



**National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC)
Meeting Summary
April 26, 2016**

NCSWIC Action Items

| # | Description | Status | Owner |
|---|--|-------------|---|
| 1 | Review and approve the <i>2015 NCSWIC Annual Report</i> | In Progress | Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) / Governance Committee |
| 2 | Review and approve the <i>2016 NCSWIC Strategic Plan</i> | In Progress | OEC / Governance Committee |
| 3 | Review and approve <i>Supporting and Leveraging Your Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)</i> | In Progress | OEC / Governance Committee |
| 4 | Review and approved the <i>SWIC Position Description Guide Template</i> | In Progress | OEC / Governance Committee |
| 5 | Review and approve the NCSWIC Outreach/Engagement Guide | In Progress | OEC / Governance Committee |
| 6 | Review and approve the Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Brochure, Memo, and Presentation Deck | In Progress | OEC / Funding and Sustainment Committee |
| 7 | Submit agenda topics for October 2016 SAFECOM and the NCSWIC In-person Meeting | Not Started | OEC / NCSWIC |

Welcome and SWIC Introductions

Bob Symons, NCSWIC Chair and Wyoming SWIC, welcomed NCSWIC members to Jacksonville, Florida. He noted achieved accomplishments since the November in-person meeting, including the Joint Funding and Sustainment Committee’s [LMR Trio](#) and the Joint Technology Policy Committee’s T-Band Executive Briefing document. Nikki Cassingham, NCSWIC Vice Chair and Oklahoma SWIC, also provided opening remarks, noting the importance of work aimed at strengthening the role and longevity of the SWIC.

Ron Hewitt, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) OEC Director, welcomed members. He mentioned that the meeting design was based on member feedback and that OEC continues to support SWICs with establishing and sustaining governance bodies, Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP), and other statewide programs through the Technical Assistance (TA) Branch. Ron discussed the possibility of developing a system to track state programs with information highlighting improvements in interoperability that can be provided to state legislatures and Congress. OEC hopes to work further with SWICs to capture capabilities and outcomes. Following the introductions, Jessica Kaputa, OEC, welcomed the following new members to the NCSWIC:

Table 1 - New SWICs

| State | Name |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Colorado | Roger Bishop |
| Connecticut | William Hackett |
| Nevada | Andy Gagliardo |
| New Jersey | John Miller |
| North Carolina | Seth Russell |
| Ohio | Richard Schmahl |



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OEC's Collaboration Efforts across States

Chris Essid, OEC Deputy Director, spoke to a number of OEC's recent initiatives that benefit the NCSWIC and SWICs. Chris noted OEC compiled member feedback from the November meeting to inform OEC 2016 focus areas. Feedback emphasized an increased focus on improving governance, strengthening Communications Unit (COMU) training, and addressing issues related to the T-Band. OEC is working to further integrate these areas of focus into their programs. OEC is supporting the implementation of and outreach for the *Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials*, and he encouraged members to begin briefing the Guide in their state, if they have not already started implementing it. Additionally, OEC is working to implement a 2016 National Governors Association (NGA) Policy Academy on Enhancing Emergency Communications Interoperability and has partnered with the COMU Working Group to increase awareness of Communications Unit Leaders (COMLs) and Communications Technicians (COMTs), as well as assist states in developing COMU program governance. OEC is working with the COMU Working Group to develop a white paper on a nationwide COMU governance structure. Finally, regarding T-Band feedback, the Joint Technology Policy Committee recently released the T-Band Executive Briefing and updated the T-Band Fact Sheet. Both of these documents are available on the [SAFECOM](#) website.

