National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC)
Executive Summary | Tuesday, June 7, 2022

New Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) Introduction

Karla Jurrens, NCSWIC Vice-Chair, Texas Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), and Billy Bob Brown, Jr., Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Executive Assistant Director (EAD) for Emergency Communications, welcomed Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs), including new members (see table below), to the first full in-person meeting since 2019.

Name	State	Name	State
Nathan Skinner	Alaska Alternate SWIC	Greg Whitaker	Georgia Primary SWIC
Richard Semo	American Samoa Primary SWIC	Andrea Baughn*	Indiana Deputy SWIC
Randall Fitisone	American Samoa Alternate SWIC	Jacob Chatfield*	Louisiana Primary SWIC
Devin Clarke	California Alternate SWIC	Richard Fiske*	Massachusetts Primary SWIC
Shelly McMahon	California Alternate SWIC	John Fansler	Nevada Deputy SWIC
Clayton Northgraves**	Connecticut Primary SWIC	Sean Douglas	Oklahoma Alternate SWIC
Scott Wright*	Connecticut Deputy SWIC	Gretchen Birt**	South Carolina Primary SWIC
Pam Monsees*	Colorado Acting SWIC	Todd Dravland**	South Dakota Primary SWIC
Eric Wagner**	Delaware Primary SWIC	Pete Rogers*	Tennessee Primary SWIC
Annah Akasa*	District of Columbia Deputy SWIC	Mike Veenendaal**	Utah SWIC
Roger Lord	Florida Primary SWIC	Gabe Elias*	Virginia Primary SWIC
Denotes in attendance	**Denotes virtual attendance*		

NCSWIC also recognized the following retiring members who have made a positive impact in their careers as SWICs: Vicki Helfrich, Mississippi Primary SWIC; Bryan Courtney, Missouri Primary SWIC; and Jeff Pierce, South Dakota Primary SWIC. Billy Bob Brown, Jr., and Karla Jurrens presented Ms. Helfrich with a certificate of appreciation and thanked her for her 10 years of service.

How Does a SWIC Request and Utilize the Emergency Management Assistance Compact?

Panelists Greg Hauser, North Carolina SWIC; William Chapman, Oregon SWIC; Budge Currier, California SWIC; and Steve Mallory, Maine SWIC, illustrated their experiences utilizing the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). An EMAC is defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a national interstate mutual aid agreement that enables states to share resources during times of disaster. Establishing EMACs with neighboring states and jurisdictions prior to an event is a crucial step in allowing for rapid mobilization of additional resources during unplanned events that overwhelm a state's existing capabilities. Key takeaways from the panel include: understanding funding as it relates to EMACs; knowing what capabilities and resources exist beforehand, as these may differ depending on jurisdiction; defining the needs, qualifications, and equipment necessary for various potential scenarios; and considering the recovery phase of an event as part of the planning and preparation process.

Mr. Hauser suggested considering a no-cost or zero-dollar EMAC, a resource he uses often during hurricane season. Mr. Mallory emphasized the importance of leveraging mission-ready packages. Mr. Currier offered his perspective based on his experience with the rapidly changing nature of wildfires in the third largest state in the country. He stressed the need for depth in both physical and personnel resources and encouraged exploration of funding for long-term sustainability of day-to-day operations. Mr. Chapman highlighted assistance available from CISA without the need for a declaration and suggested that this be the first stop for SWICs during any disaster situation. For additional resources, check out the NCSWIC Planning, Training, and Exercise (PTE) Committee's EMAC Package to share best practices and templates to support the public safety community when submitting communications-specific EMAC requests.
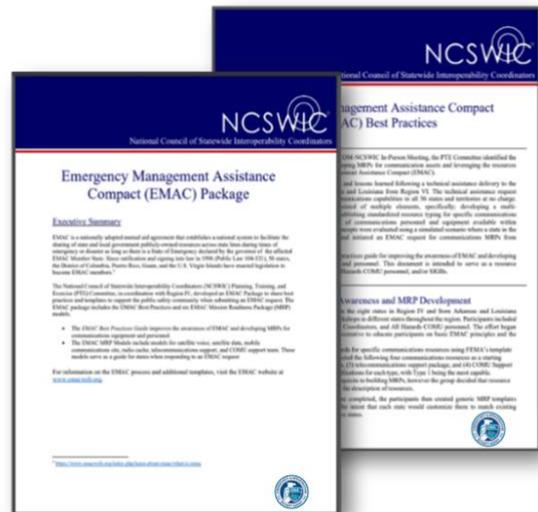

Image: EMAC Package, developed by the NCSWIC PTE Committee, which provides best practices and templates to support EMAC requests

Photo: NCSWIC Members, June 2022

How to Leverage Technical Assistance to Address Cybersecurity Challenges

Adrienne Roughgarden, CISA Acting Branch Chief for the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP), facilitated a session focused on CISA's tailorable technical assistance offerings and how SWICs can further refine the offerings to meet state-specific needs.

