

2008 World Series and 2009 Super Bowl Florida Responders Achieve Championship Emergency Communications

While every baseball team starts the season with dreams of making it to the World Series, not every city plans to host it. “When the Rays entered the playoffs, we had no idea we would end up in the World Series,” says Pam Montanari, Radio and Data Systems Manager for Pinellas County Emergency Communications. But the Rays competed in the World Series, and local authorities had to be ready with multiagency coordination, increased security, and a communications plan that an international event of that scale requires.

Fortunately, interoperable communications planning has long been a part of the Tampa Bay Urban Area. Montanari credits the St. Petersburg authorities who work the 81 regular season home games at Tropicana Field with providing a strong and experienced team at the stadium.

“For the division playoffs, we had about three days to incorporate the Federal agencies into our 205,” says Montanari referring to the Incident Command System Form 205 used to detail available communications resources and plan communications strategies. “And then it kind of worked that way in the World Series, too.”

Beginning with the division playoffs, the local authorities coordinated with Federal and State agencies, including the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Federal Bureau of Investigation,

our channels and issue radios to the agencies that came in.”

As the team progressed to the World Series, Pinellas County also brought in radios for Major League Baseball (MLB) and the other Federal agencies that support the biggest baseball games of the year.

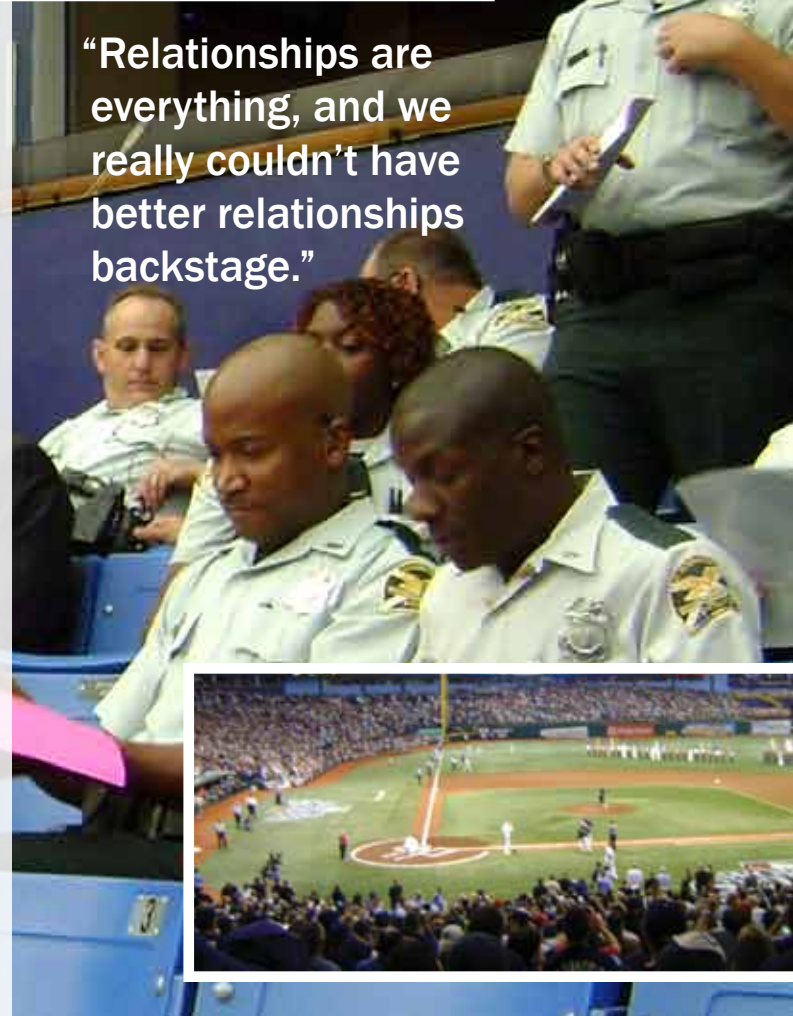
Montanari stressed that the keys to their success were designating specific talkgroups for different functions and having a large radio cache in Pinellas County, which enabled them to provide radios to all Federal and State agencies and MLB personnel.