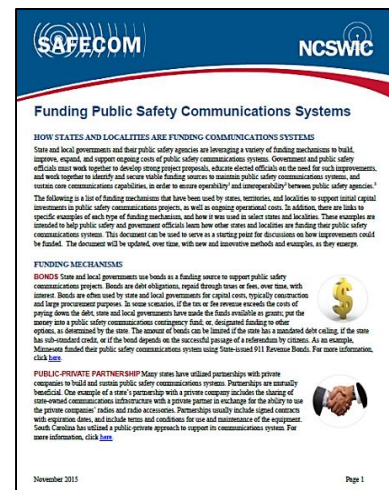
Chris announced OEC's role designing the new Urban Area Assessment, which aims to evaluate response-level communications in major urban areas. The purpose of this initiative is to develop a better understanding of the current landscape of emergency communications across urban areas. Further into the assessment, OEC will also develop and share a Planning and Observation Toolkit.

To conclude, Chris took a moment to thank stakeholders who participated in OEC-sponsored sessions at the International Wireless Communications Expo (IWCE) in March 2016. As a result of NCSWIC-member support, OEC was able to host sessions that were productive and engaging. He noted SWICs provide value when speaking on panels, because they are able to talk directly to the impact of programs they oversee and implement. For instance, SWICs conveyed the importance of LMR funding and sustainment for mission critical voice capabilities. Examples like this showcase the value of the SWIC voice, and as such, OEC intends to increasingly support SWIC participation at national-level engagements in the future.

Funding Mechanisms for Emergency Communications Systems

The Funding Mechanisms for Emergency Communications System panel focused on sharing information on various methods available to fund emergency communications systems (e.g., bonds, special tax, surcharges) and specific examples of where these methods have been used to fund state and local systems. Ken Bradley, OEC Funding and Sustainment Committee Lead, led the panel discussion with Penny Rubow, Arkansas SWIC; Victoria Garcia, Hawaii SWIC; and Adam Thiel, Virginia SWIC.

Ken began the session by noting stakeholder frustration with identifying and securing funding. Funding challenges exist, not only for major capital improvements to public safety communications systems, but for operations and necessary upgrades throughout the system life cycle during that time period. Many state and local public safety agencies are struggling to secure the necessary funding to maintain their communications systems or to move forward with major improvements due to cut-backs in federal grants, fiscal pressure on state and local governments, and other public safety needs and projects competing for funds. Ken highlighted work the Joint





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Funding and Sustainment Committee developed to address this challenge, specifically the [Funding Mechanisms for Public Safety Communications Systems](#) document and the [LMR Trio](#) documents. Ken thanked members of the committee for their time committed to these efforts, and recognized the SAFECOM Committee Chair Tom Roche, International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the NCSWIC Committee Co-chairs Victoria Garcia, Hawaii SWIC, and Mark Grubb, Delaware SWIC.



Picture of the Statewide Interoperability Coordinators listening to the Funding Mechanisms for Emergency Communications System panel.

Penny discussed her recent experience seeking funding for Arkansas' statewide emergency communications system, the Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN). Today, AWIN is a 700/800 MHz, digital, trunked radio system that has 132 sites with three Master Controllers. The system has almost 30,000 users and over 900 public safety organizations on the system. AWIN was last upgraded in 2004, making the core operating system seven releases behind and the hardware more than five years old. Because many of the base stations are either at the end of service or at the end of manufactures recommended use, the AWIN system is at risk of experiencing a server failure, among other things. Penny noted that the current state of the system is the result of inadequate state funding to upgrade the system.

Penny explained that Arkansas worked with OEC recently to complete a successful SCIP workshop by developing the overall approach, strategy, and desired outcomes prior to the workshop. During the initial workshop, Penny and her team ran out of time to discuss funding issues; therefore, a separate webinar was held to address these concerns. During the webinar, a member of the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee, instead of a SWIC, presented on the "State of AWIN." This allowed state leadership to take ownership of the problem. In addition to hosting the webinar, Penny noted that her team analyzed AWIN's current and potential infrastructure life cycle estimates and planning costs, identified public safety communications champions to conduct outreach, analyzed broadband planning and implementation costs, monitored the potential of a revenue stream, and developed briefing documents to educate decision-makers and elected officials. In the end, Penny and her team were able to establish a five-year plan and secure \$10 million for upgrades and \$800,000 in operating funds as well as establish a \$4.5 million maintenance contract. Penny attributed her team's success with securing funding to the development of the funding plan. The funding plan allowed her team to identify priorities, select champions, and focus on specific actions. Having this information on hand was crucial for being able to talk to leadership, decision-makers, and elected officials.

