



## Public Safety and Emergency Communications News Clippings / Topics of Interest

*Published twice a month 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.*

### Federal News & Events

- **Comcast chimes in on FCC's net neutrality proposal**

*July 16, 2014*

The Federal Communications Commission extended the public commentary deadline to the end of the week, and one major player took advantage of the extension. That would be Comcast, one of the broadband providers that could stand the most to win or lose depending on how one views the hot topic. The cable giant wanted to make it clear in an open memo that it does believe in an open Internet, and it also sides with what the FCC has proposed for the future of net neutrality. David L. Cohen, executive vice president and chief diversity officer at Comcast, explained further in a memo on Wednesday that Comcast already supported the FCC's 2010 Open Internet Order. However, Cohen continued by stressing Comcast does not endorse the "reclassification of broadband as a telecommunications service." Comcast announced in February that it plans to acquire Time Warner Cable in a stock swap valued at \$45.2 billion. But other tech giants that also happen to be prominent players in the net neutrality discussion, such as Netflix, have publicly decried the proposed merger as "not in the public interest." The bid is still pending approval from the Federal Trade Commission. Also in February, FCC chairman Tom Wheeler published a proposal he asserted will preserve the Internet as "an open platform for innovation and expression." Wheeler followed up with an update and clarifications in April, stipulating ISPs cannot "act in a commercially unreasonable manner," or block legal content and favor traffic from one entity over another.

<http://www.knowstuff.org/2014/07/comcast-chimes-in-on-fccs-net-neutrality-proposal/>

- **FCC Officials Say Carriers, PSAPs Should Do More for Text to 9-1-1**

*July 22, 2014*

David Simpson, chief of the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB), took carriers and public-safety answering points (PSAPs) to task for 9-1-1 reliability and text to 9-1-1. In a speech to the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), Simpson noted the recent 9-1-1 outages in Washington state and said the transition to IP is no excuse for a lack of 9-1-1 reliability. "Let me tell you the bottom line: Carriers will be fully accountable," he said. "Yes, it is an ecosystem, but the buck stops with the carrier. The transition to IP does not and will not absolve providers' responsibilities for ensuring that 9-1-1 functions as our citizens expect it to function. "Access to 9-1-1 is a core value in our society, a service that

must be maintained even as technology evolves and the new replaces the old,” Simpson said.  
[http://www.rrmediagroup.com/newsArticle.cfm?news\\_id=11018](http://www.rrmediagroup.com/newsArticle.cfm?news_id=11018)

- **Relm Protests FBI’s Sole Source LMR Procurement**

*July 22, 2014*

Relm Wireless is challenging a sole-source procurement to Motorola Solutions by the FBI with a maximum potential of \$500 million worth of LMR equipment. The five-year indefinite delivery indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract has a guaranteed minimum purchase of \$100 million during the life of the contract. The solicitation, which will be used to purchase VHF, UHF and 700/800 MHz radio equipment for the FBI and other agencies within the departments of Justice and Homeland Security, was released July 14. Items such as encryption, scanning, display and keypads are all additional capabilities or features that may or may not be ordered, the solicitation said. The contract requires all mobile and portable radio transmitter and receiver equipment to be capable of SmartNet and SmartZone trunking, both of which are proprietary Motorola technology. “Digital radio transmit and receive equipment shall be capable of operation in the above mentioned analog conventional modes, as well as the Project 25 (P25) digital conventional narrowband mode as defined by the TIA-102 series standard,” the solicitation said. “Mobile and portable radios must have, without user intervention, the ability to receive an encrypted analog (11K0F3E) or digital signal (8K10F1E) on the same programmed channel.”

