We have lots of exciting news to share for August!

People

Welcome to the newest and tiniest member of the Emergency Communication Networks (ECN) team! And congratulations to Deputy Director Dan Craigie and his wife Sara on the birth of Adela Max. Adela made her entry into the world on Wednesday, August 7, at 5:32 p.m. She was 7 pounds 7 ounces, and 19 ¼ inches long. Everyone is happy and healthy after a 20-hour labor! Dan will be off enjoying new parenthood until the middle of September.

The ECN staff is thrilled to have our leader back following an extended medical leave. Assistant Commissioner Bob Hawkins returned to the office on August 1 after suffering a heart attack and having quintuple bypass on May 3. He was released with a glowing report from his cardiologist. He will be back at the helm of the Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) for the meeting later this month. Thanks to Vice Chair Jeff Jelinski for pinch-hitting during the commissioner’s absence.

We will be bidding a fond farewell to interns Lindsey and Brandon the second week of August. It has been a pleasure having them on the ECN team this summer. They have been a great asset, contributing toward a variety of initiatives. We wish them the best as they continue their education.

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Cont. from Director Notes

National Night Out

Six ECN staff joined Governor Walz and several other divisions of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) on August 6 to participate in National Night Out at Seventh Place Plaza in downtown St. Paul. Staff wandered the plaza in groups of two, visiting with the public. We provided education using an ECN facts trivia game, asking people questions, and handing out rubber “Call if You Can; Text if You Can’t” bracelets as prizes for correct answers.

Minnesota State Fair

Stop and see us in the Education Building at the Minnesota State Fair. We will be there from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 25, sharing information about our role within DPS. We will have some new giveaway items as well.

GIS Project

At last! The long awaited Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) grant earmarked to support our Geographic Information Systems (GIS) project, a key initiative in our 2019-2021 Strategic Plan! The award was announced on Friday, August 9. Stay tuned for upcoming details from our own Dustin Leslie! Find the official announcement here.

Our New Space

Great progress continues on the ECN space transformation on the 17th floor of the Town Square Tower. Our address will remain the same, with the exception of the suite number changing from 137 to 1725.

The movers come on Saturday, August 31. Kudos to ECN staff for finding time in their already busy schedules to clean, purge and pack both their own areas and the common areas in an effort to make the move as streamlined as possible.
**GIS**

ECN and the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) staff have met with the Northeast, Southwest, South Central, Central, Southeast and Northwest regions to discuss NG9-1-1 Project. These meetings were for GIS and Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) staff. A Metro-region meeting is being scheduled at this time.

The edge matching of boundaries and road center lines continues to make progress. This is a critical step in the development of seamless statewide data layers that will be used in the Emergency Call Routing Function (ECRF) and Location Validation Function (LVF). The NG9-1-1 combined polygon standard (PSAP, provisioning/maintenance, and emergency services zone (ESZ)) is close to becoming a final draft. Some counties are behind in providing the required data at each of the prior phases: Community Name, Street Name, Address and Geospatial Validation.

While this project is more of a marathon than a sprint, it’s still important we stay on task as much as possible. Please engage your PSAP and GIS managers to ensure they are submitting the required data on time. You can find the status map for every county on ECN’s website under “911 Program” and “GIS Information” along with the most recent version of the GIS newsletter. The successful completion of this first phase (data collection and remediation) is critical for NG9-1-1 implementation.

Norm Anderson (651-201-2483 or 651-201-7559) is the GIS Project Manager for ECN and MnGeo. Akiko Nakamura (651-201-7558) from our office is also working on the project, so please feel free to reach out to either one of them with questions related to the GIS project.

**Text-to-9-1-1**

There were no new Text-to-9-1-1 implementations in July. We are currently working on getting Minnesota State Patrol (MSP) started with Text-to-9-1-1 services. Texts for MSP in the metro are currently handled by the Airport PSAP. Once MSP is ready to go live, they will take over the metro highways and interstates from the airport. Volume-wise, texts still account for less than 1 percent of all 9-1-1 calls.

**Ingress Network**

Progress continues with the planned Ingress request for proposal (RFP). We are in the final stages of review with admin, and expect to release the RFP for potential bidders in the next 30 days. This will put Minnesota in position to update inbound E9-1-1 call technology for all. The Ingress RFP is a statewide upgrade solution; every county will benefit! If you have any questions, or would like to discuss how this may affect your county, please contact Leslie Sticht (651-201-7550).