Mr. Chapman shared how Oregon utilized the State Markers to inform his state's Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) goal development and to include cybersecurity-focused activities. Through a cybersecurity exercise, in partnership with ICTAP, Oregon found its overlooked trunked radios systems to be a vulnerability. Through this exercise, Oregon learned to incorporate Continuity of Operations planning into its training and

Photo: Ms. Roughgarden moderating a panel session with Mr. Smith, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Chapman (left to right seated at table) on leveraging technical assistance to address cybersecurity challenges

exercises. Forty-one participants from 20 different agencies were able to participate, and CISA provided a Cyber Security Advisor (CSA) to help highlight CISA's cybersecurity offerings.

Darin Anderson, North Dakota SWIC, discussed a well-received CISA 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) Cybersecurity Awareness Webinar providing best practices to improve the secure use of emergency communications technologies in day-to-day operations. The webinar was so popular that a second webinar has been requested. Brandon Smith, CISA Emergency Communications Coordinator for Region 10, shared how CISA has several new cyber offerings, which are still under development and will focus on identifying areas for improvement in an organization's existing cyber response plan. He also discussed how each CISA CSA can help facilitate tailored training events and will have a template and playbook for each training available to states that request assistance through the ICTAP program.

Image: Flyer for the CISA 911 PSAP Cybersecurity Awareness Webinar held in North Dakota

Match Game: NCSWIC Edition

NCSWIC committee leadership, including Ms. Jurrens, Mr. Hauser (PTE Co-Chair), Mr. Chapman (PTE Co-Chair), and Penny Rubow, Funding and Sustainment Committee Chair and Arkansas SWIC, participated in an interactive game to identify today's emergency communications ecosystem challenges and find ways to "fill in the blanks" to solve these problems.

Ms. Jurrens commented that staying engaged, particularly relationship building with local-level counterparts, was a challenge throughout the pandemic. Leveraging virtual meeting platforms helped to adapt to the new normal of the pandemic and allowed people to continue to make the effort to connect with one another. Ms. Rubow emphasized strong relationships are vital to the success of interoperability in emergency communications and explained how some members of the Arkansas State Police did not know how to change the radio channel in their police vehicles, which caused major communications problems within the State Police. Due to strong relationships with jurisdictional departments, the information technology section was able to appoint a representative to go to the Arkansas State Police and provide educational sessions on how to operate radio systems. Mr. Hauser highlighted how the SWIC community has benefitted his state through the ability to leverage documents developed by other states and tailor them to suit his needs. He stressed he is keen to give credit to the original state who developed the materials.

NCSWIC ACADEMY

Monday, June 6, 2022

Karla Jurrens, welcomed eight new SWICs and deputy SWICs and thanked them for taking time to join the NCSWIC Academy. Four tenured SWICs also offered insight and tips. Ms. Jurrens spoke about the SWIC role, the history of the SWIC and NCSWIC, and the NCSWIC Charter. Ms. Penny Rubow, NCSWIC Funding and Sustainment Committee Chair and Arkansas SWIC, talked about the committees NCSWIC offers and how to make the most of the NCSWIC benefits. Mr. Dusty Rhoads and Mr. Chris Essid, CISA, talked about the federal support and resources offered to SWICs.

Image: SWIC Roles

National Association of State 911 Administrators Meeting Lessons Learned

The National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA) is leading an effort to establish greater interoperability in the emergency communications ecosystem by providing workshops around the country to allow states to discuss best practices for driving interoperability forward. A series of regional workshops for 911 directors is designed to enhance interoperability between Next Generation 911 (NG911) systems, public safety broadband communications networks, and other vital communications networks and systems, including traditional land mobile radio and computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems. NASNA offered each state the opportunity to attend one regional workshop, open to the state 911 director, SWIC, a governor's office representative or another key state-level policy representative, and the designated emergency alerts/warnings coordinator. Brandon Marshall, Kentucky SWIC, expressed his gratitude for the workshops, stating how eye-opening it was to see other SWICs drive interoperability in their respective states. Ms. Jurrens stated the NASNA workshop in Dallas, Texas, was well-facilitated and if SWICs continue the same level of commitment to interoperability, NCSWIC will continue to grow stronger in the emergency communications community. The next NASNA workshop will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, in July 2022.

NCSWIC Cyber Working Group

During this session, participants reviewed the purpose of the proposed NCSWIC Cyber Working Group and discussed potential product topics. Ms. Jurrens explained that the working group would examine cybersecurity from a policy and governance perspective. Through the creation of the working group, Ms. Jurrens and Mr. Brad Stoddard, NCSWIC Chair, plan to raise the SWICs' cyber awareness and develop meaningful products. For example, they plan to help SWICs better understand the upcoming notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) of CISA's State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program through the working group.