[http://mccmag.com/newsArticle.cfm?news\\_id=11021](http://mccmag.com/newsArticle.cfm?news_id=11021)

- **Clearer timeline for FirstNet not expected until at least ‘15**

*July 24, 2014*

States and localities will have a clearer understanding of the cost to participate in the public-safety broadband network after a comprehensive request for proposals goes out in early 2015, according to Amanda Hilliard, FirstNet’s director of outreach. “As we go through that process and get responses back and make an award, we’ll have a lot more information and detail on potential cost and build-out of the network that will then get incorporated into the state plans,” Hilliard said Wednesday during an IWCE’s Urgent communications webinar on the “State of the States.” For agencies that are preparing for the coming of FirstNet, while trying to maintain their current communications systems, those answers cannot come soon enough. “Everybody wants to know what is this going to cost us in the end. What is the business model? What is it going to cost? How is it going to operate in the end,” said Scott Neal, director of the Pennsylvania State Police’s Bureau of Communications and Information Services.

<http://urgentcomm.com/public-safety-broadbandfirstnet/clearer-timeline-firstnet-not-expected-until-least-15>

- **FEMA, ARRL Sign Agreement; FEMA Administrator Calls Ham Radio 'Resilient'**

*July 24, 2014*

The ARRL and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have announced a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will enhance cooperation between the League and FEMA in the area of disaster communication. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, KK4INZ, and ARRL President Kay Craigie, N3KN, signed the agreement July 18 during the ARRL National Centennial Convention in Hartford, Connecticut. “Radio is one of the most resilient communications technologies we have,” Fugate said. “When the power is out and telecommunications are down, the Amateur Radio community can serve as a vital resource in support of emergency responders and survivors during a disaster. This MOA will strengthen FEMA’s partnership with ARRL and build upon our work to expand emergency communications capabilities and the use of Amateur Radio in emergency management.” The new agreement will allow FEMA and ARRL to work together to provide resources, services and personnel, as available, in order to strengthen capacity in areas of emergency communications, mass care and emergency assistance, disaster preparedness, response and recovery, while also raising public awareness about the use of Amateur Radio as a public safety resource. The pact also outlines the ways in which FEMA and ARRL will cooperate to carry out their respective

responsibilities, with respect to disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery operations in the event of a natural or manmade disaster.

<http://www.eham.net/articles/32828>

## Regional News & Events

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- **First federal funds for West Coast earthquake warning system**

*July 22, 2014*

Efforts by California officials to expand an earthquake warning system for the West Coast gained ground last Tuesday as the House Appropriations Committee recommended \$5 million — the first federal funds specifically for the project — toward the warning system. Analysts project the system will cost \$38.3 million to build, and \$16.1 million a year to operate and maintain. The \$5 million would allow the purchase and installation of additional sensors and hiring of staff. “It’s critical that the West Coast implement an earthquake early-warning system that will give us a heads up before the ‘big one’ hits, so we can save lives and protect infrastructure,” said Representative Adam Schiff (D-California), who led a group of West Coast lawmakers in seeking the funding. The Los Angeles Times reports that despite the bipartisan support for the project, election-year debates over other issues could keep Congress from passing a series of spending bills, many of which include special projects like the earthquake warning system. The Senate has yet to pass a bill to fund the U.S. Geological Survey for the fiscal year beginning 1 September, which may include funding for the warning system, but Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-California) did include language in a Senate Appropriations Committee report which would encourage the Federal Emergency Management Agency to give priority to early-warning systems when the agency considers grant-funding requests.

<http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20140722-first-federal-funds-for-west-coast-earthquake-warning-system>

- **Updating information about U.S. regional earthquake hazards**

*July 22, 2014*

The USGS recently updated their U.S. National Seismic Hazard Maps, which reflect the best and most current understanding of where future earthquakes will occur, how often they will occur, and how hard the ground will likely shake as a result. 42 states at risk; 16 states at high risk: While all states have some potential for earthquakes, 42 of the 50 states have a reasonable chance of experiencing damaging ground shaking from an earthquake in fifty years (the typical lifetime of a building). Scientists also conclude that sixteen states have a relatively high likelihood of experiencing damaging ground shaking. These states have historically experienced earthquakes with a magnitude 6 or greater. A USGS reports that the hazard is especially high along the west coast, intermountain west, and in several active regions of the central and eastern U.S., such as near New Madrid, Missouri, and near Charleston, South Carolina. The sixteen states at highest risk are Alaska, Arkansas, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. While these overarching conclusions of the national-level hazard are similar to those of the previous maps released in 2008, details and estimates differ for many cities and states. Several areas have been identified as being capable of having the potential for larger and more powerful earthquakes than previously thought due to more data and updated earthquake models. The most prominent changes are discussed below.