**Spare Motorola XTS Radio Chargers**

ECN possesses many Motorola NTN8831A single-unit battery chargers to give away to deserving entities. The chargers work with Motorola XTS radios and are virtually new. They are not smart chargers capable of conditioning IMPRES batteries, but they do switch from rapid charge to a trickle charge when full and have a red/green indicator. Please let Jim Stromberg (651-201-7557) or your regional interoperability coordinator know if your agency could benefit from a few of these.

**Inter-Zone Patching**

The Land Mobile Radio Committee voted at its July meeting for the SECB to send Motorola a letter asking that Motorola consider changes to the Astro platform so that Inter-zone patching behaves the same way as intra-zone patching. The letter has been drafted and will be presented to the SECB at a future meeting.

Meanwhile, the standards workgroup will be reviewing the law enforcement pursuit standard to consider operational changes in light of the discovery that inter-zone patching does behave differently from intra-zone patches.

**ARMER Lifecycle Sustainment**

DPS has awarded a contract to Tusa Consulting to assist us in navigating the next phases of our contract negotiations for Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) lifecycle sustainment. Our first in-person meetings with Tusa will take place this month. We are excited and optimistic about the value Tusa will bring to our due diligence toward this large investment.
The workgroups continue to evaluate the Minnesota Launch Requirements. Televate has joined in on the process and shares historical knowledge of the original document put together in 2015, which has been very helpful.

Speaking of Televate, we are outlining tasks and plans now for the duration of the contract. Some of the projects being considered include: Feasibility study for LTE to land-mobile-radio (LMR) integration, data application analysis, adding Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and 9-1-1 into the system, and how to use the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) to support wireless broadband. All of these plans will take into consideration the need for interoperability, creating wireless broadband standards or guidelines, and making recommendations on the governance of a national initiative such as FirstNet.

Upcoming Events

Blandin on Broadband: October 8-10, 2019 at Grand View Lodge in Nisswa, MN

Blandin Foundation supports the work being done at the Office of Broadband Development at the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). It is a good place to see the progress of wireless broadband for all Minnesotans.

Broadband Technology Survey

In the coming weeks, ECN will release a survey to gather information about the various public safety data technologies — including applications, software and information sharing — that you currently use or would like to use in the future. The focus of the survey will be on public safety’s use of these technologies over wireless broadband networks, which will inform the development of recommendations for how best to use interoperable data and how to transition these technologies for subscribers to FirstNet.

In gathering and analyzing this information, our goal is to identify data technologies unique to each public safety discipline, along with those technologies common across multiple disciplines. We will additionally assess and provide recommendations and strategies to advance data interoperability and information sharing, identifying common applications that should be available on all broadband devices to promote statewide data interoperability and communications.

Your participation in the survey will be an extremely important contribution to the development of the statewide broadband data communication strategic plan and roadmap. Our intention is to integrate the survey into the HSIN site for secure information sharing, so please contact Melinda Miller (651-201-7554) or Jim Stromberg (651-201-7557) for access to the HSIN site if you do not have it already. Thank you in advance for your interest and support of the public safety broadband communications survey and program.

IPAWS

If you are not testing now, how do you know you will be able to send a message when the need arises? Testing your system is important because it maintains your status as the “alerting authority,” gives you practice on how to use your software, and builds your confidence in putting out an alert when needed to inform the public you serve.

Congratulations to Lake and Carver Counties for starting their testing program this month.
**Proficiency Demonstrations**

Beginning fiscal year 2020 (October 2019), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will track collaborative operating group (COG) proficiency demonstrations. FEMA plans to report two consecutive misses to the state IPAWS reviewing authority (for Minnesota, John Dooley at ECN).

The monthly proficiency demonstration is in the test environment with the Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC) Lab, so it is not going public. Take this opportunity to do those tasks that you normally don’t do when sending out your weekly tests, like:

- Updating and/or canceling a message.
- Drawing polygons that extend outside your jurisdictional boundary. Did you get an error?
- Polygons: Circles vs. Squares – do you get any error messages?
- Do your procedures flow properly?

The next version of the Best Practices Guidance will have a checklist of suggested items to train on.

**Administrative**

Please let us know if any of the points of contact on your memorandum of agreement (MOA) have changed recently so that we can update the ECN on our data and keep the FEMA database up to date. You can contact John Dooley (651-201-7099) with your updates.

MOAs and digital certificates are good for three years. A COG can still be in an active status while FEMA is in the process of updating their MOA, but:

- The “live environment” digital certificate absolutely stops working on its expiration date.
- The “test environment” digital certificate does not; it can still function because the test environment expiration date is not checked.