The Tampa Bay Rays lost the series to the Philadelphia Phillies, but Montanari feels that the city of Tampa Bay had a winning emergency communications line up. “Going forward, we are very confident in the communications interoperability that we have,” she said.

Super Bowl: Super Planning

Unlike the location of the World Series, which is determined by the final teams’ locations, the NFL’s Super Bowl site is decided years in advance. So Tampa, Florida, another partner in the Tampa Bay Urban Area, had plenty of time to prepare to host Super Bowl XLIII on February 1, 2009.

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dedicated to Supporting SCIP Implementation

Across the Nation, emergency responders and government officials are making great strides toward achieving communications operability and interoperability in their States and territories. These unprecedented efforts are supported by the development and implementation of Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP), which are locally-driven, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-disciplinary statewide roadmaps for enhancing emergency communications interoperability.



**Chris Essid, Director
Office of Emergency Communications**

Last year, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approved the SCIPs of all 56 States and territories. This amazing accomplishment represents the culmination of dedicated efforts across the Federal, State, and local emergency communications community.

During SCIP development, DHS's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) provided technical assistance and guidance to the States and territories. OEC analyzed the SCIPs and incorporated those findings into the development of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) and Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP) grant guidance. Now, as the States and territories work to implement their SCIPs, OEC is supporting them by providing Technical Assistance (TA), offering SCIP Implementation Workshops, developing SCIP Implementation Reports, and producing the National Summary of SCIPs.

This fiscal year, OEC received TA requests from over 98 percent of States and territories, resulting in 239 individual requests. States may request up to five offerings annually from OEC's TA catalog, which includes support in the areas of Governance and Standard Operating Procedures, Communications Unit Training, Communications Operations, Communications Systems Engineering, Tactical Communications Enhancement, and Communication Assets Survey and Mapping (CASM). OEC vets all TA requests, evaluating how they will address SCIP gaps, increase interoperable communications capabilities, and mitigate risks. Requests are then prioritized to maximize the impact of the assistance.

OEC also offered States the opportunity to participate in one-day SCIP Implementation Workshops to bring together State and local representatives—across disciplines and regions—to discuss the State's communications gaps and SCIP initiatives. The first round of workshops was completed this June, with 49 of 56 States and territories participating. OEC worked directly with Statewide Interoperability Coordinators and other stakeholders to design the workshops to meet each State's needs.

For each State and territory, OEC prepared a SCIP Implementation Report based on a comprehensive review of the State's respective SCIP. The reports provide a "snapshot" of the status of interoperability in each State and describe the current status of communications interoperability across the lanes of the Interoperability Continuum to include capabilities, interoperability gaps, strategic initiatives, and next steps. The SCIP Implementation Reports help OEC align resources and programs more effectively to meet identified State and territory needs; establish funding

goals for the IECGP in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency Grant Programs Directorate; and, establish a baseline to measure future progress within each State.

The National Summary of SCIPs, released by OEC in February of this year, provides the common themes, gaps, initiatives, and a sample of best practices identified in the 56 SCIPs and updated SCIP Implementation Reports. States can use the information in the National Summary of SCIPs to identify practices used by other States to overcome similar gaps and develop initiatives for future collaboration on statewide plans.

Through TA, SCIP Implementation Workshops, the National Summary of SCIPs, and the SCIP Implementation Reports, OEC supports and guides States and territories as they work to implement their SCIPs. Progress will only come through the hard work and dedication of stakeholders at all levels, and we are committed to doing our part to facilitate and enable each State's and territory's success.

For more information on OEC's SCIP Implementation Support activities, visit <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/statewideplanning/>, or e-mail OEC at OEC@hq.dhs.gov.

SCIP Implementation Workshops

This June, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) completed the first round of Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) Implementation Workshops, held across the Nation beginning in October 2008. In December 2008 and January 2009, OEC conducted workshops in three of the U.S. territories: Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). These workshops enabled face-to-face interaction between OEC and the territories' emergency communications leaders—and provided OEC with a greater awareness of the specific challenges the territories 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 an opportunity for participants from across the territory's four municipalities (Saipan, Rota, Tinian, and the Northern Islands) to come together as a newly established SCIP Task Force. The workshop also provided an opportunity for them to 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. Overall, the workshops represented a valuable opportunity for collaboration and coordination for both OEC and territory representatives.