Victoria highlighted challenges with upgrading outdated public safety communication systems, noting the need to translate associated risks to state decision makers and leaders in an effort to build understanding, awareness, and support for funding. She noted that conversations often go smoothly and have positive outcomes when examples are given that demonstrate the impact of potential lives lost if public safety communication systems are not continually refreshed. SWICs should get creative when trying to get their message across. It is crucial for SWICs to become informed, remember their audience, and make their voice and message heard. Additionally, Victoria noted challenges related to the development of the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), explaining SWICs' reluctance to contribute time and effort toward its development and use due to their already overtaxed schedules. Victoria implored SWICs to make an effort to utilize the THIRA.

Adam spoke about how the SWIC and the SWIC office, as a whole, are funded in Virginia. In the past, the SWIC position in Virginia was positioned in the Governor's Office; however, when the administration changed, so did the prioritization



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of the statewide interoperability program. Adam added that when he had the opportunity to combine the homeland security and public safety offices, interoperability in the state took a giant step forward. This change allowed a reorganization of authority to give the SWIC more leverage in the decision making process. Therefore, the SWIC position will not change when there is an administration change. Additionally, funding for interoperability projects and programs in Virginia mainly comes from DHS funding, bonds, and state general funds. Adam reinforced the importance of obtaining authority for the SWIC by stating, “You are either at the table or on the menu.”

Data-Driven Decision-Making: Applications for Risk and Capability Assessments

Eric Runnels, OEC, and Dante Randazzo, Federal Emergency Management Agenda (FEMA), National Preparedness Assessment Division, led a session about the THIRA and the State Preparedness Report (SPR), providing information on how the both documents benefit state and local stakeholders. Session topics included an overview of the THIRA and SPR processes, why SWICs should be involved in the process, how SWIC engagement can benefit state programs, and how all levels of government are using the THIRA and SPR data.

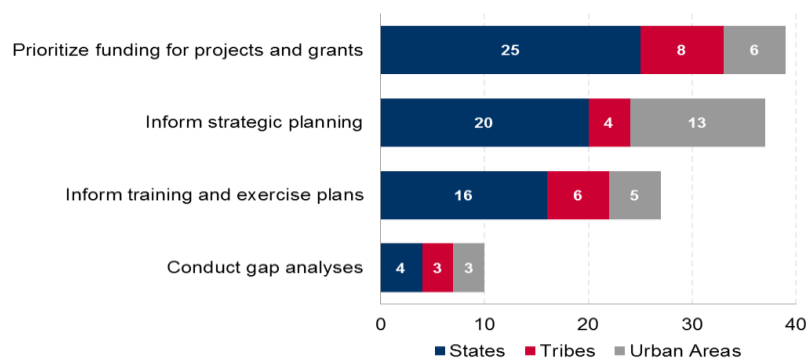


Figure 1. Most Common Uses of THIRA/SPR Results

emergency management capabilities and track their progress toward meeting the goals they set through the THIRA process. Figure 1 above shows the most common uses of THIRA and SPR results. Comparing current capabilities with THIRA goals helps jurisdictions identify gaps or shortfalls in emergency management capabilities. This makes it easier for them to prioritize and focus emergency management investments, including grant-funded projects, training and exercise planning, and organizational improvements.

Eric emphasized the importance of ensuring that SWIC priorities are captured in the THIRA and SPR. SWICs are uniquely positioned to engage with emergency response leaders across all levels of government to implement a statewide strategic vision for interoperability. As the central coordination point for their state or territory, SWICs play a critical role in bringing attention to their annual THIRA and SPR and eliciting support to ensure reported information provides a holistic portrayal of the emergency communications landscape in their jurisdictions. It is important that SWICs coordinate with FEMA regional Preparedness, Analysis, and Planning Officers (PAPO) to educate emergency communications stakeholders on the value of participating in these processes, and to help stakeholders use data and reports from their jurisdictions to inform current and future emergency communications planning and investments.

