

# MONTHLY UPDATE



## DIRECT FROM DANA



We are pleased to announce Sandi Stroud has joined the Emergency Communication Networks (ECN) division as our 9-1-1 Program Manager, effective **Monday, Oct. 19**. Many of you have worked with Sandi in her previous role at Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo), and are aware of her extensive background in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) community. As the Director of MnGeo, and in the five years prior to joining MnGeo, Sandi focused her expertise on helping agencies at various jurisdictional levels in Minnesota and across the country make the transition from legacy 9-1-1 to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1). Most recently, Sandi and the MnGeo team helped ECN facilitate advancements in the statewide NG9-1-1 GIS Program, include developing the NG9-1-1 GIS Roadmap. Sandi also brings private sector leadership experience, including building a suite of consulting services and commercial GIS SaaS solutions for the 9-1-1 buyer. She also has experience in collaborating with national organizations authoring and instructing NG9-1-1 standards and requirements. Sandi's phone number will be 651-201-7551. Her email is [sandi.stroud@state.mn.us](mailto:sandi.stroud@state.mn.us).

We are looking forward to Sandi joining our talented team. Sandi, along with her strong background and passion, will help ECN continue its work to advance NG9-1-1 and our entire 9-1-1 Program in Minnesota.

Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) Program Manager and Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, Jim Stromberg left state service and has begun working for Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CHS CISA). Jim spent five years at ECN working to advance the ARMER program and ARMER Interoperability initiatives to benefit public safety responders across the state. We will miss Jim and wish him the very best in his new endeavor.

### ECN Staff Spotlight!

Sept. 3, 2020 (Falls Church, Va.) – The International Association of Emergency Managers USA Council (IAEM-USA) is pleased to announce the results of its election that ended on Aug. 31. IAEM-USA members selected Cathy Clark as the incoming second vice president. Cathy Clark is deputy director of ECN. She has served IAEM in numerous roles since 2009.

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October 2020

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## Cont. from Direct from Dana

Currently, she serves as the co-chair of the IAEM-USA Conference committee. Previously, Cathy chaired the IAEM-USA Training and Education Committee for four years and served as vice chair prior to her role as chair. She led the Poster Showcase Work Group, which redesigned the Poster Showcase event held annual at the conference. In addition, Cathy worked collaboratively with colleagues at the Naval Postgraduate School Center of Homeland Defense and Security to develop content for IAEM's popular Leadership Symposium. She holds an M.A. in management and is a graduate of the National Emergency Management Executive Academy.

Cathy and the other newly elected officers and members of the IAEM Board of Directors will take office on Nov. 18 during the closing session of IAEM Reimagined: The IAEM Virtual Conference. Congratulations on this appointment, Cathy! Your leadership and experience with IAEM will provide great value to ECN and to the multiple public safety initiatives we support.

Meanwhile, ECN's Northern Regional Interoperability Coordinator, Marcus Bruning, was selected to present a breakout session during the virtual conference entitled, "The Day I Discovered I Didn't Have A Clue; Transforming A Responder Mindset to a Preparedness Mindset."

### 2020 4th Quarter Virtual Regional Leadership Meeting

ECN extends its thanks to all who participated in the October 26, Virtual Regional Leadership Meeting. The meeting served as the kickoff, as facilitator Judy Plante, highlighted the upcoming process for the Regional Strategic Planning Workshops, which will get underway during the fourth quarter of 2020 and first quarter of 2021. These purpose of these Strategic Planning Workshops is to engage the Emergency Communications/Emergency Services Board regions in determining needs and priorities, which will get incorporated into the planning process for the update to the 2022-2024 State Emergency Communications Board's (SECB) Strategic Plan. The current SECB Strategic Plan runs through December 2021. The process to create the 2022-2024 SECB Strategic Plan begins in early 2021. Details on the Strategic Planning Process and other topics

covered may be found at [the Regional Stakeholder Presentation](#). Mark January 25, 2021 on your calendar – for the Q1 2021 Regional Stakeholder Engagement Meeting.

Equally important to effective stakeholder engagement, is a full membership compliment representing every agency on the SECB and its committees. Letters will go out shortly to all organizations represented on the SECB, soliciting members to fill all board and committee vacancies. All individuals interested in serving as a committee chair or vice chair are encouraged to send a letter of intent and bio to ECN Director, [Dana Wahlberg](#), by December 1, for the Commissioner's appointment review and recommendation.

