



Note from the Director

By: Ron Hewitt, OEC Director

It was wonderful seeing many of you in December at the Joint SAFECOM – National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) meeting in Norman, Oklahoma. The level of participation was remarkable and discussions that arose from the meeting helped immensely in gauging what the emergency communications ecosystem means to you from a technology, governance, coordination, and work product standpoint. We are breaking new ground at the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) because of your input, and the feedback you continue to provide us is invaluable. One of the focal points of the joint meeting in December was to determine how SAFECOM and NCSWIC achieve communications interoperability within the four segments of the emergency communications ecosystem. As response agencies increasingly partner with entities outside of the traditional realm of emergency management and utilize new technologies and capabilities, such as Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1), OEC is looking to tailor its support to help you accomplish your mission.

As you know, one of our accomplishments last year was the release of the 2014 National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP). In developing the 2014 NECP, OEC adopted a bottom-up, stakeholder-driven approach where we received feedback from major public safety and emergency communications groups, including members of SAFECOM and NCSWIC. OEC is now beginning to distribute NECP implementation and outreach documents as well as develop and publish web content for the NECP, available at www.DHS.gov/NECP. The NECP will enhance our Technical Assistance (TA) offerings and inform our Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP) workshops. As we begin rolling out the new NECP, OEC will rely on

our stakeholders to assist in the implementation of the NECP’s strategic goals and benchmarks.

Our TA team continues to process requests from states for workshops and trainings, and OEC will be reaching out for your assistance as we develop new TA offerings to support your evolving needs. New offerings for spring 2015 include Radio Operator, Incident Dispatcher and Incident Communications Center Manager TA workshops. In addition, our new National Priority TA Initiative for fiscal year (FY) 2015 revolves around the emergency communications ecosystem. OEC will also continue to provide a variety of resources to support states and territories in updating their SCIPs to account for new technologies.

OEC has also established the Mobile Applications for Public Safety (MAPS) project to inform and promote consistent security, functionality, and performance requirements. The project brings public- and private-sector partners together to help application developers understand the unique operating requirements of public safety, build applications that are both secure and perform well, and ultimately enhance situational awareness. For more information on the MAPS program, please visit www.DHS.gov/MAPS.

OEC is dedicated to working with our stakeholders to ensure that their states’ or organizations’ communications needs are met by providing programs and services that help them adapt to the evolving emergency communications landscape. On behalf of OEC, thank you for all of your hard work. We look forward to collaborating with you as we enter the New Year. ■

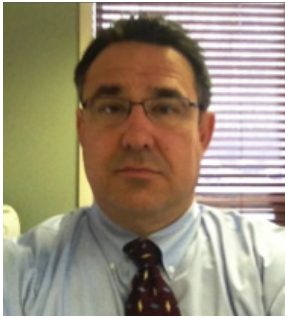
About the Newsletter

The *NCSWIC-SAFECOM Quarterly Newsletter* is designed to be a source of information, news, and updates for SWICs, their staff, and members of the SAFECOM community. We hope that it will be a valuable resource as you lead future Statewide planning efforts and implementation of the NECP.

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A Note from the Former NCSWIC Chair

By: Mark Grubb, Delaware SWIC

It has now been four years since the NCSWIC Charter was developed and agreed upon, and more than five years since we began official inter-state coordination at in-person meetings. These efforts have allowed Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) to collaborate on pertinent interoperability issues and become partners in the massive effort of bringing interoperability to the United States. We have worked on this tirelessly, day by day, county by county, city by city, state by state. So much progress has been made in the past several years that it seems like we have been working on the goal of interoperability for decades. In some respects, I guess, some of you have.

While thinking about this article, I started looking through some old files for inspiration. I found my travel file from my very first SWIC meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, December 2-3, 2009. Reviewing the agenda, I saw some very familiar topics and names. Agenda items like: OEC Update (Chris Essid), SWIC Roundtable Meeting, Breakout Sessions (Adrienne Werner), General Session (Ryan Ormeland), Peer-to-Peer Discussions, Interoperability and State Homeland Security Discussion, State Best Practices, SCIP Implementation Reports (Claudia Wayne), Ways OEC Can Support the SWIC, Grant Guidance Discussions, and, of course, NECP Goal #1! My point is that we have been progressing through the maze of interoperability issues and succeeding for many years. Now, we are consumed with FirstNet and ushering in the era of data and broadband for public safety. Because of these crucial meetings over the past five years, SWICs have been more than prepared to handle the mission critical communications needs of the communities we serve. I want to especially thank our federal partners from OEC who have propelled our success in the interoperability endeavor and have provided invaluable resources to each of us during this period.

