

# MONTHLY UPDATE



## DIRECT FROM DANA



Assistant Commissioner (AC) Bob Hawkins has left the Department of Public Safety (DPS), accepting a position with the Minnesota Board of Police Officer Standards and Training (POST). We will miss his strong leadership and unwavering support of our many initiatives within the Emergency Communication Networks (ECN). At the same time, we are extremely grateful that Minnesota State Fire Marshal Bruce West will become AC Hawkins' successor. AC West accepted the offer from Commissioner Harrington to take the ECN helm. He will also serve as Commissioner Harrington's designee as Statewide Emergency Communication Board (SECB) chair.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) has been extended for Chris Pedersen through the first week in January and for Cathy Anderson through the end of 2019. We wish them the best with their continued recoveries and look forward to welcoming them back in the new year. Cathy was back in the office a few days prior to having some complications that require further healing.

Dustin Leslie has left ECN as our 9-1-1 analyst to pursue a new and exciting career option. While we will miss him, we wish him the very best and will be posting a position for a grant specialist as soon as we fill our currently-open financial support coordinator position.

Anyone interested in serving as a committee chair for any of the eight SECB committees, please submit your committee interest and a brief bio for AC West and Commissioner Harrington's appointment consideration. Submissions are due to [Dana Wahlberg](#) (651-201-7546) by Dec. 20.

As 2019 comes to a close, the team at ECN wishes you a safe and happy holiday season. We look forward to continuing to work with all of our public safety partners across the state to advance our shared initiatives in the year ahead.

December 2019

Stay connected  
with the  
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and the  
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Communications  
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## 9-1-1 NEWS

### GIS

ECN and Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) staff are preparing several informational documents for the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) Geographic Information Systems (GIS) project. The validation overview document has been completed and is available upon request. It clarifies the phases of the data validation process by providing a comprehensive list of the data checks. The project road map is under development and will include the necessary steps for the state to deliver the required statewide GIS data layers to support next generation core services for geospatial call routing. This document will be distributed to PSAP and GIS stakeholders upon completion.

GIS Day was Nov. 13. Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) hosted an expert panel discussion on the role that GIS has in public safety. The panel was made up of private, municipal and state agencies. The presentations included subjects such as the implementation of NG9-1-1, operational deployment, monitoring crash data and strategic planning.

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 status map will be updated soon to more accurately reflect the current status of the project. This may include archiving some layers and adding new layers with more detail for upcoming validations.

[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.

## ARMER

### ARMER Lifecycle Sustainment

Tusa Consulting continues to assist the state in negotiating an Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) system upgrade contract, which will take effect in 2021. They have set a March 2020 deadline to have core contract elements identified. They desire to make contact with all system owners and partners through conference calls. In February and March, they will meet with each of each of Emergency Communications/Services Boards to discuss:

- Tasks Tusa has been contracted to perform, their process, their timeline and the deliverables
- Tusa's analysis of the current service and upgrade agreements
- Tusa's analysis of subsystem owner service and upgrade agreements
- Exploration of cost containment strategies
- Exploration of the cost benefit analysis

### Push-to-Talk over Cellular (PoC) Connectivity to ARMER

The Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Committee tasked a workgroup with studying the technical implications of connecting a foreign system—such as a Push-to-Talk-over-Cellular (PoC) device—to ARMER. They held their first meeting on Nov. 22 and established core objectives for moving forward:

- Explore the various ways a PTT (push-to-talk) over LTE (long term evolution) device could connect to ARMER and identify the protections we would expect before allowing a connection to ARMER
- Review existing standards regarding connecting a foreign system to ARMER. Update existing standards or draft new standards to satisfy our needs
- Review ways to keep PoC-LMR communications secure

The workgroup intends to meet monthly through March 2020.

## Inter-Zone Patching

At the request of the Land Mobile Radio Committee, SECB sent a letter to Motorola expressing dissatisfaction with how inter-zone patching works. This year, ARMER system administrators discovered that, when talkgroups mapped to different zones were patched, end users on different talkgroups were able to transmit over the top of someone transmitting on the other side of a patch.