## 9-1-1

### GIS

The NG9-1-1 Program is using your (preliminary) NG9-1-1 data to assist with issues across Minnesota. There is a clear understanding that the data is not perfect, but it is better than other available resources. This response will delay the release of communication website and GIS Implementation Roadmap, but it does highlight the importance of the data beyond NG9-1-1.

On Oct. 6, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) ECN, MnGeo, and Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) launched a secure automated process to deliver COVID-19 information (addresses) to the public safety answering points (PSAPs) within Minnesota via email. Each PSAP receives the cases for its service area as determined by NG9-1-1 GIS data. PSAP staff who signed the confidentiality agreement receive an encrypted email, which includes new COVID-19 cases along with cases to remove from the active list. In addition, the process sends a report back to the Minnesota Department of Health containing addresses which cannot be located. This replaces a time-consuming process that was previously done manually.

Another initiative involves RapidDeploy, which can be used as a common operating picture across the state. The NG9-1-1 GIS data will be used in the software: address points, road center lines, public safety answering points

and emergency service boundaries (fire, law & medical). This project is on an accelerated timeline to meet some potential issues, such as PSAPs with limited staffing due to COVID-19. More details will be provided as they become available.

Thank you to all the county, tribal and city data contributors!

You can find more information about the GIS project on ECN's NG9-1-1 [GIS Project website](#).

[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.

### COOP Plans

When is the last time you reviewed your PSAP's Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs)? Have you exercised it or trained on it within the last year? Recommendations are:

- Exercise your COOP once a year.
- Train on your COOP at least twice a year
- Update your COOP based on results of your training or exercise events.

Has your PSAP submitted a COOP to ECN? There are still several PSAPs who have not yet submitted a plan. If you are uncertain about whether your PSAP has submitted a plan, contact [Cathy Anderson](#) (651-201-7548), ECN Standards & Training Coordinator.

**COOP Tabletop Exercise:** While an in-person meeting is always ideal, the COOP tabletop exercise was productive and engaging, despite occurring virtually on Sept. 17. Instead of several scenarios, previous planning team meetings revealed the group was looking for more of a discussion-based exercise.

A web-based, remote working environment became a major conversation item during the exercise. This included Rice-Steele PSAP sharing their experience of having to evacuate during civil unrest in June. After evacuating, they split staff between their back-up locations (Faribault Police Department and Dakota County Communication Center) to handle calls.

An after action report (AAR) will be written for Minnesota that will outline our strengths and weaknesses, which will help provide PSAPs with direction to improve their individual plans.

The Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency/Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (DHS CICS/ICTAP) will provide this AAR to ECN by November 30, 2020.

Some comments about the exercise from attendees:

- "This COOP exercise was beneficial because it allowed PSAPs across Minnesota to know and better understand 911 center capabilities and restraints. We were able to discuss what technologies are being used and considered across the state. These open conversations allow for Minnesota to consider needs moving forward in its strategic planning. Discussing different strategies within current COOP plans across the state allowed for us to consider how to add, build and reinforced the need to practice our plans."
- "I liked the detailed thoughts from people. When doing our COOP exercise, I didn't think too much about staffing but now that we have COVID, staffing is near the top of our list for COOP."
- "I think it was extremely helpful and insightful. Honestly, it would be nice if we had more exercises like that on a regular basis. Regional exercises might be helpful, pairing up with our area partners to develop plans to support each other operationally."
- "I felt the exercise was beneficial in several ways. From improving our current COOP plan to gathering insight from other centers on how to improve things such as our COVID practices. My mind was racing with ideas and it is always refreshing to get perspectives from professionals and experts in the field."

Although we hope PSAPs never have to enact a COOP for evacuation, the reality is that some of you already have. Ensuring that your staff is trained on your plan is the best preparation for an actual emergency. Don't forget that there are a lot of resources for creating your COOP, including an online training module housed on the Alex Tech site. Questions? Contact [Cathy Anderson](#) (651-201-7548).

## Ingress Network Update

GREAT NEWS! We have executed a contract with a new ingress provider: Inteliquent. This means that all the originating service providers (home lines, wireless and business phones) will be connected through Inteliquent for E9-1-1 call origination and management. This arrangement will allow us to move to updated networks with IP technology, and have access to more informational tools, to assist all of the Minnesota E9-1-1 community better manage and transition to new technology. This ingress change will not affect the ESInet PSAP services. If you have questions please reach out to [Leslie Sticht](mailto:Leslie.Sticht@state.mn.us) (651-201-7550).