For more information on SCIP Workshops or other OEC initiatives, email OEC@hq.dhs.gov.



2010 Olympics: Effective Communications as the World Joins in Competition

High profile public events present unique coordination and communication challenges for public safety agencies. The upcoming 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as the 2009 World Police and Fire Games, in Vancouver, Canada, are no exception.

Though Vancouver is located approximately 30 miles north of the U.S.-Canada border, U.S. emergency responders will have the means to communicate across jurisdictions and agencies should the need arise. To help ensure cross-border communications interoperability during the Games, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is leading a number of efforts to support the Washington State 2010 Olympics Security Committee's Communications Interoperability Working Group (CIWG).

The CIWG is one of seven working groups created by the Washington Governor's Office's Olympic Security Committee to coordinate State homeland security functions during the Games. The CIWG is co-chaired by the Washington State Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and includes representatives from Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies, military components, and non-governmental organizations in the region.

To assist CIWG's mission, OEC is working to ensure that data and voice communications during critical security operations can be exchanged seamlessly among Federal, State, and local law enforcement, emergency responders, and homeland security personnel within the United States and across the border. OEC's technical and operational support to CIWG includes three initiatives: the Integrated Interoperable Communications Plan, the 2010 Olympics Coordination Center, and regional training and exercises.

The Integrated Interoperable Communications Plan includes the activities of government and non-government emergency response providers within the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metropolitan area corridor, the Puget Sound coastline, and the U.S.-Canada border. Once the Plan is tested and approved, it will lay the foundation for county and local response interoperable communications preparedness, and for collaboration with their Federal and State partners.

The 2010 Olympics Coordination Center, which OEC and U.S. Customs and Border Protection are jointly establishing, will serve as the central hub for the United States for collecting and distributing information about incidents related to the Games. The Center will be capable of handling mission-critical voice, video, and data needs for more than 50 agencies directly or indirectly supporting preparedness and response efforts at the Games.

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OEC Holds National Conference On Emergency Communications

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) hosted the first National Conference on Emergency Communications at the downtown Hilton Chicago April 22-24, 2009. About 450 members of the emergency response community from across the country attended the event, representing public safety, government officials, and private industry. The theme, Effective Communications for a Secure Nation, advanced the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) and enlisted the emergency response community in support of NECP implementation.



"DHS needs to integrate the State and local aspect early on rather than on the backend," stated DHS Assistant Secretary of Intergovernmental Programs (IGP) Juliette Kayyem in her presentation during the National Conference, "For those of us, like me, we are not first responders, and we need to recognize this." IGP's mission is to promote an integrated national approach to homeland security by ensuring, coordinating, and advancing Federal interaction with State, local, territorial, and tribal governments.

The agenda included plenary sessions and speaker panels addressing NECP implementation, State and local governance planning and coordination, and grants and tools development information. Keynote speakers such as Federal Emergency Management Agency Grants Program Directorate Assistant

Administrator Ross Ashley and Washington, D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency Director Darrell Darnell engaged participants with insight into the priorities of the Administration and State and local governments.

In addition, State and local emergency response officials had the opportunity to provide examples of ongoing challenges and successes related to emergency communications interoperability. The conference provided a forum for attendees to provide input on current and future DHS initiatives and discuss best practices and lessons learned for operable and interoperable emergency communications. Conference outcomes included the following:

- Engaged conference participants with Federal officials to collect input on technical and operational initiatives to better support nationwide interoperability
- Implemented social media tools, including Twitter, to interface with the emergency response community and the public
- Clarified rules, regulations, and decision making process for State, local, territorial, and tribal communities to secure grant funding
- Identified partnering opportunities for emergency responders to work closer together to implement the NECP's goals and objectives



"DHS needs to integrate the State and local aspect early on rather than on the backend"

Juliette Kayyem

DHS Assistant Secretary of Intergovernmental Programs

"In these uncertain times and limited resources focus is essential," said OEC Director Chris Essid in his closing remarks, "It is clear to me that wringing out the inefficiencies at the Federal level is a priority of this administration and of all the Federal staff in this room today. We can do better and we will do better. We now emerge with a national focus poised to produce extraordinary results."