On Tuesday, November 18, 2014, I was asked to testify before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security and Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness on "[Interoperable Communications: Assessing Progress since 9/11](#)," especially concerning the critical role of SWICs. I was honored to testify alongside Ron Hewitt, OEC Director, and FirstNet's T.J. Kennedy. I believe the hearing was a great success and we were able to communicate our need for full-time SWICs and funding on record. In addition, during the hearing, Congressman Donald Payne, Jr., the subcommittee's ranking member, introduced the SWIC Enhancement Act. This piece of legislation requires Governors to appoint a full time SWIC to receive Homeland Security Grant Funding. After the hearing, I thanked Congressman Payne for his extraordinary leadership on this issue.

As we kick off this year, I want to thank each of you for your leadership, hard work, and dedication to interoperable communications around this country. We must continue to be the champions of interoperable communications and lead by example.

As was announced during the December meeting, I did not seek re-election as the NCSWIC Chair. It has been my extreme honor to represent the SWICs over the past four years. I am very happy that Michael Varney, Connecticut SWIC and seasoned EC member, was elected to serve as the NCSWIC Chair for the next two years. Michael has vast experience in emergency communications and will serve us extremely well moving forward. Please join me in congratulating Michael on his new position. ■



Note from the New SAFECOM Chair

By: Steve Proctor, Utah Communications Authority (UCA)

I hope that each of you had the best of holiday seasons and the happiest of New Years. Thank you for understanding that I was unable to attend the meetings in Norman, Oklahoma, in December. The adventure I took part in on the USS Missouri had been a year-in-the-works. My wife and I signed up to do service work for 10 days aboard the battleship to help with upkeep and maintenance of the vessel. To be there on the December 7th Pearl Harbor Day Anniversary held extra special meaning.

I am both humbled and honored to have been elected Chair of SAFECOM. It is a privilege to be associated with each one of you. You are all experts in your field who focus on public safety communications and the advancement of services and technology to support our first responder community. While we all come from different disciplines, backgrounds, and perspectives, we have focused on a common goal: to promote better use and application of technologies for the agencies and organizations we support.

A little about me: I have been a public safety communications professional since 1970, holding a variety of positions, from public safety dispatcher to director. I have been a member of SAFECOM since its inception, including the Public Safety Wireless Network effort prior to SAFECOM. I have also served as the President of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International from 1994-1995.

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My current position is Executive Director of the UCA, an independent State agency, formed in 2014 by the Utah Legislature. UCA replaced UCAN, the Utah Communications Agency Networks. Our responsibilities expanded to include the Statewide 800 and VHF radio networks and the supporting sites, towers, and connectivity for over 200 sites. We are also responsible for the State 9-1-1 Committee, 9-1-1 network, NG 9-1-1 implementation, coordination of Utah's FirstNet efforts, and the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator's Office.

I am grateful that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and OEC continue to support and promote SAFECOM activities. The collaborative efforts among federal, state, and local governments, along with the numerous association representatives, create a platform to develop interoperability initiatives and technologies in support of our collective missions. The SAFECOM message, outreach, and the NECP have all been critical parts of getting the public safety communications message a higher level of visibility in the emergency response community. Communications needs and resources are recognized as the most critical part of the emergency response effort.