## RapidDeploy Update

RapidDeploy access continues to gain momentum with many in the PSAP community embracing this tool for backup and situational awareness use. We are actively in development steps with multiple agencies to populate the RapidDeploy tool with the information they need to support use. Through our conversations with the participants we have identified multiple use case scenarios and have been very pleased with the flexibility this tool offers. If you would like more information about how this tool can provide value, please contact [Leslie Sticht](mailto:Leslie.Sticht@state.mn.us) (651-201-7550).

# ARMER

## SUA Status

The state is closer to signing an ARMER System Upgrade Agreement (SUA) with Motorola Solutions for 2021 through 2025. Negotiations were completed months ago and, at present, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)'s legal team is reviewing the contract. An Interagency Agreement between MnDOT and ECN, Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) is nearly ready for signatures. By all accounts, the SUA will be effective by January.

## Participation Plan Amendments

As a reminder to all ARMER participants the process for amending your participation plan may be found on the [ARMER Participation](http://www.ecn.mn.gov/ARMER-Participation) webpage of the ECN website. All amendment requests should minimally include the following elements:

- Document date
- Summary statement
- Operational impacts
- Technical impacts
- Financial impacts
- Drawings and/or diagrams, as applicable
- Other supporting materials, as applicable
- Regional approvals and feedback, as applicable

Amendments may be submitted by email to [ECN@state.mn.us](mailto:ECN@state.mn.us).

## ARMER Participation Plan Standard

Over the past year, the Standards Workgroup has been consolidating ARMER participation standards into one new and comprehensive ARMER participation standard. After being on the “two yard line” for many meetings, the standard is ready to be run into the end zone. With Chair Thomson’s endorsement, ARMER Program Manager Stromberg added the draft standard to the October Land Mobile Radio Committee’s meeting agenda and has recommended that a dedicated “special team” come together to make sure everything is in good order and to bring it across the goal line.

# Wireless Broadband - FirstNet

## Workgroup Update

The workgroup has been busy meeting on the last Friday of each month to put together a Basic Applications Best Practice Guide. Several volunteers took the lead of each section to review the contents and guide discussion in our last meeting. The guides will be posted on the public facing website under [Wireless Broadband Reports](http://www.ecn.mn.gov/Wireless-Broadband-Reports). You can find the Carrier Evaluation Checklist under reports today, which has received some national attention from Mission Critical Magazine.

The workgroup will now begin work on the Push-to-Talk (PTT) Best Practices Guide after receiving several educational presentations from Televate on all things PTT. The landscape for PTT is very complex. The PTT tools can work differently depending on whether it is an embedded solution from a carrier, or whether it is an application that is what is referred to as an “over the top solution.” Televate has been meeting with PTT vendors to understand the landscape of this tool. Some of the biggest challenges of interoperability are the business decisions by each vendor. The thought is that the guide should focus on interoperability at a local or regional level.

### Coverage is King

The coverage request for proposal (RFP) is nearing the final stages. Understanding the complexities of federal funding has slowed the process as federal partners weigh in on our ability to use federal funding. Already, a few vendors who expressed their desire to respond to the RFP by checking in with Program Manager Melinda Miller.

### User Forum

The Third Bi-Annual Wireless Broadband & Applications (WBB&A) Virtual User Forum concluded in September with virtual participation this year. All of the major carriers in Minnesota held two stakeholder presentations—one in the morning and another after hours-- to provide outreach to our volunteers and others who work outside traditional hours. Verizon kicked off the forum with a welcome from Retired New York Fire Chief Bill Bratton. AT&T/FirstNet demonstrated its commitment to public safety with its presentation. Tracey MacElvaney presented many new and upcoming aspects of the FirstNet network. Finally, T-Mobile/Sprint showcased the newly merged 5G network presence and the “Connecting Hero’s” Program.

There were presentations from the FirstNet Authority, Televate, and Mike Waldner, State Wide Interoperability Coordinator from the State of South Dakota. Mr. Waldner talked about how the state is using Bridge4PS. During the conversation we were able to set up the first Minnesota channel “#MN Public Access” inside the Bridge4PS application. This application has a vetting process to verify only public safety constituents are using it. One of the first uses of “#MN Public Access” was the ten digit

phone numbers for the PSAPS across the state in case 9-1-1 has an outage. The list of phone numbers being available through a native operating system app means faster responses than using a browser on your phone. The phone list will continue to be there into the future until it is physically removed. Sign-up today by going to [bridge4ps.app](https://bridge4ps.app).