For more information on OEC and the National Conference on Emergency Communications, please visit www.DHS.gov: keyword National Conference on Emergency Communications, or email OEC@hq.dhs.gov.



What did you take away from the National Conference on Emergency Communications?



“Meeting all of our peers... a little from each perspective adds up to a lot. It was also helpful to hear the experience of our international counterparts.”

Lloyd Mitchell

Forestry Conservation Communications Association
Gettysburg, PA



“I liked the fact that the entire leadership of OEC was engaged and [that they]are passionate about partnership and working with local agencies.”

Pamela Montanari

Pinellas County Emergency Communications
Largo, Florida



“I’m very excited about the NECP. I think it’s a great plan—it gives us a vision in the field. [It lays out] what I need to be doing in Indiana to make sure all states are moving in the same direction, filling in the gaps”

Don West

Indiana Department of Homeland Security
Indianapolis, Indiana

2010 Olympics - Continued from Page 3

To promote effective execution of CIWG’s communications plans and protocols, OEC supports interoperable communications training and exercise activities within the region. These activities include a series of workshops, tabletops, and functional exercises, as well as technical assistance for planners.

The interoperable communications model developed for the Games is repeatable. It can be adopted by other States and border regions for use in future high-profile events. OEC will collect lessons learned and best practices from exercise activities and the Games’ operational execution to provide future guidance for the interoperable emergency communications community.

With the opening ceremonies less than a year away, coordination efforts are strengthening partnerships with participants at various levels of government. Planning for the Games sets a common goal for Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies and provides the opportunity to overcome barriers to information sharing and critical response operations. U.S. and Canadian planners anticipate the increased collaboration among responders will not only make the 2010 Olympics safer, but will also markedly improve communications interoperability in the region.

For more information about the CIWG or OEC, contact OEC@hq.dhs.gov

World Series & Super Bowl - Continued from Page 1

“We went down to Miami for Super Bowl XLI and worked in conjunction with them,” says Major John Bennett, District 2 of the Tampa Police Department. “We also went to Arizona [for the 2008 Super Bowl] and did joint planning there. We then had our first planning meeting right after that.”

Major Bennett says the Tampa area is no stranger to large events. It tends to draw a lot of campaign appearances in election years, absorbs thousands of visitors for the annual Gasparilla festival, and hosts numerous large professional and college sporting events every year. “This was not our first rodeo,” said Bennett.

However, he did acknowledge that the size and significance of the Super Bowl made it unique—and the last time Tampa hosted the Super Bowl in 2001 was before September 11. “The security has changed,” says Bennett. “Also, the scale of the event has changed.” In addition to the game itself, there were nearly 200 NFL-sanctioned side events throughout the region.

So how did Tampa plan to coordinate communications for nearly two dozen agencies during a sprawling event that attracts worldwide attention? By dividing the operation into command centers based on geography and functionality, says Bennett. One command station was within the stadium, another was in downtown Tampa, and the third was in the hotel-dense Westshore area. Each center had representatives from each agency, which was the central means for connecting disparate entities. “That way, even if you didn’t have technical interoperability, you had people interoperability,” says Bennett.

The area tested its structure and plan during college football’s Outback Bowl at Raymond James Stadium on January 1, 2009, which was also this year’s Super Bowl location. This opportunity allowed for a month lead time to make any needed changes before the big event.

Super Bowl XLIII operations went smoothly, just as Bennett was confident it would. In addition to the long planning period, the area has enjoyed a history of success within its Urban Area, and the Tampa Police Department and Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office have an established method of dividing the work for events at the stadium. “We have a very long, ingrained history of working together,” says Bennett. “Relationships are everything, and we really couldn’t have better relationships backstage.”

For more information, contact OEC@hq.dhs.gov.