<http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20140722-updating-information-about-u-s-regional-earthquake-hazards>

## Homeland Security & Emergency Communications News & Events

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- **MARCS on schedule for P25 upgrade to be operational in Q1 2015**

*July 17, 2014*

Work on a statewide P25 deployment in Ohio is progressing as scheduled, which means the system should be operational during the first quarter of next year, according to Darryl Anderson, program manager for Ohio's Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS). MARCS is migrating from a four-zone Motorola SmartNet/SmartZone system to a full P25 architecture with five controllers, Anderson said. Both systems support seamless roaming for LMR users, he said. "We plan on turning the old system off in March of next year," Anderson said during an interview with IWCE's Urgent Communications. "Of course, there will be some project closeout, but we plan on being totally done by July of next year." By making the LMR upgrade, MARCS will realize a couple of key benefits, Anderson said. "Number one, we'll get considerably more coverage and capacity, because we'll have considerably more towers on the IP platform than we did on the [SmartNet/SmartZone system]," Anderson said.

<http://urgentcomm.com/p25/marcs-schedule-p25-upgrade-be-operational-q1-2015#comments>

- **Editorial: Improve Upstate's emergency communications**

*July 25, 2014*

The fragmented nature of emergency communications in communities across the United States was laid bare on Sept. 11, 2001, when first responders to the terrorist attack at the World Trade Center had difficulty communicating with one another. Those difficulties, according to some sources, almost assuredly led to increased fatalities in the devastating attacks. Even though many communities have updated their communications since then, the system for different agencies and different jurisdictions to communicate with one another during emergencies remains broken. That is the case in Greenville. In a recent report in The Greenville News, reporter Ron Barnett recounted a recent incident in which 8,000 pounds of sodium hydrosulfide caught fire at a chemical plant near Interstate 85. Units from the Gantt Fire Department and the Greenville Fire Department responded, but because they operate on different radio frequencies, firefighters from the two agencies could not coordinate their efforts to fight the fire or evacuate the surrounding neighborhoods. That incident was a timely reminder that emergency responders need to be able to communicate efficiently. Had the chemical fire instead been more serious, perhaps something on the order of the Graniteville train derailment but in a highly populated residential area, for example, lives would have depended on quick and efficient communication. In that incident, a train carrying chlorine gas derailed in the middle of the night, killing nine people in the small town.

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2014/07/24/editorial-improve-upstates-emergency-communications/13110851/>

- **Convergence of public-safety technologies really equals complementary technologies for safer, thriving communities in North America**

*July 28, 2014*

There is no doubt that deployment of a nationwide public-safety broadband network based on Long-Term Evolution (LTE) technology will provide an opportunity to deliver endless levels of interoperability, operability and high-speed video, data services and eventually mission-critical voice to first responders across the United States. But those first responders, communications directors and other public safety experts agree that land mobile radio (LMR) systems will remain the primary solution for mission-critical voice communications for many years to come. Emergency response agencies today face increased challenges as they work tirelessly to create safer environments for their communities. In a time when resources are limited and agencies are being asked to do more with less, criminal elements are getting more technology savvy, taking advantage of the latest innovations to try to gain an edge. New types of crimes are popping up in communities, and agencies are becoming increasingly engaged in responses that require complex regional or multi-jurisdictional coordination. Typically, public safety has relied on LMR networks, and these have performed very well as they are specifically designed for disaster management and, today, interoperable communications between agencies.

