



Public Safety and Emergency Communications News Clippings / Topics of Interest

Published twice monthly for the FEMA Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) stakeholders, this newsletter provides articles of interest from various sources across the emergency communications and homeland security communities.

National News & Events

- **FEMA Seeks Public Feedback on NIMS Resource Management Documents**

April 13, 2018

FEMA's National Integration Center is seeking public feedback on National Incident Management System (NIMS) Resource Management component documents that enhance interoperability and the effectiveness of mutual aid. The documents include NIMS Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Skillsets User Guide and 17 EOC Skillsets, to help create a national vocabulary for Emergency Operations Center personnel qualifications while remaining flexible for the diversity of EOC organization structures, NQS EOC Director and Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS) Job Titles/Position Qualifications that define minimum qualifications criteria for personnel serving in these positions, and NQS EOC Director and Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS) Position Task Books (PTB) that identify the competencies, behaviors, and tasks that personnel should demonstrate to become qualified for a these positions.

<https://www.hstoday.us/channels/fema/fema-seeks-public-feedback-on-nims-resource-management-documents/>

- **Office of the Inspector General Assesses FirstNet Band 14 Relocation Grant Program**

April 20, 2018

A Department of Commerce Inspector General report found that First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)'s processes for managing band 14 grants to be reasonable but identified opportunities to address control weaknesses and improve management of the grant program. Public-safety 700 MHz narrowband licensees had to relocate their licenses from band 14 to other 700 MHz spectrum by end-August 2017 to make way for the FirstNet broadband network. More than \$27 million was originally awarded to grantees as part of the grant program. Grantees have a one-year period of performance, with an option for no-cost time extensions. In 2016, FirstNet said it would make up to \$40 million available for the grant program.

<https://www.rmediagroup.com/News/NewsDetails/NewsID/16772>

- **Smartphone FM Radio Capabilities Enhance Public Safety at No Cost**

April 23, 2018

Eighty-five-year-old technology is still one of the best ways for government officials to convey information to the public during natural disasters. FM radio, first introduced in the 1930s, remains a critical communication

channel during emergencies, and smartphone manufacturers can provide this lifeline to their customers at little cost. Despite the popularity of smartphones, the cellular networks on which they rely to talk, text, and access the Internet are vulnerable during hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, and other natural disasters. Even when towers are not damaged or destroyed, the surge in call volume during an emergency often creates network congestion that makes communication difficult or impossible.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevepociask/2018/04/23/smartphone-fm-radio-capabilities-enhance-public-safety-at-no-cost/#6060350273a5>

- **New 630-Meter Band Reported “Very Busy”**

April 24, 2018

Amateur Radio got two new bands last year, but is anyone actually using them? Ralph Wallio, WORPK, of Greenville, North Carolina, and others who took part in ARRL’s WD2XSH Part 5 Experimental operation or have a deep interest in what now is the 630-meter band, 472 – 479 kHz, say activity is picking up on the new allocation. Wallio has been maintaining an informal database tracking the activity of stations on a state-by-state basis, as well as how many states each station has worked. Topping the list is Eric Tichansky, NO3M, in Pennsylvania, with 36 states worked on 630 meters, and 35 confirmed, including Hawaii and Alaska. NO3M, who also operates as W3CDX, reports 8 DXCC entities worked on the new band.

<http://www.arrl.org/news/new-630-meter-band-reported-very-busy>

- **GAO makes FEMA grant assessment recommendations**

April 25, 2018

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has issued recommendations to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regarding the manner in which the agency assesses its grant programming. In 2012 the GAO identified coordination challenges among Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant programs sharing similar goals and the funding of similar projects, which contribute to the risk of duplication among the programs. GAO officials said the agency previously recommended FEMA complete a national preparedness assessment of capability gaps at each level, based on tiered, capability-specific performance objectives to enable prioritization of grant funding.

<https://homelandprepnews.com/stories/28082-gao-makes-fema-grant-assessment-recommendations/>

- **Annual Armed Forces Day Crossband Communication Test Set for Saturday, May 12**

April 25, 2018

The Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) will sponsor the traditional military/amateur radio communication tests to mark the 67th annual Armed Forces Day (AFD) on Saturday, May 12. Armed Forces Day is May 19, but the AFD Crossband Military-Amateur Radio event traditionally takes place 1 week earlier in order to avoid conflicting with Hamvention. Complete information, including military stations, modes, and frequencies, is available on the US Army MARS website. The annual celebration is a unique opportunity to test two-way communication between radio amateurs and military stations (authorized under §97.111 of the Amateur Service rules).