FROM OUR PARTNERS

Inaugural Emergency Communications a Success with Help from NCS, Partners

With over a million observers cramming into the National Mall in Washington, Barack H. Obama took the oath of office on January 20 to become the 44th President of the United States.

The 56th Inauguration activities provided visitors – using their cell phones – with an opportunity to capture a bit of history by communicating their observances to family and friends by text message and calls, as well as capturing and transmitting images from their cell phone cameras.

With the high volume of wireless communications expected, the National Communications System (NCS) – along with its government and industry partners – coordinated communications efforts to handle the large surge of wireless communications in the District of Columbia. At the same time, the NCS, through its National Coordinating Center (NCC), supported national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) communications services to the Federal, State and local leaders; first responders and critical infrastructure personnel through the five-day inaugural weekend.

NCS Director and Deputy Manager James Madon said much of credit goes to the telecommunications industry for their preparation with the NCS to handle the wireless demands. “Bottom line, at least from all the reports that I’ve seen, was that the cellular coverage and the landline coverage performed admirably,” said Madon. He added that the NCS planned and worked with carriers for two and half months and cited the effort as a true partnership effort. “We understood what they were doing and they understood what we needed for emergency preparedness.”

NCS implemented its continuity of operations plan for this historic event and successfully conducted a personnel accountability test of its automated messaging service – the DHS Emergency Notification System. The NCS also activated the Shared Resources High Frequency Radio Program and conducted a variety of communications checks while operating at its second highest level. In addition, NS/EP callers using the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) completed 99 percent of the over 700 priority service calls during the inaugural weekend.

Industry representatives of the NCC also deployed to the NCS alternate site and provided vital situational awareness information on their wireless networks. This deployment was part of industry efforts to ensure communications channels remained open. Many of the communications carriers brought mobile cellular resources to the National Capital Region to augment existing wireless communications assets, coordinating placement, personnel access and refueling issues directly with the NCC.

Under the National Response Framework (NRF), the NCS is responsible for Emergency Support Function 2 (ESF-2) – Communications. Through its 24/7 watch center, the NCC planned, coordinated, and conducted ESF-2 operations from multiple venues including: the NCS alternate site; the Federal Emergency Management Agency National Response Coordination Center (main and alternate sites); the U.S. Secret Service Multi-Agency Communications Center; and the Federal Region 3 Regional Response Coordination Center.