<http://urgentcomm.com/p25/convergence-public-safety-technologies-really-equals-complementary-technologies-safer-thriving-c>

- **Appallicious Launches FEMA Disaster Dashboard**

*July 29, 2014*

Recovery in the wake of disaster is never simple. But a new disaster dashboard, released today, aims to make rebounding after devastation a bit more manageable. At the White House's Innovation for Disaster Response and Recovery Demo Day -- an event promoting disaster preparedness solutions -- open data civic tech company Appallicious unveiled what it calls the Disaster Assessment and Assistance Dashboard (DAAD). Still in beta, the dashboard is being billed as a solution that pairs local disaster response resources with open data, and offers citizens real-time developments and status updates, said Appallicious' founder Yo Yoshida in a presentation. Key features are real-time mapping of relief locations, roadway conditions, weather notifications, and details on hospital and emergency first response centers. The dashboard is more than just another emergency information display given its two distinctly compelling features. First, thanks to open data, the dashboard can harness real-time emergency response data across numerous departments and agencies. When the service is fully developed, it will be a hub that harnesses disaster information from more than 100 application programming interfaces (APIs) -- systems that help process data and software requests -- and will be filled with hundreds of data sets to help citizens and emergency crews assess current situations, Yoshida said. These include local government resources such as fire station, police station and hospital location data; federal data highlighting environmental hazards such as fires and flooding; and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<http://www.emergencymgmt.com/disaster/Appallicious-Launches-Disaster-Dashboard.html>

## **State & Local News – First Responder Communications & Technologies**

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- **7 Factors for Effectively Adding Social Media Monitoring into Operations**

*July 16, 2014*

Following the publication of a report last year about lessons learned from social media's use during Hurricane Sandy, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security released a new document on July 1 to address how social platforms can and are being used for situational awareness. Developed by the DHS Science and Technology Directorate's Virtual Social Media Working Group, the report "addresses various challenges associated with the use of social media for situational awareness, the integration of social media within the operational environment, and identifies areas requiring further consideration, research and development," according to FirstResponder.gov. Called Using Social Media for Enhanced Situational Awareness and Decision Support (PDF), the report says that while situational awareness is not a new concept for emergency managers, it is a focus point for response and recovery efforts — and social media provides additional channels through which information can be shared and requested. "If integrated with traditional data, social media can help emergency responders achieve and maintain situational awareness in real time. This will assist with decision-making, planning and resource allocation," says the report.

<http://www.emergencymgmt.com/training/7-Factors-Adding-Social-Media-Monitoring-Operations.html>

- **First Responders Training Addresses Emergency Communication in Oswego Co.**

*July 17, 2014*

In the past it's been a common problem across the country. Multiple agencies will respond to an emergency, but find confusion due to a lack of communication; maybe one fire department's radios are on a different frequency than another's, maybe all internet and phone services are down. "If we can't talk to each other, we can't manage the scene," said Oswego County E-911 Director Michael Allen. That's why a new effort is underway to fix that. This week emergency personnel from throughout New York have gathered in Phoenix for The All Hazards Communications Technicians Training Course. 15 students have been learning about working together, and utilizing local, state and federal command center equipment. "They learn about how to establish telephone communications where no telephone communications exist, they learn about

satellite link ups and they learn about two way radio systems they may not be familiar with," said Allen. The equipment could be needed for an emergency, like an ice or snow storm, or a planned event, like Harborfest. That's just a week away, and in order to run an event with more than 100,000 visitors, multiple agencies will be blending their skills and equipment together.

<http://binghamton.twcnews.com/content/news/753790/first-responders-training-addresses-emergency-communication-in-oswego-co-/#sthash.PUP55s7O.dpuf>

- **Old communication system putting lives at risk**

*July 19, 2014*

When 8,000 pounds of sodium hydrosulfite caught fire at a chemical plant near Interstate 85 on a Friday morning last month and spewed noxious fumes over a wide swath of homes and businesses along Mauldin Road, the Gantt Fire Department sent trucks rolling to the scene. So did the Greenville Fire Department. Because they operate on different radio bands, firefighters from the two departments couldn't talk to each other to make plans about how to put out the fire and how to evacuate the area. The city fire department and the Sheriff's Office have dispatchers inside the same building, but officers of the two agencies can't communicate on emergency channels, and most of the 14 county fire departments can't communicate with each other. In an age when instant worldwide communication across multiple platforms has become nearly ubiquitous between businesses, families and friends, the most critical type of communications in Greenville County remain stuck in the past. People who call 911 when their house is on fire or a member of their family is having a heart attack often have to be transferred from the county 911 center to another dispatcher at another location where they have to tell their frantic story again before help can be sent.