PAPOs collect and analyze operational and preparedness capabilities specific to their region; monitor and evaluate regional capabilities and progress of work in relationship to regional and national preparedness policies and goals; identify requirements and perform preparedness program management or maintain awareness alongside whole community partners across the region to meet such requirements; develop annual and multi-year regional preparedness strategies; and



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influence the application of grant and technical assistance, training, exercises, operational planning, and assessment activities to achieve such strategies. *Table 2*, below, lists PAPOs by region.

Table 2 - FEMA Regional PAPOs

| Region | Name | Email Address |
|--------|---|--|
| I | Eleanor Jewett | Eleanor.Jewett@fema.dhs.gov |
| II | Terry Winters, Russell Fox | Terence.Winters@fema.dhs.gov , Russell.Fox@fema.dhs.gov |
| III | Blair Hyde | Blair.Hyde@fema.dhs.gov |
| IV | Holly Hollingsworth, Willie Womack | Holly.Hollingsworth@fema.dhs.gov , Willie.Womack@fema.dhs.gov |
| V | Vince Parisi | Vincent.Parisi@fema.dhs.gov |
| VI | Brian Ellis | Brian.Ellis@fema.dhs.gov |
| VII | Rodney Butts, Rodney Odom | Rodney.Butts2@fema.dhs.gov , Rodney.Odom@fema.dhs.gov |
| VIII | Pete Bakersky | Pete.Bakersky@fema.dhs.gov |
| IX | Joel Palmer, Gen Tamura | Joel.Palmer@fema.dhs.gov , Gen.Tamura@fema.dhs.gov |
| X | Tiffany Anderson, Andrew Hendrickson | Tiffany.Anderson@fema.dhs.gov , Andrew.Hendrickson@fema.dhs.gov |

Dante noted that each year, FEMA hosts a series of after action calls with jurisdictions that participated in the THIRA and SPR processes, seeking their feedback to drive continuous improvements. Results from the 2015 SPR found that states and territories identified operational communications as their tenth highest-rated capability, and their highest-rated capability in the planning element. States and territories report their perception that filling capability gaps in high-priority capabilities are primarily a state responsibility; however, they feel the federal government is relatively more responsible for filling gaps in other capabilities considered less important.

To further improve the THIRA and SPR processes, FEMA is developing an optional set of THIRA example targets for each of the 32 core capabilities¹ to help improve target quality, standardize language, improve consistency for the SPR ratings, and reduce the burden on jurisdictions. Similarly, FEMA also is developing an optional set of SPR example measures that are more specific than the 1-5 ratings currently used and rely on verifiable facts. Jurisdictions will be able to point to specific evidence to verify responses, and measures are based on existing national-level doctrine and best practices in assessing preparedness across the country. Measures are nationally applicable, unlike performance standards that may be tailored to the unique requirements of an individual jurisdiction.

Victoria Garcia emphasized that FEMA should ensure coordination with SWICs and better educate them on THIRA/SPR processes. Dante encouraged SWICs to become proactive and to reach out to their regional PAPO. Wynn Brannin, New Mexico SWIC, emphasized that grants applications need to have the same core capabilities for communications, noting inconsistent messaging across grant guidance. Dante responded that a grants modernization project is under development. Additional questions about the THIRA or SPR processes can be directed to PAPOs or FEMA-SPR@fema.gov.

¹ The THIRA process consists of 32 core capabilities, including operational communications, such as LMR, Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1), and social media; operational coordination; planning, such as SCIPs and the 2014 National Emergency Communication Plan (NECP); and situational assessment.



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What Does it Mean: Public Safety Grade (PSG) versus Mission Critical?