Motorola recently advised Minnesota of a potential fix to this issue and has committed to present this update to the LMR Committee when the details are better defined.

## System Administrator Master List on HSIN

ECN and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) maintain a master list of all ARMER system administrators on ECN's Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) site. You will find the names of each system administrator as well as their system administrator level and contact information for each ARMER participant agency. If you don't have access to HSIN, contact ECN's [Jim Stromberg](#) (651-201-7557).

# Wireless Broadband - FirstNet

ECN presented to the DPS-MNIT Project Review Board on Dec. 6. The Review Board is made up of representatives from the DPS Commissioner's Office and the application development team from MNIT. We got rave reviews for the Coverage Review Tool Project. The commissioner's office is in support of this project. Wireless Broadband has and is clearly on the radar for the commissioner's office and this team. Special thanks to the Wireless Broadband and Applications (WBB&A) committee and committee chairs for directing and supporting this task.

The project can now go forward with a request to proposal (RFP) to purchase an application and analysis for statewide coverage of wireless communications on all bands of public safety spectrum. We will be able to analyze FirstNet Band Class 14, as well as Verizon's dedicated public spectrum. Any spectrum will be included in the analysis—including T-Mobile and Sprint. The primary project goal is a comprehensive analysis of statewide cell coverage in a report format, and web

based format, that is understandable by a layman in a real-time ongoing basis. Every first responder should know they have water in the hose before they enter a burning building. It shouldn't be any different for cell coverage.

The Minnesota FirstNet User Forum is being planned for three locations during the week of Feb. 4-7, 2020 in St. Cloud, Mankato and Cass Lake. Mankato's event will take place in Fire Hall #2 on February 7 in North Mankato. Meeting spaces in or near Cass Lake and St. Cloud still have yet to be identified.

This forum will serve allow participants to see, in-person, where coverage is being implemented across the state by FirstNet. FirstNet and the FirstNet Authority will have several representatives to present maps and answer questions. Televate will also be present in the afternoon to talk about the program survey. Televate would also like to interview constituents about what they need from ECN and the Wireless Broadband Program. Our directive is to support wireless broadband for public safety, regardless of carrier, so please join us and share your thoughts about how we can become the "Minnesota Model" for wireless broadband.

On Dec. 10, the workgroups met with Chis Algieri from the FirstNet Authority to discuss the Federal Agency participation in FirstNet as well as provisioning users on the network. Ted Verren from FirstNet/AT&T presented on Network Security and explained how they view public safety security differently from their commercial network.

A draft of the requirements was also distributed to the workgroup which will discuss the draft on Jan. 7 with the wireless broadband workgroups.

The Communications Conference will be here before we know it, and ideals for conference sessions specifically topics related to Wireless Broadband are needed. You can submit requests for sessions or speakers to [Melinda Miller](#) (651-201-7554), or any of the program managers at ECN.

# IPAWS

## IPAWS Usage and Weekly Testing

Congratulations to the following counties:

- Brown County started weekly testing in November
- Cook County has applied for Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) capability

There are now 42 counties and two state agencies testing on a regular basis.

## Wireless Emergency Alerts 2.0

Most of the mass notification vendors have released their interface changes to support Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) 2.0. As of the publication of this newsletter, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has postponed their release until further notice.

**Please do not use Public Safety or WEA Test handling values until after FEMA releases WEA 2.0. Please note that WEA Testing guidelines are still in development, please do not use this handling code until further guidance is published from the IPAWS Committee.**