## IPAWS

[Statewide Alert, Warning and Notification Best Practices Guide 2.0](#) was approved by SECB and is now published to the Integrated Public Alert and Warning Systems (IPAWS) webpage. The guide features the following:

### Section 1: When to issue an Alert, Warning and Notification

Introduces you to factors and guiding principles of alerts, warnings and notifications.

### Section 2: How to Warn — Alerting Best Practices

Introduces you to the skills required to send appropriate, effective and accessible warning messages using best practices in alerting.

### Section 3: Administration, Training and Testing

Introduces you to the skills required to effectively train for and maintain a strong alert, warning and notification program.

Online training will be available in the next few months.

In the meantime, remember to keep up on your monthly Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) proficiency demonstrations. Think ahead on how would you “update” or “cancel” an alert. It is better to find out now, than to let it run and try to remember when you are under pressure.

For any questions, please contact [John Dooley](#) (651-201-7099).

# Interoperability

## Strategic Technology Reserve Cache Radio Updates

The Strategic Technology Reserve (STR) Workgroup is encouraging each ECB/ESB region to check that its STR cache radios have the most current firmware. Many regional Motorola XTS cache radios are limited by the firmware to the three zones. Before discontinuing the XTS support, ECN obtained several hundred “flash” upgrades and is offering them to each region. If your region would like to take advantage of this offer, please contact your [Regional Interoperability Coordinator](#).

## Interstate Interoperability Workgroup

At its August meeting, the SECB accepted the recommendations of the Interoperability Committee and the Land Mobile Radio Committee and approved the *Minnesota Land Mobile Radio Interstate Interoperability Best Practices Guide* and the *Minnesota Land Mobile Radio Interstate Interoperability Crosswalk Plan*. Both documents have been posted to [Interoperability webpage](#).

## LTE-LMR Workgroup

Since November 2019, a dedicated workgroup has been developing a standard to address the technical aspects of how a foreign radio system—of particular attention is a cellular telephone network—could interface with the ARMER network. The workgroup has made progress, but additional work remains. The Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Committee will receive an update on this project this October and will guide the next steps.

# AHA/CPR Update

As you are likely already aware, all PSAPs are required to be compliant with the provisions of Minnesota State Statute 403.03(2) on or before July 1, 2021. The SECB NG9-1-1 Committee has formed a workgroup to develop an SECB standard regarding T-CPR and identify training options to assist PSAPs in achieving compliance. The workgroup has met several times and will continue to meet.

Recent discussions have been focused on the need to collect accurate data from the PSAPs to determine what its current/planned T-CPR protocols are and what level of training/funding might be needed to bring them into compliance with the state statute. The SECB NG9-1-1 regional representatives will be distributing a spreadsheet to compile that information.

The information collected from each region will assist the workgroup, NG9-1-1 Committee, and ECN with the task of determining which PSAPs need funding to provide T-CPR training to its staff. Once the need is identified, ECN will provide grant funding (no match required) to the PSAPs that need training to be compliant with the statute. Like other grant programs, these funds will be disseminated through the regional grant coordinators, and the work group is creating grant forms to make this processes as smooth as possible.

Once information is gathered, return the completed spreadsheet to the regional representatives or directly to the SECB NG9-1-1 Committee Chair, [Dar Pankonie](#).

While there has not been a firm deadline established for returning the information to the workgroup, the goal is for PSAPs to complete this task by the end of October so the group can begin setting up the grant process.

# Training Module/ Alex Tech Update

The URL for accessing training modules has changed. It is a secure, non-searchable URL and is only being shared with public safety and applicable partners. If you still need the URL, contact [Cathy Anderson](#) (651-201-7548).

# Statusboard

An upgrade to StatusBoard was completed on Sept. 24. That application, along with other DPS applications, has now been moved to (cloud-based) Amazon web services.

In accordance with SECB Standard 3.31.0 (IOP-7), StatusBoard, your agency should ensure that your StatusBoard Administrator(s) are on the StatusBoard notification list. You can add or check to see who is on

the list by contacting the ECN Standards and Training Coordinator.

If you experience issues accessing StatusBoard, or if you hear an agency using a talkgroup inappropriately, please contact [Cathy Anderson](#) (651-201-7548).