Participants spoke of potential working group product topics, including:

- Primer on cybersecurity and buzzwords
- Guidance or best practices on industrial control systems cybersecurity
- Roadmap document to guide development of cyber plans
- Checklist consisting of questions to ask when a cyber incident is reported
- One-pager on SWICs' cyber responsibilities
- Resources for the cyber grant NOFO to help advocate SWIC presence during funding discussions
- Cybersecurity for mobile and temporary structures (e.g., mobile command post)
- Writing requests for proposal with considerations to cyber requirements
- Management of statewide radio systems involving Chief Information Security Officers
- Cybersecurity policy for statewide radio systems

Eric Abdullateef, CISA, thanked participants for their input. He said that once stood up, the working group will meet monthly. CISA plans to develop an agenda and socialize it with NCSWIC in the next 30 days.

Incorporating Alerts and Warnings into Emergency Communications Governance

Nikki Dallas, Oklahoma SWIC, provided an overview of recent alerts and warnings activities in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (ODEMHS) recently assisted the Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters (OAB) with updating the statewide broadcasters' public alerts and warnings plan. This effort has a deadline for completion of June 30, 2022, and ODEMHS coordinated with OAB to host technical assistance workshops to address the following topics within the plan:

Image: Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA) Coverage Map. OETA is responsible for maintaining the state's infrastructure for the PBS Warning, Alert and Response Network system, which provides a path between FEMA and cellular service providers to relay important emergency information statewide via cellular networks

- FEMA Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), which distributes silver and amber alerts, emergency alert system (EAS) messages, and National Weather Service alerts
- Outdoor warning system for specific disasters that include television, radio, and social media alerts

Image: OR-Alert, Oregon's statewide system to provide alerts, warnings, and notifications to enable real-time sharing of hazard information across Oregon's 36 counties and tribal governments

Mr. Chapman provided an overview of the newly-established Oregon statewide EAS—OR-Alert— which the state launched in 2020 in response to a warning system failure. OR-Alert is designed to provide statewide access to alerts, warnings, and notification systems to enable real-time sharing of hazard information across Oregon's 36 counties and tribal governments. This technology also allows county emergency managers to access notification tools, including IPAWS, which are capable of issuing messaging to all cell phones within a specific geographic area as defined by the alerting authority. Previously, several counties in Oregon lacked access to IPAWS or other EAS messaging tools due to issues such as funding and system access. To address these issues, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services worked across the state on issues like incident-based messaging, delegation of alerting abilities, and integration with other EAS networks.

The mission was to provide not just a tool, but also governance for the tool. This included a collaborative governance approach unique to Oregon, and a voluntary partnership between state, county, local, and tribal governments.

Data Interoperability Panel: Status of the CAD-to-CAD Interoperability Pilot and the Information Sharing Framework

Rob Dew, CISA Senior Technologist, provided updates on the concept of an Information Sharing Framework (ISF) with the ultimate goal of ensuring the effectiveness of new products and technologies as public safety agencies transition to mobile and fully interconnected environments, improving the efficiency and interoperability of public safety communications. Specifically, the ISF is comprised of three layers: the data layer, which contains the information content; the integration layer, which aggregates and manipulates the data to make it consumable regardless of the end user application; and the presentation layer, which is the piece with which the end user interacts. It is the integration layer that forms the basis of CISA's CAD-to-CAD interoperability efforts; by developing

guidelines and best practices for addressing information in the integration layer, standardized, interoperable data exchange can be realized. Recent CISA work in this area includes a use case in Houston, Texas, for situational awareness during an active shooter situation at a school, and a project in Iowa aimed at developing a custom ISF CAD-to-CAD data and NG911 media content exchange within the existing emergency communications system/public safety answering point ecosystem. Gabriel Martinez, CISA Engineer, provided an update on CISA's CAD-to-CAD pilot in partnership with the International Public Safety and Justice Network (Nlets), Maryland State Police, and Washington County, Maryland. The goal of the pilot is to provide timely, accurate, and up-to-date information on-demand during emergency incidents to improve handling of calls for service, reduce the response time of first responders, and increase situational awareness. To date, pilot participants have identified the operational requirements, including eight required data types for sharing, and conducted a technical gap analysis, allowing for the identification of the preferred intrastate communications architecture, which routes all messages through the existing state switch. Next steps for the pilot include the development of a limited proof of concept and successful demonstration of bi-directional information exchange.
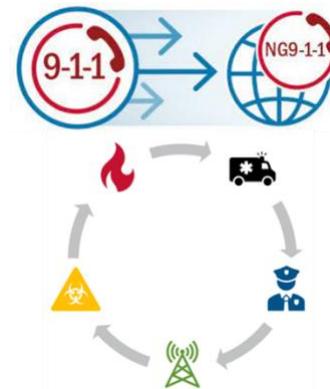
Image: Maryland's CAD-to-CAD pilot has benefitted the state through improvements in receiving 911 calls for service

REGIONAL DISCUSSIONS

To conclude the session, NCSWIC members met by region and discussed topics such as recent successes and challenges and identified additional collaboration opportunities.