<http://www.arrl.org/news/annual-armed-forces-day-crossband-communication-test-set-for-saturday-may-12>

- **Minnesota PSCC: Red Grasso, Ed Mills discuss Changing Relationship between states and FirstNet**

April 26, 2018

Red Grasso of North Carolina (left) and Ed Mills of Colorado explain how state obligations to be vendor-neutral about public-safety broadband providers have caused their roles to change since FirstNet named AT&T as its nationwide contractor a year ago. Grasso and Mills spoke with *IWCE’s Urgent Communications* Editor Donny Jackson at the Minnesota Public Safety Communications Conference in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

http://urgentcomm.com/ntiafirstnet/minnesota-pscc-red-grasso-ed-mills-discuss-changing-relationship-between-states-and-fir?NL=UC-03&Issue=UC-03_20180426_UC-03_920&sfvc4enews=42&cl=article_3&utm_rid=CPEQW000009083667&utm_campaign=12941&utm_medium=email&elq2=265a52e9ed164bd0990d5cef7aba156b

Homeland Security & Emergency Communications News & Events

- **New Projects Recently Awarded to Advance Emergency Communications**

April 16, 2018

The National 911 Program kicked off the federal fiscal year with five new projects aimed at advancing 911 nationwide. Addressing everything from emergency medical dispatch to supporting efforts to standardize 911 data and planning for the future of 911, the projects are a collaborative effort with national associations, other federal agencies and experts in 911. "Most of the projects emerged directly from ideas generated by the 911 stakeholder community. These efforts will not only support advancing 911, but will also lay the groundwork for significant innovation in the future" says Program coordinator Laurie Flaherty.

<https://www.911.gov/911connects/issue-5/new-projects-underway.html>

- **NIST Releases Updated Cybersecurity Framework**

April 17, 2018

The U.S. Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) released version 1.1 of its Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity, more widely known as the Cybersecurity Framework. The framework was developed with a focus on industries vital to national and economic security, including energy, banking, communications and the defense industrial base. It has since proven flexible enough to be adopted voluntarily by large and small companies and organizations across all industry sectors, as well as by federal, state and local governments. "The release of the Cybersecurity Framework Version 1.1 is a significant advance that truly reflects the success of the public-private model for addressing cybersecurity challenges," said Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and NIST Director Walter G. Copan.

<https://www.rmediagroup.com/News/NewsDetails/newsID/16761>

Regional News and Events

- **FEMA launches first FEMA Integration Team in North Carolina**

April 17, 2018

This week, North Carolina became the first state to have FEMA staff assigned to its emergency management agency. The FEMA Integration Team (FIT) will provide technical and training assistance on FEMA's programs and continuous on-site support to the state. While FEMA currently works closely with North Carolina Emergency Management through our Regional office in Atlanta, co-locating staff is a new initiative. "This is a new way for FEMA to do business with our state partners, getting staff out of our regional offices and into the states." said Administrator Brock Long. "We will talk to, and learn from, each other during blue sky days, not just when disaster strikes." Readyng the nation for catastrophic disasters is about the partnerships we build every day."

<https://www.bladenjournal.com/news/17629/fema-launches-first-fema-integration-team-in-north-carolina>

- **How Do You Say 'Evacuate' in Tagalog? In A Disaster, English Isn't Always Enough**

April 20, 2018

Nearly 20 percent of people in Washington and 15 percent in Oregon speak a language other than English at home. Emergency managers from around the West are grappling with how to reach people in foreign languages in the midst of a disaster. A new Washington state law seeks to raise the bar. During the bad wildfire seasons of 2014 and 2015, some farm workers in central Washington didn't understand evacuation notices they were given and only narrowly escaped wind-driven flames. That motivated the Washington Legislature to impose new requirements on state and local governments.

<http://nwnewsnetwork.org/post/how-do-you-say-evacuate-tagalog-disaster-english-isnt-always-enough>

- **Earthquake program managers gather in Seattle for annual meeting**

April 26, 2018

Dozens of earthquake program managers from around the country will converge in Seattle the week of April 30 to May 4 to compare notes and figure out ways to improve earthquake safety practices nationwide.

“Earthquakes have the potential to cause significant loss of life, destruction of infrastructure and personal property, and have devastating economic impacts,” said Matthew Wall, chairman of the national earthquake program managers. “We don't know when or where an earthquake will happen, but we do know the total impacts of a catastrophic earthquake will spread far beyond the area or even the state where it happened. The impacts will be regional and potentially nationwide.”

<https://www.mil.wa.gov/blog/news/post/earthquake-program-managers-gather-in-seattle-for-annual-meeting>

State & Local News – First Responder Communications & Technologies

- **Fort Detrick enters agreement to join county computer-aided dispatch system**

April 12, 2018

After years of operating on separate dispatch systems, Fort Detrick and Frederick County have entered an agreement to join the Fort Detrick Police Department with the county's emergency communications network. Fort Detrick entered an Intergovernmental Support Agreement on Sept. 25 to join Frederick County's computer-aided dispatch service, a communications system used by every other public safety agency in the county, said Emergency Management Director Jack Markey. While the county already provided dispatch support for Fort Detrick Fire and Emergency Services, Fort Detrick police were not directly connected to the system, Markey added.

https://www.fredericknews.com/news/politics_and_government/military/fort-detrick-enters-agreement-to-join-county-computer-aided-dispatch/article_31f3aa4d-fbde-526e-9825-ad7346670801.html

- **New technology makes it easier for EMS to communicate with emergency room**

April 16, 2018

Florida Hospital emergency rooms are using a new communications technology that allows them to get instant updates from EMS about patients. Florida Hospital's Larry Marshall says Twiage allows photos, videos, and even EKGs to be shared, cutting down on the time it takes for a doctor to see a patient.