There is no doubt that the public safety community is in an environment of rapid change. Making sure the people and organizations SAFECOM represents are aware of those impending changes is the most important thing we can do. Providing responders with the resources to help accommodate change is critical to all of our success. I look forward to serving with each of you in 2015. ■

Firefighters Look Forward to New NFPA Standard to Address Portable Radio Failure

By: Jim Goldstein and Gary McCarraher, International Association of Fire Chiefs

In December 2014, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) released the results of a study testing the effects of high temperatures on the performance of handheld portable radios. These tests were conducted after portable radio performance problems were noted in several line-of-duty firefighter fatalities investigations by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

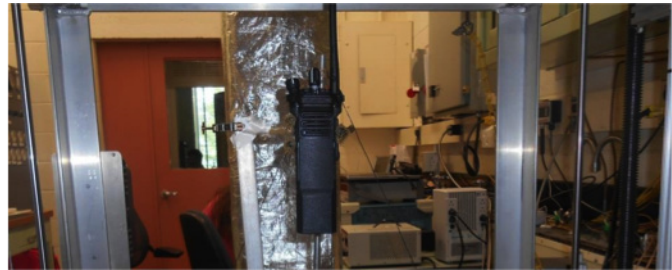


Photo of radio mounted on the flow loop platform. Photo Courtesy of NIST.

In 2012, NIOSH released a [report](#) on the line-of-duty deaths of San Francisco Fire Department Lieutenant Vincent Perez and Firefighter Paramedic Anthony Valerio, both of whom died during a single family residence structure fire on June 2, 2011. The NIOSH report recommended that "first responder radio manufacturers, research/design facilities and standard setting bodies should continue research and efforts to improve radio system capabilities."

The [study](#), completed by NIST in September 2014, tested portable radios from seven manufacturers using four different thermal classes. The testing regime had four thermal classes that included the exposure of portable radios to heightened temperatures over limited time periods. The test for thermal class I (212°F over 25 minutes) saw all radios operating throughout the period with frequency stability. Radios tested under the thermal class II scenarios (320°F for 15 minutes) did not fare as well. Four of the seven radios were not able to transmit throughout the entire test period. Although the three remaining radios transmitted throughout the time period, they experienced more than five ppm deviation from the carrier frequency in the mean maximum-power frequency. Testing under thermal class III and IV were not completed as they both included exposure to higher temperatures.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) performance standard for firefighter portable radios states that "portable radios shall be manufactured for the environment in which they are to be used and shall be of a size and construction that allow their operation with the use of one hand." The NIST study also stated that many portable radio manufacturers list the maximum operating temperatures of 60°C (140°F) for radios used by firefighters. The chasm between the current standards and the operational needs of firefighters is a key focus of the new NFPA 1802 standard on personal portable (hand-held) two-way radio communications devices for use by emergency service personnel in the hazard zone. In a July 2014 interview with Radio Resources Media Group, NFPA 1802 Chair Bob Athanas stated, "for many years there have been issues with portable radios not being robust enough to survive the environments that we work in daily. Now we have a chance, with both user and industry input, to ensure that we can create a new standard for firefighter radios."

The ability to communicate under adverse field conditions remains a critical topic for the health and safety of all public safety. The ever changing environment where firefighters are required to work requires continued research to keep them safe. As communications hardware solutions evolve, it is vital that we ensure they are suitable and reliable for the public safety community. ■

TA Branch Updates

Since the TA Branch's data call last summer, OEC has received 220 TA requests and 23 SCIP workshop requests. To date, OEC has accepted 134 of the TA requests and all requests for SCIP support. OEC has deferred 86 TA requests, but expects to be able to accept additional requests in spring 2015.

The table below reflects the top ten categories of received (left) and accepted (right) FY 2015 requests to date. OEC is still in the planning process for 75 accepted TA requests.

FY2015 TA Requests			
Received		Accepted	
TRG-COMT	16	TRG-COMT	11
TRG-COML	13	TRG-COML	10
TRG-AUXCOMM	12	TRG-AUXCOMM	8
ENG-NG9-1-1 STRATPLAN	11	BB-BRBNLTE	7
TRG-IDT	11	ENG-NG9-1-1 STRATPLAN	6
BB-BRBNLTE	10	OP-COMMEX	5
OP-COMMEX	8	OP-PSCC INTEROP	5
OP-PSCC INTEROP	6	ENG-SYS	4
TRG-RADO	6	TRBL-SPCL	4
TRG-INCM	5	BB-BRBNPLAN	3

Since July 2014, OEC has completed 61 TA engagements and has 108 open from all fiscal years. Some of the more visible TA engagements are recently completed or currently underway, including:

- The joint Federal and State Communications Unit Leader (COML) training in Missouri
- Providing Land Mobile Radio (LMR) communications support to Pennsylvania during the seven week sniper manhunt
- Planning for an assessment of Emergency Management Assistance Compacts and interstate deployment of Communications Unit (COMU) personnel in the southeast

Each month, there are approximately 20 personnel across the country conducting workshops, providing training, and planning and executing communications exercises.