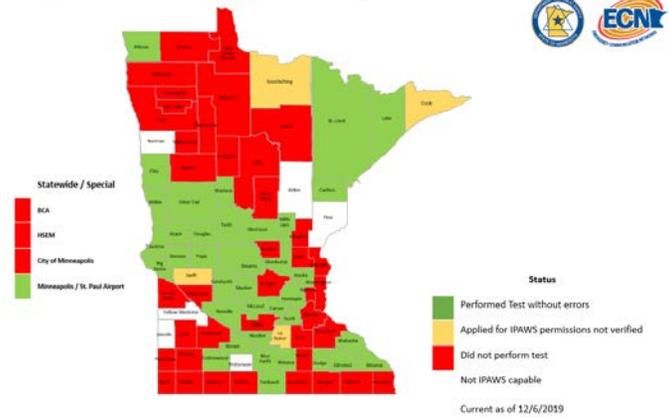
If you have the capability of changing the **handling value** (This is NEW with WEA 2.0) on your screen now, please only use the Imminent Threat WEA - Handling Value.

The new fields for increased character counts and Spanish messages will not deliver to WEA 2.0 compatible devices until after FEMA's release.

## Proficiency Demonstrations

Minnesota received an advance report from FEMA for the November 2019 Proficient Demonstrations, 33 (41 percent) of our 80 Collaborative Operating Group (COG)'s at least attempted a proficiency demonstration. Out of the 33 entities that made the attempt, 14 COGs had errors. They are being analyzed and those counties will be notified about what the possible error could be. ECN is working with them to understand what could have been the cause of the error. The following map includes the counties who have tested as of Dec. 6.

## Alerting Authorities Performing Proficiency Demonstrations



Again please use the proficiency demonstration as a training opportunity for the things you may not do but should know how to do. The monthly demonstration is performed in the test environment with the FEMA Lab so it does not go public.

Items to work on during the monthly proficiency demonstrations would be:

- Updating and or canceling a message
- Drawing polygons to outside your jurisdictional boundary. Did you get an error?
- Polygons: Circles vs. squares. Do you get any error messages?
- Do your written procedures flow properly?
  - Good opportunity to see if someone else can follow them without error

## Administrative

Please let us know when any of the points of contact or notification systems on your Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) change so that we can update ECN (contact [John Dooley](#) with your updates) data and keep FEMA up to date.

## IPAWS Training

If you would still 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.

# Interoperability

## Minnesota Land Mobile Radio Conventional Interoperability Plan

In July 2018, the Interoperability Committee created a workgroup to review and update Minnesota's 2012 VHF Interoperability Plan. The workgroup met several times and has drafted what it believes to be a very strong update. The draft will be presented to the Interoperability Committee this month.

The draft plan leans heavily on the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum by recommending engagement of, not just technology but all five lanes of the continuum:

- Governance
- Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs)
- Technology
- Training and Exercising
- Usage

Specific to technology, the proposal recommends decommissioning the Motobridge network and reprogramming each of 109 existing network-connected VHF base station radios to be variable station resources. While the Motobridge resources are now only available in a few select dispatch centers, under the proposed plan, any VHF resource will be available to any network-connected dispatch console.

## Communications Unit Reports

Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) Jim Stromberg has asked members of the Communications Unit (COMU) Workgroup to work with their Emergency Communications/Services Board regions to draft annual COMU reports. The COMU Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) ask each region to provide a report summarizing exercises, significant events, trends and concerns. SWIC Stromberg must also draft a statewide report. This will be the second year of this COMU report.

SWIC Stromberg has requested regional reports be submitted by Feb. 18 for presentation in March 2020.

## Strategic Technology Reserve Financial Report

The SECB has requested that each Emergency Communications/Services Board region submit an annual report detailing expenditures and end-of-year balances related to their dedicated Strategic Technology Reserve (STR) maintenance funds. This information will be reported to the SECB through the SECB Interoperability Committee during the March 2020 meeting.

Please submit your 2019 STR information to SWIC [Jim Stromberg](#) (651-201-7557) by Feb 29, 2020.

## Communications Unit Exercising

The initial training of Communications Unit personnel is typically provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and comes to Minnesota's public safety communications personnel at no financial cost. In order to be recognized in the position for which they trained, each student must complete several tasks identified in position-specific Position Task Books (PTBs). These PTB sign-offs can be done through real world events or training events.

