA  
– Urbandale, IA

**17-19** COML Type III Training  
– Las Vegas, NV  
– St. Cloud, MN

### April

**14-16** COML Type III Training  
– Kingswood, WV

**21-23** COML Type III Training  
– Lansing, MI

**22-24** National Conference on Emergency Communications  
– Chicago, IL

**30** NACo Interoperability Policy Forum  
– Kansas City, MO

### May

**1** NACo Interoperability Policy Forum  
– Kansas City, MO

**13-15** 2009 Cross-Border Interoperable Communications Workshop  
– Niagara Falls, NY

## New Metropolitan Area Working Group Addresses NECP Challenges

The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is partnering with the Nation's metropolitan areas to help meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP). NECP Goal 1 states that 90 percent of all high-risk urban areas designated within the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) are able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies by 2010.

OEC created the Metropolitan Area Working Group (MAWG) as another way to gain input from key stakeholders on the NECP, its goals, and on the criteria that will be used to assess goal achievement. The MAWG will provide OEC with a national perspective on the needs of the metropolitan areas and ensure that OEC provides effective resources and support to metropolitan areas as they work toward implementing the NECP.

The first MAWG conference call was on January 29, 2009 and included representatives from many of the largest metropolitan areas. MAWG members include emergency responders and local officials who represent city and county fire and police services, communications operations, regional councils, information technology managers, emergency management offices, and UASI administrators. If you have questions about the MAWG or wish to nominate someone within your State's metropolitan areas to join the MAWG, please contact Robert "Dusty" Rhoads at OEC, [robert.rhoads@dhs.gov](mailto:robert.rhoads@dhs.gov). ■

## Statewide-NECP Alignment

The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), developed with input from more than 150 emergency response community members across the Nation, is the national strategy for communications interoperability. It lays out a common vision and goals, as well as 92 milestones that apply to Federal, State, and local agencies. As a first step toward achieving this national

strategy, OEC identified eight NECP milestones with recommended actions applicable to the States and territories. Beginning with this issue of the Statewide Interoperability Coordinators Newsletter, and continuing in future issues, OEC will detail the support it provides to the States and territories for each of the eight milestones. The first two milestones are highlighted in the table below. For more information about the NECP or OEC, please contact OEC at [OEC@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:OEC@hq.dhs.gov). ■

### Initiative 1.1– Effective Governance Groups Milestones:

- By 7/31/09, establish a full-time statewide interoperability coordinator or equivalent positions.
- By 7/31/09, incorporate the recommended membership into the Statewide Interoperability Governing Body (SIGB) as outlined in the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan Guidebook and establish the SIGB via legislation or executive order by an individual State's governor.

### How OEC Can Help:

- OEC published the Establishing Governance to Achieve Statewide Communications Interoperability Guide. The guide can be accessed [here](#).
- OEC will collect and share template legislation and executive orders with States.
- OEC will facilitate integration of Federal representation into State governance bodies.
- OEC offers governance support through SCIP Implementation Workshops, National Conference on Emergency Communications, and Statewide Interoperability Coordinators Council.
- OEC will align emergency communications grant policies to support implementation of the NECP.

## SCIP Corner



## OEC Travels Far and Wide to Help Territories Implement Their SCIP

During the months of December and January, Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) teams traveled to Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to conduct Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) Implementation Workshops. These workshops provided OEC with a greater awareness of the territories and the specific challenges they face. In Guam, workshop participants developed an Interoperable Communications Working Group charter that lays out the group's purpose, scope, roles and responsibilities,

membership, operating principles, and next steps. In CNMI, the workshop provided participants from across the four CNMI municipalities (Saipan, Rota, Tinian, and the Northern Islands) the opportunity to come together as a newly established SCIP Task Force and increase their understanding of their SCIP, update it, and draft implementation plans for priority initiatives. Similarly, the Puerto Rico workshop resulted in a shared understanding of the SCIP, updates to SCIP initiatives, and the development of project plans for prioritized initiatives. ■