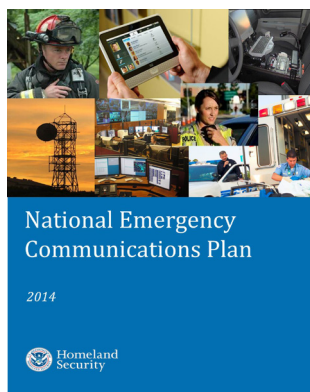
OEC is in the process of developing a pilot for the Radio Operator workshop (TRG-RADO) and other new COMU trainings for release in spring 2015.

Since last summer, OEC has also begun implementing the State-sponsored, OEC-recognized COMU Instructor program. The pilot program was launched in several states with 139 students successfully completing Communications Unit Technician or Auxiliary Communications training taught by SWIC-recommended instructors. More information about the COMU Instructor program, discussed on pages 122-126 of the OEC TA/SCIP catalog, version 4.1, will be available in the coming months.

During FY 2014, OEC assisted with the facilitation of Broadband Pre-Consultation workshops, which were very successful and well received, to help stakeholders prepare for FirstNet State Consultations. Moving forward, OEC expects to emphasize NG 9-1-1 (including text-to-9-1-1) and dispatch operations within the citizen-to-government segment of the emergency communications ecosystem. For the government-to-government segment of the ecosystem, OEC anticipates offering more multi-jurisdictional Executive Table Top exercises to emphasize involvement of elected or appointed officials in emergency communications. Additionally, OEC is updating the broadband offerings to highlight long-term evolution technology and the use of digital communications during real-world events and incidents. Descriptions of the new offerings will be available in the next revision of the TA/SCIP Catalog.

OEC is now reviewing the deferred FY 2015 requests and will accept a number of them for execution. If SWICs want to change or modify accepted TA requests that we have not yet scoped, please contact your OEC Coordinator or the TA Branch (oec@hq.dhs.gov). ■

2014 NECP Sets Path for 21st Century Public Safety Communications



On November 12, 2014, DHS released the first updated NECP since its original publication in 2008. Roberta Stempfley, DHS Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Cybersecurity and Communications within the National Protection and Programs Directorate, announced the release of the 2014 NECP on the official DHS [blog](#).

Within the blog, DAS Stempfley notes, "The NECP is the Nation's overarching strategic plan for enhancing emergency communications capabilities and interoperability nationwide. The updated NECP addresses the increasingly complex communications landscape that the public safety community uses to keep America safe and secure. The plan provides a roadmap for improving emergency communications for traditional emergency responder disciplines such as law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services, while recognizing the importance of engaging non-traditional disciplines including public health, public works and transportation agencies."

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The 2014 NECP focuses on three priorities over the next several years: (1) maintain and improve emergency responders' current LMR systems; (2) ensure emergency responders and government officials plan and prepare for the adoption, migration, and use of broadband technologies, including the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN); and (3) enhance coordination among stakeholders, specifically within processes and planning activities across the emergency response community.

As we have seen from responses to various emergencies and incidents, maintaining interoperable emergency communications is critical to saving lives. In the case of the Boston Marathon bombings, emergency response efforts, which spanned federal, state, local, public works, and private industries, relied on traditional public safety radios as well as social media, emergency alert systems, and commercial wireline and wireless networks. The 2014 NECP considers many of today's technologies did not exist in 2008. The update incorporates traditional and non-traditional communications methods, including methods that allow first responders and public safety officials to better-share information and enhance situational awareness.

While technology has changed and will continue to evolve, one thing remains constant: the public safety community requires the ability to effectively communicate in any situation. DHS remains committed to working with our stakeholders as we implement the 2014 NECP to forge a path ahead for the next generation of emergency communications.

