

MONTHLY UPDATE



DIRECT FROM DANA



Emergency Communication Networks (ECN) staff have welcomed Cathy Anderson and Chris Pedersen back to work following extensive medical leaves. Those two steps forward were matched with a couple of new staffing challenges. Dustin Leslie left ECN after accepting a position with City of Minneapolis. Our Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Program Manager John Dooley will be out of the office on a medical for an undetermined amount of time.

Overview of the Federal 9-1-1 Grant Program Awarded to the State of Minnesota:

- The 9-1-1 Grant is a federally funded by National Telecommunications and Information Administration/National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NTIA/NHTSA). The funding is available to eligible states and tribal organizations.
- The funding is specifically to advance Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) across the state.
- Unlike the Minnesota State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) and Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) grants, which are regionally administered grants through the Grants Workgroup, this is a state-administered grant.
- ECN accepts responsibility for a lack of administrative oversight which led to inaccurate and, in some cases, conflicting communication by ECN staff through the grants workgroup in the weeks following the award.
- Thank you to those who have identified and brought specific examples of inconsistencies to our attention. ECN will be going back through all of the call handling applications and reviewing them to ensure they are being considered both fairly and equitably.
- ECN is committed not only to our Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) partners, but to the NTIA and NHTSA, who have made this funding possible, and we will follow the requirements that have been laid out.
- ECN will use this opportunity to review and improve upon internal grant management processes which includes posting and filling a more robust grants manager position in the coming months.
- This is a cost sharing/matching grant. The federally funded portion of the grant may not exceed 60 percent. Grant recipients will provide at least 40 percent non-federal funding toward eligible project cost. As the grant recipient, the Department of Public Safety (DPS)-ECN will provide the 40 percent match across the board. There will not be a 50 percent match by the regions.

January 2020

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Cont. from Director Notes

- This is not a competitive grant. This is a grant to advance the State of Minnesota in NG9-1-1 deployment. The identification of a single officer to serve as the 9-1-1 coordinator and to sign off on certifications was a requirement. ECN's Director, and former 9-1-1 Program Manager (in the absence of having a 9-1-1 Program when the application was submitted) will serve as the grant coordinator.
- ECN is responsible to review and approve the grant proposals to ensure that money will not be spent for any purposes other than for the implementation of the services essential to 9-1-1. Part of the certification process required no 9-1-1 fee diversion.

Wireless Broadband Reminder

Please take fifteen minutes to complete the Wireless Broadband Survey that has been widely distributed. The feedback received will assist in guiding the direction of the Wireless Broadband Committee. Every voice counts!

9-1-1 NEWS

GIS

As mentioned in previous newsletters, ECN and the 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. Recently, ECN released the "[GIS Grant Reimbursement Task List, FAQ & Data Schema](#)" which clarifies reimbursable GIS work under the grant. This document also introduces the Minnesota NG9-1-1 GIS data schema.

The second document recently released by ECN was the "[NG9-1-1 Validation Overview](#)" which provides details about the redesigned NG9-1-1 GIS data validation process.

The NG9-1-1 GIS project roadmap has been written and is awaiting release for publication. This document details

the comprehensive plan for the NG9-1-1 GIS program. The roadmap will address:

- Required Datasets and Standards
- Data Aggregation Workflow
- Data Quality
- Data Management Solutions and Requirements
- Outreach and Education

ECN and MnGeo staff are active contributors and participants in National Emergency Number Association (NENA) committees and workgroups. This month, ECN and MnGeo have attended the NENA [NG9-1-1 Standards & Best Practices Conference](#) in Austin, TX.

More information about the GIS project can be found 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.

ARMER

ARMER Participation

For the past few years, ECN has been cataloguing the many decisions found in the minutes of SECB and its committees so that those determinations related to Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) participation are organized and searchable. As an example, a county may have received permission to join ARMER in 2010 with many radio IDs and talkgroup IDs, then added radio IDs in 2014, transitioned to MCC 7500 consoles in 2016, and added more radio IDs in 2018. As this dataset increases in size, the information is being shared with Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) so that radio ID and talkgroup ID counts are fully reconciled.

Please contact ARMER Program Manager, [Jim Stromberg](#) (651-201-7557), if you have any questions about your entity's ARMER files.

PoC Connectivity to ARMER

Interest in Push-to-Talk over Cellular (PoC) devices continues to grow, as does interest in connecting such devices to ARMER. As a reminder, the ARMER System Administrator of a recognized ARMER participant must file a participation plan amendment with the Land Mobile Radio Committee before any PoC device may be connected to ARMER. No permission is needed if the PoC devices are operating separate of ARMER.

A workgroup is presently examining this emerging technology so that it can be used in a responsible way that will not negatively impact ARMER. Please contact [Jim Stromberg](#) (651-201-7557) if you have any questions.

Training Module Password Change

Just a reminder that as of Dec. 6, 2019, regional passwords changed for accessing training modules housed on the Alexandria Technical and Community College Website:

<https://alextech.learn.minnstate.edu/d21/login>

Regional user names remain the same, but the password for each region is now: **Region!234**

Passwords will no longer be kept on the ECN website; both regional and individual user passwords will change every 180 days.