“Once we get them the room number they now know they go straight just to a particular room as opposed to walking in the emergency room and saying where do you want me to go?” Using this data, emergency rooms can assign patients to the correct department and even calculate how long it will take them to arrive at the emergency room.

<http://www.wmfe.org/new-technology-makes-it-easier-for-ems-to-communicate-with-emergency-room/85775>

- **Northeast Nebraska emergency management counties assist Region 26 with portable communications tower**

April 17, 2018

Following the weekend snowstorm, a communication tower in Region 26 was knocked over from 60 mph winds. Emergency Management has since answered the call a part of the Northeast Nebraska Planning, Exercise and Training Region. Nic Kemnitz, Wayne County Emergency Manager attend the Wayne County Board of Equalization meeting Tuesday morning to let them know what happened.

<http://us92.com/local-news/northeast-nebraska-emergency-management-counties-assist-region-26-with-communications-tower/>

- **San Jose, Calif., Reaches Deal with AT&T to Install 170 Small Cells This Year**

April 24, 2018

San Jose announced Monday it has reached a tentative agreement with AT&T to install a network of 170 small cells on lampposts across the city by the end of the year to improve wireless coverage. East and central San Jose, where wireless is most in demand, will be targeted first. City officials say the small cells will offer

enhanced voice and data capacity for residents and businesses. The technology is also expected to fortify the FirstNet emergency responder communications network, said Dolan Beckel, San Jose's director of innovation and digital strategy.

<http://www.govtech.com/network/San-Jose-Calif-Reaches-Deal-with-ATT-to-Install-170-Small-Cells-This-Year.html>

- **Idaho Counties Consider Banding Together to Buy New Fiber Optic Network**

April 24, 2018

The Lewis County Commissioners are considering buying into a five-county cooperative to construct a fiber-optic network that would upgrade emergency and public safety services. Dave Taylor, emergency communications officer for Nez Perce County and Lewiston, met with the commissioners during their regular weekly meeting Monday to discuss the plan. Taylor is asking commissioners in Lewis, Idaho, Nez Perce, Clearwater and Latah counties to pitch in \$4,200 each to hire a consultant to determine where fiber-optic cable already exists in the region.

<http://www.govtech.com/network/Idaho-Counties-Consider-Banding-Together-to-Buy-New-Fiber-Optic-Network.html>

Emergency Management / Homeland Security Conferences & Seminars

- **Emergency Management Leaders Conference (EMLC)**

June 12, 2018 (Tampa, FL)

The Emergency Management Leaders Conference serves emergency management professionals from the public and private sectors. EMLC presents a national forum where experts in the field of emergency management and disciplines related to disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation can convene for 2 days of policy discourse and problem solving, discussing recent events and current issues, best practices and lessons learned while engaging in forward thinking.

<http://www.emlc.us/>

Emergency Management / Emergency Communications Training Opportunities

- **Advancing 911 through national initiatives, training, and grants**

May 8, 2018 (Webinar)

Numerous federal efforts are underway to advance 911 throughout the country, from developing new resources and professional development to grants. Join this webinar for the latest updates on:

- Federal projects underway to advance 911 emergency communications
- The status of the Next Generation 911 Cost Estimate
- The status of the 911 Grant Program availability

In addition, learn how a training program in Tennessee became the catalyst for increased professionalism, customer service and commitment. More than 10,000 contact hours of training significantly impacted the major roles in the 911 Center, possible through funding by the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board

https://mcp911events.webex.com/mw3200/mywebex/default.do?nomenu=true&siteurl=mcp911events&service=6&rnd=0.9746275317229174&main_url=https%3A%2F%2Fmcp911events.webex.com%2Fec3200%2Feventcenter%2Fprogram%2FprogramDetail.do%3FtheAction%3Ddetail%26internalProgramTicket%3D4832534b0000004fcae6ced1c2a12af1483f73758b10a28f2acc9cf15cb466f7f48c9d300cebb8%26siteurl%3Dmcp911events%26internalProgramTicketUnList%3D4832534b00000004fcae6ced1c2a12af1483f73758b10a28f2acc9cf15cb466f7f48c9d300cebb8%26cProgViewID%3D1763952%26PRID%3D464df1ef05b8bb5d190b319a95a97fc9

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