To view or download an electronic copy of the 2014 NECP, a summary slick sheet, or a brochure, please visit the [NECP website](#). For NECP inquiries, please e-mail Eric Runnels, OEC's National Planning Chief at OECNECP@hq.dhs.gov. ■

Canada-United States Communications Interoperability Working Group Update



Ensuring security and safety along the northern border is a shared challenge for both Canada and the United States. It requires continual collaboration and coordination in order to provide real-time, effective, and interoperable emergency communications. To be successful, this mission-critical effort requires that first responders and emergency management personnel from both nations have the ability to exchange voice and data communications across disciplines and jurisdictions on a daily basis and in response to major disasters and events. To that end, representatives from OEC participated in the Canada-United States Bi-National Cross-Border Interoperability Workshop in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, on October 21-22, 2014. The focus of the workshop was to address gaps in key voice and data interoperability issues facing the public-safety sector. OEC also presented on the 2014 NECP at the request of the Public Safety Canada. ■

Joint NCSWIC/SAFECOM Meeting Highlights

December 2-4, 2014

NCSWIC and SAFECOM members met in Norman, Oklahoma, to discuss critical and emerging public safety issues, the implementation of the 2014 NECP, and the new emergency communications ecosystem. Meeting highlights included:

- A moment of silence for Gregg Riddle and Bill McCammon, two members of the public safety community who passed away in 2014
- A panel session featuring local public safety officials who discussed their experiences responding to the 2013 Moore, Oklahoma, tornado
- Four sessions highlighting each segment of the emergency communications ecosystem:
 - Citizen→Government: Laurie Flaherty, Department of Transportation, and Roberto Mussenden, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), discussed NG 9-1-1
 - Government→Government: Antwane Johnson, FEMA, discussed the Integrated Public Alerts & Warnings System
 - Citizen→Citizen: Heather Kowalski, OEC, discussed Priority Telecommunications Services
 - Government→Citizen: Roberto Mussenden, FCC, provided an update on the FCC Interoperability Rule
- Working sessions for SAFECOM's four committees (Technology Policy, Education and Outreach, Governance, and Funding and Sustainment) that focused on the status of current work products and prioritization of future products and initiatives
- Working sessions for NCSWIC that focused on the development of the Introduction to NCSWIC presentation and discussions on the revised governance guide
- An impromptu panel session of SWICs who shared their experiences with the FirstNet consultation process
- Election of the SAFECOM Chair, Steve Proctor; SAFECOM Vice Chairs, Doug Aiken and Mark Grubb; and NCSWIC Chair, Michael Varney

Please contact [Michael Varney](#), the NCSWIC Chair, for more information on NCSWIC activities, and [Steve Proctor](#), the SAFECOM Chair, for more information on SAFECOM activities. ■

SAFECOM and NSWIC Website Updates

SAFECOM is proud to announce the launch of its new [website](#) that contains information about SAFECOM's history and membership as well as useful resources for SAFECOM members, other public safety stakeholders, and the public. The website, a product of months of hard work, is hosted within the main DHS website. SAFECOM members provided valuable feedback to identify and prioritize the documents that are hosted on the site, and the Education and Outreach Committee provided a review of the website content. OEC will begin preparations to build a similar website for NCSWIC soon.. ■

2015 SAFECOM Committee Schedule

FY2015 TA Requests	
Committee	Meeting Dates
Education and Outreach	Last Wednesday of every month at 2pm EST
Governance	Second Wednesday of every month at 2pm EST
Technology Policy	Second Thursday of every month at 3pm EST
Funding and Sustainment	Third Wednesday of every month at 4pm EST

SCIP Program: How can we help you succeed?

The emergency communications community has seen, firsthand, how advancements in technology are changing the way we operate and plan for the future. For OEC, that has included looking at how it can enhance its services and resources available to stakeholders.

From 2013-2014, OEC provided 47 SCIP Revision Workshops supporting states and territories in updating their plans and to account for emerging technologies. These workshops have been a success in not only updating SCIPs, but by also providing OEC with more insights on stakeholder needs. As the needs of the emergency communications community have changed, so have the offerings and resources that the SCIP Program will provide in 2015.