Because many COGs were initially approved in 2016 and 2017, FEMA will replace expiring digital certs to maintain your COGs operational status. The IPAWS MOAs officially has a three year lifespan and with the revised MOA and streamlined approval process FEMA will more actively pursue MOA renewals.

**IPAWS Training**

If you would like to have a training session conducted in your jurisdiction, we would be glad to facilitate one for you. Contact John Dooley (651-201-7099) to arrange one.

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**Interoperability**

**State Conventional Interoperability Plan**

The workgroup that formed to update the state’s conventional interoperability plan has drafted a very strong and viable plan. They have shared the draft plan with each regional advisory committee chair and asked that each region give the plan a vetting. Responses are due to ECN by October 1 with an eye toward bringing the plan to the Interoperability Committee in November.

**Communications Unit Personnel**

Minnesota has recognized Communications Unit personnel since 2009. Originally we started with just Communications Unit Leaders (COMLs) and shortly afterward added Communications Unit Technicians (COMTs). Since November 2017, Minnesota has also recognized Incident Communication Center Managers (INCMs), Incident Tactical Dispatchers (INTDs), Radio Operators (RADOs), and Auxiliary Emergency Communication Specialists (AECSs). Although Minnesota has trained and recognized many more personnel, today, Minnesota’s public safety community has access to the following quantities of active, state-recognized Communications Unit personnel:

- COMLs: 62
- COMTs: 19
- INTDs: 4
- AECSs: 7

A spreadsheet of all COMU trained personnel, whether state-recognized or not, can be found on the ECN HSIN site. The COMU Standard Operating Guidelines can be found on the Communications Unit webpage.
Grants

Grants were discussed at the last Regional Leadership Meeting in St. Cloud. The aim of this meeting was to brainstorm ways in which locals could get more involved with grants planning. The main takeaways from the meeting were for the grants workgroup to have more regular meetings and to host an annual in-person meeting that would include grants refresher training for those in the grants workgroup. Other ideas included regions working together, creating a matrix on what is allowable for grants spending, and creating roadmaps for what is needed in the regions. ECN is currently working on creating follow-up meetings with the grants workgroup to discuss.

AHA/CPR Legislation Status

T-CPR Important Reminder!

ECN is actively coordinating efforts between primary and secondary PSAPs for compliance with the T-CPR bill. In addition, we are researching available training options in order to implement the best program for Minnesota. At this time, we strongly encourage that individual PSAPs or regions refrain from engaging in any contracts for training or for transferring cardiac arrest calls as required with the new T-CPR legislation.

Not only is ECN actively engaged in reviewing available training, but we are also working with Minnesota’s secondary PSAPs to accommodate transfers from primary PSAPs who elect to transfer calls instead of training to perform T-CPR. Finally, the legislature appropriated funding to assist PSAPs in meeting the requirements of this new law. ECN is working to incorporate funding into our grants process to assist PSAPs in offsetting compliance costs.

It is essential for the 27 PSAPs who are neither performing T-CPR today nor transferring cardiac arrest calls to another PSAP for pre-arrival instructions to let us know as soon as possible whether they will train to perform T-CPR or train to recognize and transfer cardiac arrest calls. ECN needs this information to be able to coordinate support from our secondary PSAPs most appropriately.

More information regarding training will be coming in the near future. Once again, our recommendation for PSAPs not already transferring or performing CPR pre-arrival instructions is to be in direct communication with Cathy Anderson and to hold off on contracting with a training company to become certified in T-CPR or on contracting with another entity to transfer and perform T-CPR on your behalf at this time.

If you have questions, please reach out to Cathy Anderson (651-201-7548).

Upcoming Events

Thank you to all that attended the July Regional Leadership Meeting, and thank you to those who participated in the discussion and shared information about grants management. If you have any follow-up questions or comments, please reach out to Dustin Leslie (651-201-7552) at ECN.

The next Regional Leadership meeting will be held on Monday, October 28, 2019, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. in St. Cloud.

Updates from the Interns

One of the projects we did this summer was assisting John Dooley in rewriting the IPAWS Best Practices Guide. This consisted of researching some new methods, comparing the current guide to other states’ guides, adding new graphics and information, and removing irrelevant content. Throughout this process, we did some heavy editing and went through at least six drafts of the new guide. Now that the guide has been sent to a workgroup and is in the final stages of review, we are putting together presentations to use for a pilot training at the beginning of August. By working on this project this summer, we gained skills in research, editing, and public speaking.