

## **2014 Communications Grant Proposals Narrative**

Ten projects were submitted under the “operational communications” category. Traditionally, each would be reviewed by the Statewide Interoperable Communications Coordinator (SWIC) for compliance with guidance and then forwarded to Nevada Communications Steering Committee (NCSC), and its Grants committee, for recommendation to the Commission. NCSC was dissolved in January, 2014, and its successor body has not yet met. Therefore, the SWIC was assigned the task of vetting and ranking the projects.

As in previous years, the NCSC criteria were applied to each project proposal. This approach was approved by the State Administrative Authority, Chief Christopher Smith.

### **Criteria for Projects**

1. Does the project fall under the goals of the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP)?
2. Does the project involve multi-jurisdictional entities?
3. Is the project regional or multi-regional?
4. Does the project provide data interoperability or infrastructure for data interoperability?
5. Will the proposed project be completed within the funding cycle and within the budget requested?
6. Has ongoing maintenance, leases, right-to-use fees or other ongoing expense been identified/accounted for within each?
7. If this project requires purchases and/or construction, how long will completion take after funds are received?

### **The SCIP goals cited in (1) are:**

1. Provide the State-Wide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) with legislative authority to support the SCIP as Nevada’s primary guidance document.
2. Support relationship building between the Nevada Communications Steering Committee (NCSC), State of Nevada Network (SoNNet) board, Nevada Broadband Task Force, local, tribal, State, and Federal entities and other critical partners.
3. Encourage the development of interoperable emergency communications guidelines, common standards, and procedures.

4. Identify interoperable communications resources throughout the state.
5. Develop a technology roadmap for development, access, maintenance, and/or upgrades to mission critical voice, video and data services.
6. Develop and provide training for first responders in interoperable communications that can be used by all entities Statewide.
7. Promote legislation for requiring continuing interoperable communications training for first responders.
8. Advance the Communications Unit Leader (COML), Communications Technician (COMT), and Auxiliary Communicator (AuxComm) programs by conducting training and establishing a statewide recognition and certification process.
9. Support the daily use and growth of the Nevada Dispatch Interconnect Project (NDIP), Nevada Core Systems Network (NCORE), and Nevada Crossband Repeater Network (NCRN).
10. Develop and encourage interoperable communications education and awareness throughout the State.
11. Recognize the value and force multiplier represented by well-trained auxiliary communicators and other partners.

Note: while the bodies enumerated in (2) may no longer exist (NCSC, SoNNet), the principles of relationship-building, cooperation, and coordination remain.

### **The Projects:**

Two Statewide project proposals were submitted:

1. Continuation of the SWIC program,
2. Purchase of operational communications equipment (radios) for the State Parks.

Six projects were proposed for Clark County Urban Area (UASI) funding, in whole or in part:

1. 9-1-1 upgrades for the City of Henderson (100% UASI),
2. P-25 system upgrades for Clark County (50% UASI),
3. P-25 site expansion for the Southern Nevada Area Communications Council (100% UASI),
4. 9-1-1 upgrades for the City of Mesquite (50% UASI),
5. Radio site improvements for the City of Mesquite (50% UASI),
6. A disaster recovery system for Clark County's SCOPE computer system (100% UASI).

Outside the UASI, two additional projects were submitted:

1. 9-1-1 upgrades for the City of Sparks
2. Nevada Core Systems interconnection improvements from the Washoe County Radio Communications System. Washoe County has since withdrawn this project.

### **Evaluation and Ranking**

Of the remaining nine projects, eight were ranked by the SWIC. Although obviously important, the SWIC project was not ranked by the SWIC to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest.

Consistent with the mission of the NCHS, consideration was also given to the statewide nature of projects, with preference for those that benefit all areas of Nevada. Additionally, information was collected to determine which projects could be accomplished in shorter time frames, should future funds become available with attenuated performance periods.

For NCHS consideration, we include only those projects that sought some level of non-UASI funding. Not including the SWIC project, this leaves six projects for consideration. They are ranked:

1. Mesquite Communications Site
2. Clark County P-25 upgrade
3. Two 9-1-1 projects (Sparks, Mesquite)
4. Purchase of radios for State Parks

Both the Mesquite and Clark projects provide additional interoperable communications capacity and capability for statewide responders. While naturally focused on their home jurisdictions, the capability of providing robust, interoperable communications to mutual aid responders and during large-scale incidents is consistent with guidance and sound policy. Both Mesquite and Clark seek a 50% contribution from SHSP funds for their projects, with the balance from UASI.

Mesquite ranks slightly ahead of Clark since this project adds baseline capability in an underserved area. Responder safety, inter-jurisdiction (including three states) coordination, and reliable coverage issues are all key factors in ranking this project highly.

Clark's P-25 upgrade proposal allows for the upgrade of several hundred radios used by a variety of agencies and jurisdictions, including State users, to accommodate the transition of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police radio system from an EDACS based system to a P-25 standard. This project can be rolled out gradually as funds permit, since the cost is primarily a per-radio one. However, delays in upgrading radios once LVMPD has transitioned to P-25 will create an interoperability gap that will affect communications capability.

The two 9-1-1 projects represent urgently needed upgrades to infrastructure and capabilities in an expanding telecommunication environment. The replacement of aging equipment, the introduction of effective redundancy, and the ability to accommodate the rapidly approaching requirements of Next-Generation 9-1-1 services are key reasons to endorse these projects equally. While failure to fund these projects will not create an immediate gap in capability, continued neglect of 9-1-1 infrastructure will require greater future investment and does not address system weaknesses that currently exist.

Parks' request for new radios represents a benefit to users within that agency statewide. Currently, Parks personnel are equipped with hand-me-down radios that are either at or approaching end-of-life. While the Commission has historically resisted the purchase of operational communications equipment, as this request calls for, there is a legitimate need to replace equipment in this situation. This proposal will not necessarily improve interoperability, other than by providing more reliable equipment.

### **Summary**

All of the projects seeking SHSP funding have merit and would improve communications capability and resiliency within Nevada. These projects will provide increased safety to the public and to our responders. Each of the proposed projects are essential, and should be completed as soon as practical.