First, OEC is building on momentum generated through the previous SCIP Revision workshops by reaching out to the remaining states and territories to update their plans. Second, OEC is offering SCIP Update workshops tailored to each state's or territories' needs. For example, the workshops may include updating SCIP goals to reflect the latest planning efforts in the state or territory involving broadband, text-to-9-1-1, and other emerging technologies. OEC also plans to use the workshops to identify the alignment between the SCIPs and the 2014 NECP, and to hear about each state's or territories' individual experiences in navigating the ever-changing ecosystem. Third, OEC is providing customer-focused support to SWICs to help address obstacles they may be facing accomplishing SCIP goals and initiatives. This SCIP execution support will involve one-on-one support provided by a member of the SCIP Team to ensure each state or territory has the resources needed to continue supporting public safety interoperable communications capabilities.

OEC is also providing innovative tools to support the planning process. The eSCIP Program provides a tracking capability for SWICs to monitor their progress made on goals developed during the collaborative workshop discussions. Another tracking method developed by OEC that will be compiled and disseminated soon is the SCIP Annual Snapshot. Formerly the Annual Progress Report, this streamlined document provides information about trends, successes, and obstacles from the past calendar year. ■



Southwest Border Communications Working Group Update

The Southwest Border Communications Working Group (SWBCWG) serves as a forum for federal, state, local, and tribal agencies in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. The SWBCWG shares information on common issues, collaborates on existing and planned activities, and facilitates federal involvement in multi-agency projects within the southwest border region.

The last quarterly meeting was held on September 24, 2014, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The meeting was attended by emergency communications practitioners from across all levels of government. It focused on: (1) building and expanding partnerships among federal, state, local, and tribal emergency communications practitioners in the southwest border region, (2) sharing border communications best practices and lessons learned, (3) identifying opportunities for collaboration on regional projects, and (4) exchanging information on key regulatory issues that impact emergency communications along the international border. Meeting briefings included:

- Long-Term Evolution Early Builders activities
- New Mexico Broadband Technology Opportunities Program focused pilot and its resulting federal partnerships with the U.S. Department of the Interior and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- The Arizona FirstNet program's outreach and data collection efforts for the NPSBN

- The DHS Science and Technology First Responders Group, which provides technological solutions and support to the operational needs of first responders
- The SAFECOM program and the 2014 NECP
- Emergency communications challenges facing the New Mexico Department of Health in the U.S.-Mexico border region

In addition, the SWBCWG continued its monthly webinar series on November 18, 2014, by hosting a presentation on LMR Planning. The webinar included candid discussions on the importance of LMR to the public safety communications community and provided case studies showing how LMR can provide seamless communications and interoperability, if used to its full potential.

The next SWBCWG in-person meeting will be hosted by the CBP Office of Field Operations, 9400 Viscount Blvd, El Paso, Texas 79925, on January 28-29, 2015. Following the meeting on January 28, a border tour will be offered to attendees on January 29 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Agenda topics for the meeting include: (1) the Cross-Border Security Communications Network draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), (2) Bureau of Indian Affairs briefing, (3) Texas border communications overview, (4) CBP Office of Field Operations briefing, and (5) New Mexico border communication issues.

For more information on the SWBCWG, contact Robin Beatty at 703-235-4024 or Robin.Beatty@hq.dhs.gov. ■

NPSTC Welcomes the NCSWIC as a Full Voting Member

At the November 2014 meeting of the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC), the Governing Board was pleased to welcome NCSWIC as a full voting member to the Board of now 16 member organizations. This is the first addition of a new member to the Governing Board since the National Sheriffs' Association became a voting member in 2007. NPSTC is a federation of organizations whose mission is to improve public safety communications and interoperability through collaborative leadership. "This new relationship will enhance the missions of both organizations," said Ralph Haller, NPSTC's Chair.

NPSTC has three committees that focus on issues of interoperability, spectrum management, and technology and broadband. NPSTC's committees and associated working groups have multiple, ongoing efforts to improve interoperability. The Radio Interoperability Best Practices Working Group is a relatively new effort. Several major incidents in the U.S., including the death of 19 wild land firefighters in Arizona and the Washington D.C. Navy Yard shooting, have focused attention on the need for best practices involving radio programming, interoperability, and training. The Phoenix Fire Department requested that NPSTC develop a set of best practices for radio interoperability to include programming guidelines, verification, testing, and training. Mark Schroeder, City of Phoenix, is Chair of this working group. The working group has developed 12 best-practice statements, using a standard template to record each, that are aligned with the lanes of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum. The template records the best practice statement, a statement of importance, an incident use case, supporting elements, and how it relates to the continuum regarding SOPs, Governance, Technology, Training/Exercise, and Usage.