Craig Allen, Iowa SWIC, led a discussion on the definition of Public Safety Grade (PSG) versus mission critical across the emergency communications landscape. Feedback during the session aimed to inform a more comprehensive definition of public safety grade from the SWICs' perspective. He noted there are a variety of existing definitions of PSG.

Craig asked the SWICs to brainstorm example scenarios of when the term "Public Safety Grade" has been used, and how the meaning of PSG and mission critical differ in these instances. Members also discussed whether mission critical equates to PSG in all circumstances. SWICs felt that PSG means guaranteed access, redundancy, reliability, resiliency, security, and durability of communications systems and equipment. They also felt PSG should be standards-based rather than proprietary, and that vendors should be required to be compliant with specifications. Victoria Garcia questioned how standards would be balanced in smaller jurisdictions. Craig responded that PSG networks can utilize non-public safety grade equipment, but PSG equipment cannot be utilized fully on non-PSG networks.

SWICs felt the Joint Technology Policy Committee is the appropriate body for NCSWIC and SAFECOM to play a role further defining the terms and SWICs agreed to review any definitions the Committee develops.

OEC Urban Area Assessment and Technical Assistance Update

Chris Essid and Dick Tenney, OEC, provided an update to the NCSWIC, and to SAFECOM on April 28, on OEC's urban area assessment, which is meant to observe and assess response-level communications in major urban areas. This initiative will be similar to DHS' Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) assessment in 2010 for NECP Goal 1². In 2010, OEC focused primarily on LMR, and the 2016 effort will look at the entire emergency communications ecosystem. OEC hopes to launch several pilots in summer of 2016 and will work with NCSWIC and SAFECOM members as well as the OEC Coordinators to identify potential focus areas. After the pilots, OEC expects to provide support to urban areas nationwide, where requested.

In 2010, OEC worked with the nation's 60 UASIs to conduct assessments of their capabilities as they aligned to the lanes of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum (Governance, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Technology, Training & Exercises, and Usage). For the 2016 update, Goal 1 will include various aspects of the emergency communications ecosystem, such as LMR, broadband, Priority Services (Government Emergency Telecommunications Service [GETS], Wireless Priority Service [WPS]), and social media.

Dick facilitated a breakout session to obtain feedback and input on the approach used to assess capabilities and performance factors. Members were given a list of proposed 2016 Urban Area Assessment Elements and were asked to review each element for its level of importance.

NCSWIC members responded the assessment should identify how urban areas are engaging with commercial industry as well as the difference between population-based urban areas and threat-based urban areas. Help is also needed to educate decision-makers on what should drive the assessment elements. Some regions commented that there is no incentive to collaborate with urban areas that are no longer funded. Other regions commented that assessment elements should be added including to:

² From the [2010 NECP](#): By 2010, 90 percent of all high-risk urban areas designated within the UASI are able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.



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- Identify if a comprehensive After Action Report (AAR) was used/published;
- Identify if a COML was imbedded with the incident management team;
- Identify if a communications plan was mapped to the SCIP and is in alignment with the catastrophic plan for the area;
- Address social media elements and the importance of public alerts and warning to pre-empt social media inaccuracies;
- Address non-urban area/former UASIs and their ability to participate as peers;
- Identify how OEC will use the data and how the data will benefit states; and
- Include SWICs and OEC Coordinators in the urban area evaluation.

Following the presentation to SAFECOM, members responded that the initiative should:

- Analyze regional events in addition to large cities;
- Conduct early outreach to obtain volunteer support, and clarify what the value is for volunteers participating;
- Utilize the evaluations to support grant applications; and
- Utilize AARs to identify equipment that worked successfully and identify shortfalls to prove grants are used effectively.

Moving forward, this effort will be known as the Interoperable Communications Capabilities Analysis Program (ICCAP).