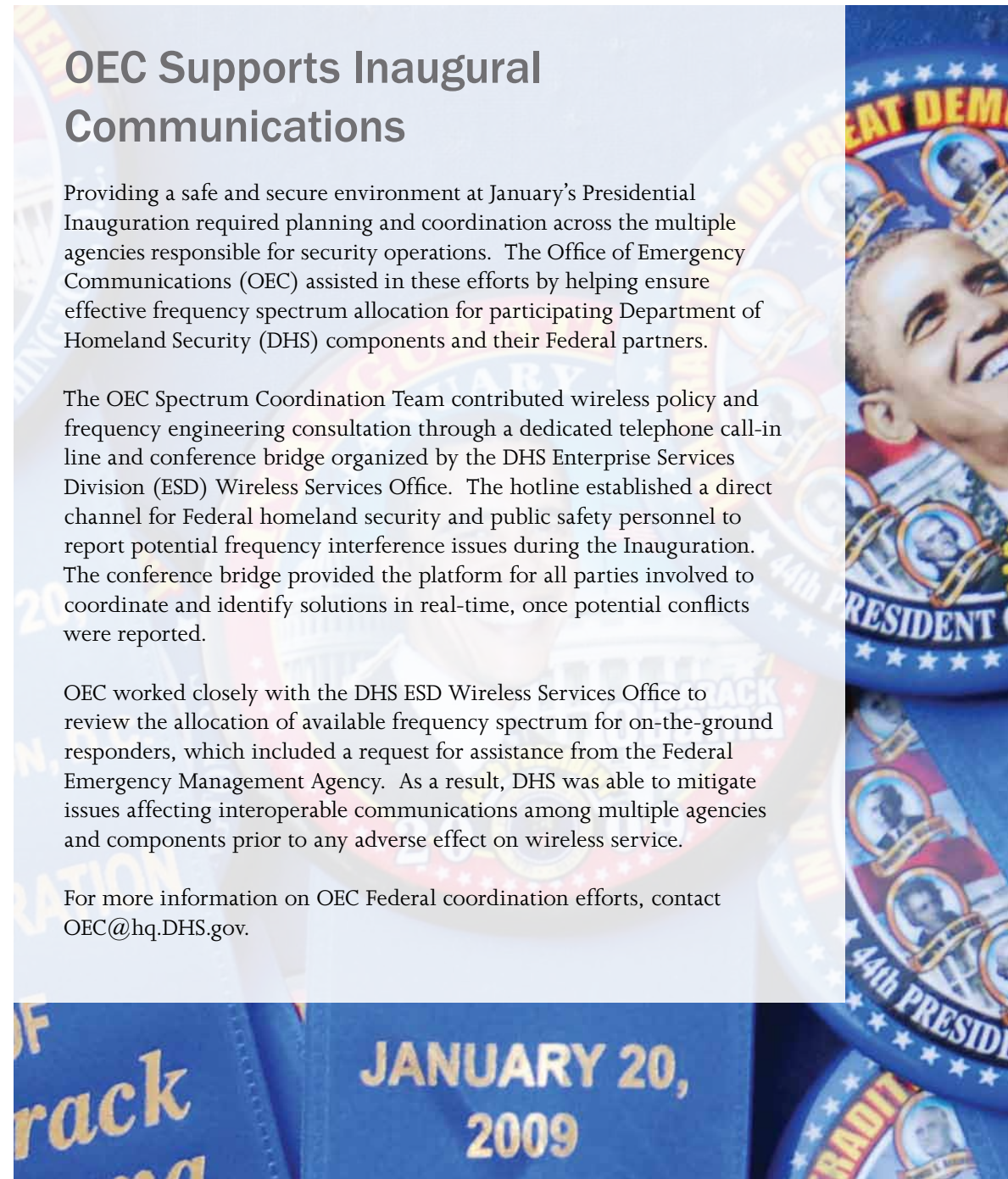
OEC Supports Inaugural Communications

Providing a safe and secure environment at January’s Presidential Inauguration required planning and coordination across the multiple agencies responsible for security operations. The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) assisted in these efforts by helping ensure effective frequency spectrum allocation for participating Department of Homeland Security (DHS) components and their Federal partners.

The OEC Spectrum Coordination Team contributed wireless policy and frequency engineering consultation through a dedicated telephone call-in line and conference bridge organized by the DHS Enterprise Services Division (ESD) Wireless Services Office. The hotline established a direct channel for Federal homeland security and public safety personnel to report potential frequency interference issues during the Inauguration. The conference bridge provided the platform for all parties involved to coordinate and identify solutions in real-time, once potential conflicts were reported.

OEC worked closely with the DHS ESD Wireless Services Office to review the allocation of available frequency spectrum for on-the-ground responders, which included a request for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. As a result, DHS was able to mitigate issues affecting interoperable communications among multiple agencies and components prior to any adverse effect on wireless service.

For more information on OEC Federal coordination efforts, contact OEC@hq.DHS.gov.



U.S. Virgin Islands Prepares for Natural Disasters with Tabletop Exercise

The four islands of the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), home to 160,000 residents, welcome three million visitors each year. Subject to tropical storms and hurricanes, the islands sustained substantial damage from Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and Hurricane Marilyn in 1995.

To prepare for similar natural disasters, the USVI held a tabletop exercise last October with support from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications' (OEC) Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP). The scenario used for the tabletop was a 6.8 magnitude earthquake, resulting in a collapsed school on St. Thomas, a downed communications tower on St. Croix, and a damaged Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on St. John.

The USVI tabletop was a territory-wide exercise, with dozens of public safety professionals participating from emergency medical services, utilities, and hospitals. Federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Parks Service and the U.S. Coast Guard also provided input. OEC's Technical Assistance tabletop exercises focus on communications. "You throw out a scenario, such as the school has collapsed and 115 children are missing, and ask questions about who responds, how they are talking, what channels they are on, and what interoperability options they share, such as swap radios or gateways," says Dr. Jennifer Hendry, senior scientist for ICTAP's Operations Group. "We walk through all the communications elements that would be involved in supporting their operations." Reliance on cell phones is discouraged for all exercises, Hendry adds.