With the FCC release of the Report and Order on 700 MHz, the Common Channel Naming Working Group was reconvened to revise APCO/NPSTC ANS 1.104.1-2010: Standard Channel Nomenclature for Public Safety Interoperability Channels. Revisions will follow the American National Standards Institute/APCO process for ANS standard development and revisions.

NPSTC's Border Working Group and the Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group Cross-Border Communications Working Group presented a white paper at the October Canada-U.S. Bi-National Cross-Border Interoperability Workshop, which provides a history of

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cross-border communications and consolidates existing cross-border documents and recommendations. The FCC and Industry Canada announced a joint agreement at the workshop that allows the use of public safety portable radios across the borders. Both entities continue to work on a streamlined process to allow infrastructure to be installed across the border from the home agency.

NPSTC is also pleased to announce an important technical tool that will enhance interoperability and save lives. In late August 2014, NPSTC's Radio Programming Compatibility Requirements Working Group released Version 3 of the Programming and Management (PAM) Tool. Radio programming is very complex with many data fields that assign frequencies, IDs, features, and options. The PAM Tool was developed by all of the major manufacturers working with public safety to develop a useable solution to assist interoperability in an operational environment when outside agencies come to assist on a scene.

The PAM Tool uses an Excel spreadsheet to capture specific Project 25 (P25) radio programming data fields. Each P25 radio vendor has its own proprietary programming software and none of the software packages were compatible. The technician would have to know the specifics of each software system and understand that the same data element (e.g., frequency) might have a different label in each vendor's program. The complexity in navigating pages of software programming could easily cause the introduction of errors and incorrect settings.

The Radio Programming Compatibility Requirements Working Group held a training seminar for the State of Florida in October to demonstrate the capabilities of the PAM Tool. As the PAM Tool is generating great interest in the public safety communications community, the Radio Programming Compatibility Requirements Working Group plans to produce a video or web-based seminar to increase training for the tool.

NPSTC has a huge focus on the development of broadband requirements and the many technical and practical questions that will be asked as the NBPSN is developed. NPSTC encourages your participation in the process. Please visit <http://www.npstc.org> to learn more and volunteer for each of these working groups. ■

Meet the Stakeholders



Chris Guilbeaux
Louisiana SWIC

Chris served in the Louisiana National Guard for a total of 23 years, retiring as the Senior Operations Sergeant for the newly-formed 62nd Civil Support Team, Weapons of Mass Destruction, in October 2002.

Following his tenure with the National Guard, Chris worked for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital's Bioterrorism Program for 17 months, building teams and training personnel to respond to potential Bioterrorism incidents. In November 2003, Chris was appointed by the newly-elected Sheriff of St. Martin Parish as the Deputy Chief of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. He also served as the 9-1-1 Director for St. Martin Parish, including serving as the Chief of Operations for the St. Martin Parish

Sheriff's office. In this role, Chris provided leadership and guidance for deputies in various offices including Patrol, Detectives, Narcotics, Juvenile, and Court Room Security.

In July 2008, Chris was chosen to serve as the Operations Chief for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness where he led the branches of Operations, Planning, and Logistics to insure that Louisiana was in a constant state of readiness. Their readiness was put to the test a short month later in August 2008 with Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. In July 2013, Chris was named to his current position as the Deputy Director of the Preparedness, Response, and Interoperability Division, and was appointed as the Chairman of the Louisiana Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee. Following organizational changes, Chris was appointed as the SWIC for Louisiana in October 2014. ■

Chris can be reached at Christopher.Guilbeaux@la.gov.



Patrick Irwin

National Association of Counties (NACo)

Pat Irwin was appointed as the SAFECOM Executive Committee's alternate representative to NACo in October 2014, after recently completing his term as the 2014 President of NACo. In addition to this role, Pat serves as a Pershing County Commissioner. He is also an active Advanced Emergency Medical Technician ambulance attendant, a firefighter with the Lovelock Volunteer Fire Department, and the regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) representative for five counties in the State of Nevada. As the past Nevada EMS Manager, he helped complete the migration project for every ambulance in Nevada from the old ultra-high frequency broadband signal to the 800 MHz Nevada Shared Radio System six months prior to the mandated deadline. Prior to his current positions, Pat retired from AT&T after 32 years of designing, installing, and maintaining close to 15 sites in over ten different counties in Nevada.