Wireless Broadband - FirstNet

Coverage Tool Project Receives Go-Ahead

On Dec.6, 2019, ECN received the go-ahead for the Minnesota Coverage Tool request for proposal (RFP). The Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) Review Board is made up of representatives from the DPS Commissioner's Office and the application development team from MNIT. Melinda Miller will be working with MNIT to create an RFP for coverage tool software and analysis, including maps. The MNIT Review Board also resoundingly supported this project by identifying it as a top priority. The Commissioner's Office was clearly knowledgeable on all things Wireless Broadband and the FirstNet project from

a nationwide perspective. The draft RFP is currently under review by MNIT. We appreciate the Wireless Broadband & Applications Committee (WBB&A Committee) and Committee Chairs or directing and supporting this project.

Contact [Melinda Miller](#) (651-201-7554) if you are interested in using the tool on your work or personal cellphone.

Annual Achievements

In December, the Wireless Broadband (WBB) team reviewed our accomplishments for the year to report back to the Commissioner's Office, and we accomplished a lot in 2019! Just a few highlights:

- Assisted over thirty public safety constituents to receive outreach and education at wireless broadband events across the country.
- Kicked off the first bi-annual User Forum in Chaska, MN, with a two-day event.
- Realigned the Interoperable Data Committee into the Wireless Broadband and Applications Committee (WBB&A Committee) to better describe the function of the program and decrease confusion. The new committee encourages a broader audience to participate in the committee and workgroups.
- Developed two new workgroups under the WBB&A Committee: the Applications Workgroup, and the Standards Workgroup. Rowan Watkins (Cook County) volunteers to lead the Applications Workgroup. The Standards Workgroup continues to look for a lead.
- ECN's participation in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Comments and Mission Critical webinar on the Boulder Regional Emergency Telephone Service (BRETSA) filing (FCC Packet 19-254) set off state support from Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New Mexico. Comments continue to be posted; counting six states willing to speak up for what public safety needs in a nationwide network.

Minnesota Wireless Broadband [Survey is Out!](#)

We want to hear from you! The WBB Program is conducting a statewide survey to better understand the landscape of capabilities, needs and challenges to use wireless broadband to solve your public safety

communications challenges. This initial survey will shape the WBB key activities in 2020 and beyond to enhance public safety operations for years to come.

Contact [Melinda Miller](#) (651-201-7554) if you would like to participate in the survey. Responses from all public safety statewide are welcomed and encouraged. No one knows your data needs better than you do. We want to hear what you think! The [survey](#) will be available through Jan. 31.

Carrier Agnostic

A portion of the WBB Program is focused on supporting FirstNet engagement with the State of Minnesota public safety stakeholders as part of the SLIGP 2.0 program. These user meetings will be conducted semi-annually. All who have an interest in FirstNet service should attend. Please note: ECN and the SECB is “carrier agnostic” and does not endorse any specific wireless carriers. Agencies should select their wireless service provider based on their requirements and the capabilities of the carriers where they need it. There should be no interpretation that ECN endorses or prefers FirstNet as a result of these meetings. ECN encourages robust competition among the wireless carriers. If you or your agency would like ECN to host user meetings with other carriers on a periodic basis, please contact [Melinda Miller](#) (651-201-7554).

Minnesota Wireless Broadband User Forum: Feb 4-7, 2020

Cass Lake, St. Cloud, and North Mankato will be hosting the second bi-annual User Forum during the first week in February.

The morning session is focused on FirstNet status and services while the afternoon session will focus on hearing about user broadband challenges throughout the state and how the WBB program can help overcome those challenges.

Tuesday, Feb. 4: Onigum Room, Northern Lights Casino in Walker

Wednesday, Feb. 5: Granite Room, MnDOT Training Center in St. Cloud

Friday, Feb. 7: Community Room, Fire Hall Number 2 in North Mankato

9-9:10 A.M.	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Host, ECN, FirstNet, AT&T
9:10-9:25 A.M.	FirstNet Authority Update and Roadmap Overview	FirstNet Authority
9:25-10:30 A.M.	State Radio Access Network (RAN) Discussion	AT&T
10:30-10:40 A.M.	Break	
10:40-12 P.M.	FirstNet Use Cases	
12-12:05 P.M.	FirstNet Wrap-Up	
12:05-12:20 P.M.	Lunch (Provided)	
12:20-4 P.M.	Minnesota Survey and Interview Project	Televate, ECN

ECN will be providing lunch, so please contact [Melinda Miller](#) (651-201-7554) to register before Jan. 31.

Interoperability

Interstate Interoperability

Maturing land mobile radio interoperability with our interstate neighbors has long been a priority of the SECB and of ECN. The state has supported the deployment of control stations to the dispatch centers of many non-Minnesota border counties giving them access to ARMER. These technology deployments have resulted in varying degrees of success. As our neighbors now migrate from legacy, county-run VHF systems, to their own statewide radio systems, the way we look at interstate interoperability must evolve. To that end, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) Jim Stromberg and Regional Interoperability Coordinator Steve Tait have drafted an Interstate Interoperability Best Practices Guide as well as a detailed technical plan. Anticipate both of these documents to be introduced to the Interoperability Committee this winter with a request for volunteers to sit on a workgroup to review these drafts from a regional and local perspective.

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—comprised of volunteers from each of the state's Emergency Communications/Services Board regions as well as multiple public safety disciplines—met several times and 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, SOPs, Technology, Training & Exercising, and 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.

If you have any questions about this plan, please contact SWIC [Jim Stromberg](#) (651-201-7557), [your Regional Interoperability Coordinator](#), or your regional representative to this workgroup.