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/07/19/antiquated-communication-system-putting-lives-greenville-county-citizens-first-responders-risk/12897499/>

- **'Using technology to do good': Disaster Tech Lab**

*July 21, 2014*

An Irish NGO has brought emergency communications systems to disaster-stricken countries like Haiti, The Philippines, and Sandy-hit Long Island since setting up in 2010. Evert Bopp, originally from Netherlands but living in Ireland, founded Disaster Tech Lab in 2010 as a direct response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. In a disaster area, communication is vital, after food and medical aid, according to Mr. Bopp. He and his team of volunteers provide rapid response communication networks for use in disaster relief and humanitarian aid work, after an earthquake, tycoon, or hurricane. They help set up internet cafe-style hubs in a disaster zone, so that families can search for their loved ones or let them know they're safe. And doctors can communicate with respected medical professionals across the world for professional advice. "We provide internet-based communications to other emergency response organizations, and also communications in disadvantaged areas." "We set up almost like an internet café. It can be as simple as someone logging into Facebook to let people know they're OK, or having access to information or where they can get supplies or other information."

<http://www.independent.ie/business/technology/news/using-technology-to-do-good-disaster-tech-lab-30447120.html>

## **Emergency Management / Homeland Security Conferences & Seminars**

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- **2014 NEMA Annual Emergency Management Policy and Leadership Forum**

*October 9 – 12, 2014 (Atlanta, GA)*

At this Forum you will have many opportunities to broaden your knowledge in emergency management and consider policy level discussions that will assist you in executing these concepts in your program. You will find these concepts applicable to both the public and private sector. During your attendance you will find this year's forum giving particular attention to the collaboration needed with the faith based and private

sector communities and the critical role they play in assisting local and state governments in disasters that may not meet Stafford Act thresholds.

<http://www.nemaweb.org/>

- **NASCIO Annual Conference**

*September 28 – October 1, 2014 (Nashville, TN)*

The NASCIO Annual Conference: Raising the Bar...What's Next. The conference will take place at the Omni Nashville Hotel. You won't want to miss this opportunity to discuss and learn about high-profile IT and leadership topics and network with your peers.

<http://www.nascio.org/events/>

## **Emergency Management / Emergency Communications Training Opportunities**

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- **IS-15.B: Special Events Contingency Planning for Public Safety Agencies**

*Interactive Web-Based Course*

Course Overview: This web-based course provides public safety agency personnel information related to pre-event planning, forming the planning team, event hazard analysis, and responding to incidents during special events in their community. Though relevant special events statutes/ordinances and codes must be considered by public safety agency personnel engaged in special event planning, an extensive job aid manual is included in the course and available for download on the course web page.

Primary Audience: Emergency managers, personnel from emergency operations organizations such as law enforcement, fire, medical services, and public works, and representatives from other community organizations, both public and private, for whom special event planning is not a regular responsibility.

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-15.b>

- **IS-102.C: Preparing for Federal Disaster Operations: FEMA Response Partners**

*Interactive Web-Based Course*

Course Overview: This course is designed to help prepare participants for deployment as a FEMA response partner to a domestic incident. Responding to incidents requires that we must be ready, willing, and able to deploy at a moment's notice. This course provides personnel with practical tips and advice for incident deployment.

Primary Audience: This course is designed for FEMA response partners, including personnel from other Federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private-sector companies. It is suggested that personnel who have not completed the IS-700 and IS-800b courses do so before completing this course. If you are a Reservist, you should complete the IS-101 Deployment Basics course, available through the FEMA Knowledge Center or the Independent Study Website.

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-102.c>

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and newsworthy articles to [DEC\\_RECCWG\\_Support@bah.com](mailto:DEC_RECCWG_Support@bah.com)***