Pat is passionate about the implementation of FirstNet and believes that the whole public safety team in Nevada will be able to work more efficiently with increased communication channels. He feels that the new network will give data and voice a priority service for command situations, even for those towns, cities, and counties that cannot afford to take advantage of all the possibilities FirstNet has to offer. Pat agrees that "it is a win-win for Nevada and I look forward to giving Nevada everything I know to make it successful. SAFECOM will allow me to keep Nevada in the loop and I am proud to be part of this great team at a national level."

Pat has likened his love of hot-air ballooning to public safety. As Pat notes, "Public safety is like flying a balloon. You take off with a plan, goals, and expectations; and once in the air, with all the variables encountered during your flight, you have to be willing to adjust your plan and goals based on the most current conditions and your experience and knowledge to make the best decision possible to keep yourself and the passengers safe at all times. It is a dance, and I love that dance." He continued on to say, "Communications should and will be a constant during an emergency event, instead of a variable. FirstNet is that first step in making it happen." ■

Pat can be reached at pirwin@health.nv.gov.

OEC HQ Spotlights



Kenzie Capece

Program Analyst, State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Partnerships
OEC Partnerships Branch

Kenzie Capece comes to OEC Partnerships Branch after having supported the Grants Team in OEC's Policy and Planning Branch since 2012 as a government consultant. In her new capacity as a Program Analyst in OEC's Partnerships Branch, she will lead the development of the Governance Guide, working closely with SAFECOM and NCSWIC members in the coming months.

Kenzie has additional experience working as an Infrastructure Protection Analyst for DHS and the Department of Health and Human Services. Kenzie regularly engaged stakeholders from each of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors on a wide variety of issues, including risk management, data collection and performance measurement, cybersecurity risk and capabilities, and national-level planning.

Upon arrival in Washington, DC, in 2008, Kenzie worked for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's National Security and Emergency Preparedness Division, published the Consummation of U.S.-India Space Cooperation in the India Abroad newspaper, and worked on International Trade and Arms regulations. She holds a degree in Journalism, Political Science, and Law from the University of Pittsburgh. ■

Kenzie can be reached at Kenzie.Capece@hq.dhs.gov.

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Miriam Montgomery

Program Analyst, State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Partnerships
OEC Partnerships Branch

Before beginning her current position as a Program Analyst in OEC's Partnerships Branch, Miriam was a government consultant specializing in Homeland Security grants management, emergency preparedness and counterterrorism policy, and legislative and congressional affairs. In this capacity, Miriam worked closely with various components within DHS such as OEC's Policy and Planning Branch, FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate, and FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate.

A Virginia native, Miriam graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a double major in Political Science and Homeland Security/Emergency Preparedness. Miriam also obtained a Master's in Public Policy from George Mason University with an emphasis on National Security and Public Policy. ■

Miriam can be reached at Miriam.Montgomery@hq.dhs.gov.

OEC Calendar

FEBRUARY

- 4** ECPC FirstNet Consultation Group Meeting
- 5** SAFECOM EC Conference Call
- 12** Governance Guide Conference Working Group Call
- 17** PSAC Webinar
- 26** Governance Guide Conference Working Group Call
- 26** ECPC Steering Committee Meeting

Workshops:

TA: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Nevada, Oklahoma, Washington, Wisconsin

MARCH

- 12** Governance Guide Conference Working Group Call
- 25** NCSWIC EC In-Person Meeting, Portland, Oregon
- 26** SAFECOM EC In-Person Meeting, Portland, Oregon
- 26** Governance Guide Conference Working Group Call

Workshops:

TA: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, Wisconsin

APRIL

- 9** Governance Guide Conference Working Group Call
- 23** Governance Guide Conference Working Group Call

Workshops:

TA: Arizona, Kentucky, Montana, North Carolina, Texas

CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER

If you would like to contribute articles for an upcoming NCSWIC-SAFECOM Joint Quarterly Newsletter, please contact either NCSWICGovernance@hq.dhs.gov or SAFECOMGovernance@hq.dhs.gov.