Emergency Communications/Services Board regions may independently or through partnerships with other regions dedicate grant money to developing a Communications Exercise (COMMEX) for the sole purpose of providing PTB sign off opportunities. It is encouraged that ECB/ESB regions have a regional Communications Unit plan to support such requests.

# Grants

## SHSP Grant

For most regions, the current SHSP grant ended Dec. 1 (some regions had their due date extended to Dec. 31). Please collect all remaining paperwork and upload it into EGrants by Jan. 15. Make sure all required paperwork is included. For the next SHSP grant, ECN asked the workgroup how the award process should go. From the feedback we received, it will work like the next SECB grant. Each region will receive \$25,000 in training and exercise funds while the rest of the \$50,000 will be awarded in a competitive process yet to be determined by the workgroup. The deadline will be the same as the

SECB grant – April 1, 2020. Our hope is that the grants are ready in EGrants soon.

### SECB Grant

The current 2019 SECB grant ended Dec. 3. Please collect all remaining paperwork and upload it into EGrants by Jan. 15. Make sure all required paperwork is included and is presented in a way that will make sense to Dustin Leslie's replacement. This includes all grant reimbursement forms, approved training forms, invoices and proofs of payments. Make sure your progress reports are completed as well. For the next SECB grant, ECN was hoping that the EGrants application process would be ready for you, but they are still working through getting everything uploaded. When it is ready in EGrants, you will need to fill out your budget and complete the other application items before signing the grant agreement. As a reminder, each region will receive \$25,000 for training, exercises and planning costs. The current deadline for the remaining funds is April 1.

### NG9-1-1 GIS Grant

On Dec. 12, ECN sat down with MnGeo to go over all applications submitted for the grant. Some issues were found. Expect Dan Craigie from ECN to reach out to the regions regarding resolution of those issues. Work can begin as soon as applications are approved by ECN and MnGeo. This grant should also be set up in EGrants soon.

### Call Handling Grant

Applications were approved by the workgroup and Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) is working to get this grant set up into EGrants. ECN is still waiting to hear back from Washington County regarding which vendor they chose. Depending on the vendor, more money may be available to the regions. ECN is hoping that contracts will be available for you to sign once everything is set up in EGrants.

## Upcoming Events

### Mark your calendars for the 2020 Public Safety Communications Conference (PSCC)!

The Conference will be held the week of April 13-17 at the Intercontinental Hotel in downtown St. Paul. Pre-Conference Training is slated for Tuesday, April 14. The Conference kicks off on Wednesday, April 15, which is also designated as Commissioner Day! The PSCC concludes at approximately noon on Friday, April 17.

ECN listened to your feedback after the 2019 Public Safety Communications Conference. Nearly 75 percent of survey respondents asked ECN to explore other cities across Minnesota to hold this event. This summer and fall, ECN worked with the State Department of Administration to issue a request for proposal seeking a conference venue. We received two proposals; the Intercontinental Hotel and the Rochester Civic Center. Your input was considered in the final decision as we evaluated both proposals. In addition to a new location for 2020, we're excited to announce that conference planning vendor Government Training Services (GTS) has joined us in spearheading this event.

We look forward to hearing your ideas to make the 2020 Conference our best yet! If you want to join the conference planning team, please let us know.

### Join HSEM for the 55th Annual Governor's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Conference

HSEM is back for its 55<sup>th</sup> year of unique training opportunities for public safety partners across the state. The [2020 Governor's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Conference](#) kicks off on Tuesday, Feb. 11 and runs through Thursday, Feb. 13 at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center.

Just like last year, attendees will use our conference mobile app to guide them through the three-day event. In addition to connecting with colleagues and newcomers, attendees can use the app to:

- Stay on schedule with session notifications
- Follow a live feed of conference happenings
- Interact with exhibitors and vendors

- Rate breakout sessions and speakers

Join HSEM and your other public safety partners for this annual training event. [Review the keynote speakers, breakout sessions and conference schedule here.](#)

[Registration is now open!](#)