As the group discussed the scenario, various participants answered or identified options for working around a problem. "The territory was able to describe how they could get something done if basic resources were removed. We love to see that in an exercise," says Hendry. "The FBI was also really active in this exercise. They had multiple redundant choices within their Continuity of Operations Plans, for example, that included reaching back to the field office in

San Juan, Puerto Rico via their satellite phones and activating support teams from Miami.

The day following the exercise, the territory received a "Quick Look" review of high-level gaps and within a few weeks they received a full after-action report and improvement plan. "For every gap, we address how that gap fits one or more of the critical tasks in the DHS Target Capabilities List, focusing on critical tasks within the communications, planning, EOC management, public information and warning, and on-scene management capabilities," says Hendry.

The team links each gap with the ability to accomplish a critical task and documents the potential real-life implications of not filling that gap. "For example, by failing to declare a Communications Unit Leader, the emergency responders wouldn't be able to coordinate communication resources, and at some point in the exercise, the EOC might be recruiting the same asset for multiple needs." For each gap, the team provides mitigation recommendations, beginning with the "low-hanging fruit"—efforts that can be accomplished quickly—and working up to issues that require additional resources including governance, leadership, money or time.

A week after the exercise, a 6.1 magnitude earthquake shook the islands. Then, "two weeks after the earthquake, a Category 3 hurricane hit the islands and did in fact strip antennas and other equipment off of a St. Croix tower," says Hendry.

"The USVI exercise participants demonstrated awareness of what they have and how to work within the limitations of what they have to their best advantage. Their human investment in interoperability is commendable," Hendry says. "And the hurricane and earthquake events subsequent to the USVI exercise certainly reinforced the value of exercises based on potential real scenarios."

For more information on OEC's tabletop exercises, contact OEC@hq.dhs.gov.

Communication-Specific Tabletop Exercise Methodology

The Communication-Specific Tabletop Exercise (TTX) Methodology guide, released by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in September 2008, provides a detailed, step-by-step approach for effectively planning, conducting, and evaluating an interoperable communications-specific TTX. It should be used in accordance with the general principles for planning and conducting effective exercises put forth by DHS, including the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program's guidelines. The exercises developed and executed as a result of this methodology will help localities identify interoperability capabilities and gaps in existing processes.

For an electronic copy of the Communication-Specific Tabletop Exercise Methodology guide, go to www.safecomprogram.gov.



About Emergency Communications Quarterly

The US Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) supports and promotes the ability of government officials and emergency responders to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters, and works to ensure, accelerate, and attain interoperable and operable emergency communications nationwide.

OEC is a component of the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications (CS&C) within DHS's National Protection and Programs Directorate. CS&C is responsible for the overarching mission to prepare for and respond to incidents that could degrade or overwhelm the operation of our Nation's information technology and communications infrastructure. This mission is part of the larger DHS strategy to ensure the security, integrity, reliability, and availability of our information and communications networks.

Emergency Communications Quarterly's mission is to provide the emergency response community, policy makers, and Federal, State, local, and tribal officials with information about the latest in emergency communications nationwide, including current and upcoming OEC initiatives; stories from our partners and from the field; and best practices and lessons learned.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

National Governors Association Policy Academy
July 20-21 – Minneapolis, MN

**National Association of Counties
Annual Conference & Exposition**
July 24-29 – Nashville, TN

**Association of Public-Safety Communications
Officials Annual Conference & Exposition**
August 16-20 – Las Vegas, NV

**International Association of Fire Chiefs Fire-Rescue
International Conference**
August 27-29 – Dallas, TX

SAFECOM Executive Committee Meeting
September 10 – Washington, D.C.

**International City/County Management Association
Annual Conference**
September 13-16 – Montreal, Quebec

National Association of Counties Policy Forum
September 24-25 – Phoenix, AZ



Homeland Security