NGA Policy Academy on Enhancing Emergency Communications Interoperability

The NGA Policy Academy on Enhancing Emergency Communications Interoperability session provided updates on current coordination efforts between NGA and OEC to develop best practices and tools on governance for the new emergency communications landscape. Michael Obrock, OEC, began the session by speaking to the importance of elevating the role of the SWIC within the Governor's Office, noting significant changes within the public safety communications interoperability environment since the last NGA Policy Academy took place in 2007.

Timothy Blute, NGA, stated that NGA typically receives applications from eight or nine states; however this year, the NGA received 12 applications for this particular Policy Academy. The increase in applications speaks to the importance of this topic. Timothy shared that the following five states were selected: Alaska, Hawaii, Illinois, Utah, and West Virginia.

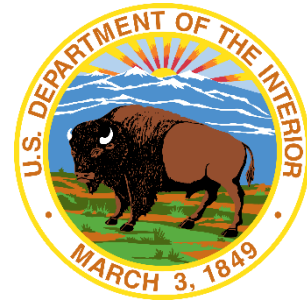
The Policy Academy will remind Governors of the critical role SWICs play in day-to-day operations and emergency response as technology progresses. The Policy Academy aims to reinvigorate state governance structures, advance the role of the SWIC, strengthen strategic planning, and encourage personnel to coordinate on these topics. The Policy Academy aims to benefit all states, highlighting public safety issues and recommendations for the Governor's Office.

The five selected states kicked-off the Academy in Idaho on May 16-17, 2016, to discuss desired outcomes and possible challenges. Additional follow-up meetings, designed based on the initial meeting in May, will be held in each state to provide an opportunity to get all essential personnel in one room at the same time. This will result in quite a few agencies making up each of the state teams. Networking within and amongst states will make up a large part of the Policy Academy. States will be presented with best practices and success stories to help each choose best practices for their state. Each state will have a final meeting to discuss challenges, successes, and best practices. At the end of the academy, states should have a series of recommendations available to implement in their state.



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Improving Interoperability through Federal Frequency Sharing Panel and Discussion



The Improving Interoperability through Federal Frequency Sharing panel, moderated by Bob Symons, focused on recent changes to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) rules regarding non-Federal use of the Federal interoperability frequencies and the role of the SWIC. Brian Marengo, FCC, noted the role of the FCC is to administer the licensing of and set technical standards for the radio equipment which state and local first responders use. He said his agency's goal is to ensure that these first responders experience reliable and interface-free communications. The FCC is currently working with NTIA to improve the ability of state and local first responders to interoperate with federal first responders on national interoperability channels. The recent Science and Technology Policy Institute draft report to the White House Office of Science Technology Policy found that state and localities are often unable to communicate with federal agencies during emergencies or joint response efforts. The report asks for recommendations for ways to reduce regulatory barriers impeding interoperability between federal and non-federal public safety entities. In an effort to address the regulatory barriers for the non-federal responders, the FCC and NTIA staff agreed to allow SWICs to coordinate non-federal licensee access to federal interoperability channels within their states. The new process eliminated the need for each non-federal entity within a state to obtain a memorandum of understanding (MOU) from a federal licensee and obtain individual licenses through the FCC. The FCC will release a Public Notice outlining the new process once the revision to the NTIA rules are published and the MOU is developed. Once a SWIC signs a Memorandum of Understanding with a federal user on the availability of the federal interoperability channels in its state, those channels will be available to all within the state.

In a notice of proposed rulemaking released September 1, 2015, the FCC proposed adding a rule listing all non-federal interoperability channels in the VHF, UHF, 700 MHz and 800 MHz bands. The proposed rule would codify that FCC "license by rule" authority applies to mobile and portable units operating on those channels. For additional information, contact Brian Marengo at Brian.Marengo@fcc.gov.



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Scott Jackson, NTIA, added that non-federal use would be coordinated with the FCC through the SWIC or designated state official. Scott also mentioned that federal agencies with a public safety or emergency response mission are required to have all federal law enforcement and incident response (LE/IR) frequencies programmed into one or more zones, banks, or channel groups in mobiles and portables. Scott also clarified that non-federal use of the federal interoperability channels are restricted to mobile and portable devices and cannot be built into the non-federal user's infrastructure. Scott encouraged members to reach out to him or Stephen Veader with questions at sjackson@ntia.doc.gov and sveader@ntia.doc.gov.



From left to right, panelists Brian Marengo, Bob Symons, Scott Jackson, and Chris Lewis discuss improving interoperability through federal frequency sharing.

Chris Lewis, United States Department of the Interior, provided information on the All Risk Management Zones (ARMZs). The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) zoned the United States along dispatch center areas of responsibility to better manage wildland fire fighting. These were designated as Initial Attack (IA) and Extended Attack (EA) zones supporting Type 3, 4, and 5 incidents. The IA/EA zone designation has since been changed to ARMZ with the advent of a more encompassing public safety multi-disciplinary role for NIFC radio system and spectrum support. In 2010, DOI, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and NIFC moved to permanent assignments for air-to-ground covering each zone with a minimum primary and secondary VHF FM channel. There are currently two to four permanent frequencies in each zone that are all air-to-ground with 99 percent of the frequencies in use. Chris stated that there needs to be greater state and local participation in providing FCC licensed spectrum for ARMZ. Chris noted his appreciation for the states that have already provided the FCC with licensed spectrum, adding that he can be reached at Christopher_lewis@ios.doi.gov for questions.

National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) and the Voluntary Cyber Reporting Efforts

Sam Mackin, Special Advisor to the Director of the NCCIC for Cyber and Communications Strategy and Policy, discussed the NCCIC's mission and capabilities, and its involvement with the SWICs. Sam explained that the NCCIC monitors cyber and communications assets supporting United States Critical Information and Key Resources (CIKR) and for threats. One of NCCIC's goals is to become the "cyber rolodex" for the federal government as the single point of entry for federal cyber information sharing and technical assistance requests.

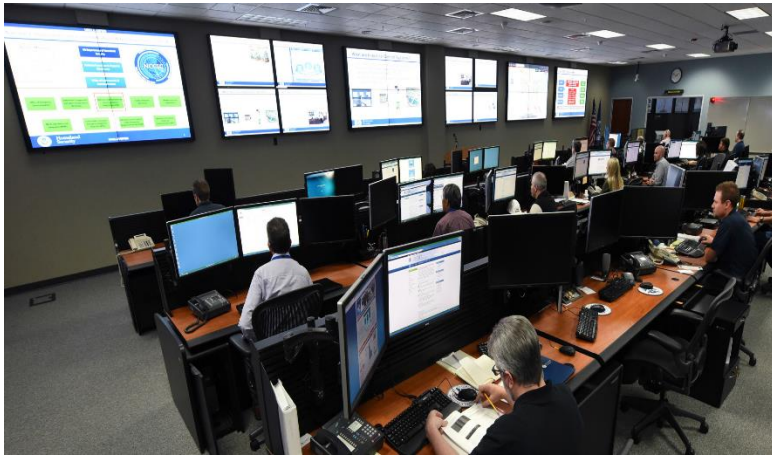
The Center's current capabilities include supporting the US Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT), Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team (ICS-CERT), National Coordinating Center for Communications (NCC), 16 CIKR Sectors, multiple Information Sharing & Analysis Centers, and federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government partners as well as developing programs and processes with international partners. Sam also explained that the NCCIC monitors the .gov domain for threats and incidents. In recent projects, the NCCIC has been working with state and local governments and the National Guard to provide a cyber and communications situational awareness tool, referred to as Cyber and Communications Layer, to the DHS National Common Operating Picture (COP).

Additionally, the NCCIC has developed a means for SWICs to report all cyber incidents that occur within their states. These efforts are focused on creating a means for reporting and tracking who submitted the incident report. Sam



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encourages all SWICs to take advantage of this tool as the NCCIC is working to build out this tool further so there will be a function for SWICs to monitor the status of their incident reports.



In March 2017, Congress will review a report jointly created by the NCCIC and the National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) to understand its cyber reporting involvement with each SWIC and how to improve cybersecurity, specifically supporting emergency communications systems. Congress requested the report in order to bolster the role of the SWIC and motivate the use of technologies geared towards Internet Protocol (IP) technology providing support to emergency communications. States have begun developing reporting processes and the future role of the SWIC will become much more involved in the cyber environment. Sam reiterated that he needs the SWICs' involvement to develop this report.

Reuben Molloy, Virgin Islands SWIC, asked who in the jurisdictions should be sending this information. Sam explained there are several personnel and agencies who may lead this effort, including the Chief Information Officer or other state cyber coordination elements. Chris Essid emphasized that the SWICs need to be the ones informing others in their states and to be involved in the process. This is an opportunity for federal partners to work with the SWICs to learn how to better assist them.

Ken Hasenei, Maryland SWIC, asked who is reporting cyber security threats. Sam agreed to contact the NCCIC Service Desk for that information and forward a list on to the SWICs through OEC. Sam will coordinate with OEC to collect information from SWICs for the report. He is also available to speak with SWICs about cyber-attacks, questions, and best practices for IP deployment or similar issues.

Succession Planning: What to Do When the SWIC Leaves

Chris Essid and Bob Symons facilitated an open discussion on succession planning strategies. Chris reminded the audience of Virginia's dormant phase without a SWIC. Despite lacking a true sustainment plan, active engagement of an interoperability board allowed Virginia to remain interoperable for the period without a SWIC. Chris emphasized the importance of developing and maintaining a governance body. Although funding is an issue across the Nation, it is essential for building and maintaining governance bodies to ensure sustainment of the SWIC role. Chris suggested using the OEC Coordinators as a resource to help plan for succession and maintain relationships. SWICs can visit the document library on the [NSWIC website](#) or contact the [NCSWIC Inbox](#) for additional resources.

Few states have an active and up-to-date succession plan in place. Chris noted that although funding may change SWICs should involve the OEC Partnerships and TA Branches in developing plans. In addition, OEC is working with FEMA to ensure investments in training and governance are a priority.

Chris asked participants how OEC may leverage the NCSWIC to fill gaps created when SWICs leave. Craig Allen mentioned that when a grant is released, it is the responsibility of the State Administrating Agency (SAA) to sign it. As members of the SAA, SWICs provide input into the grant processes, adding to the credibility and value of their role. He also suggested leveraging former SWICs to provide assistance to current SWICs, similar to a "SWIC Helpline."



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NCSWIC Committee and Working Group Updates

On Wednesday, April 27, SWICs met with their committees and working groups to validate 2016 work products and discuss product development.

Governance

The Governance Committee reviewed products including the SWIC Vacancy Announcement Template, the Supporting the SWIC Fact Sheet, and the *2015 Annual Report*. The Committee also discussed the creation of the NCSWIC Outreach Plan/Engagement Guide and the creation of a NCSWIC Achievement Award.

First, members determined the SWIC Vacancy Announcement Template needed additional changes. Specifically, members felt a need to change the order of the requirements to emphasize project management and knowledge of public safety are the top priorities when discussing specificity of the position. OEC will make updates to the document and distribute the final document for review and approval prior to the next conference call. The SWIC Fact Sheet was well received by the committee; however, members offered valuable updates to the document to ensure its target audience understands the purpose of the document. Specific edits included removal of the timeline found on the first page, addition of a call-out box where SWICs could fill out state-specific success stories, and addition of a short appendix guide following frequently asked questions. Finally, members reviewed the 2015 Annual Report and offered minor edits to the document for consideration.

The committee members also discussed the need for an Outreach Plan or Engagement Guide to help SWICs engage in conversations with decision-makers and elected officials on funding. Committee members mentioned that SWICs could bolster outreach efforts to compliment the outreach funded by the State and Local Implementation Grant Program. The plan or engagement guide should be a tool to guide what SWICs could do to reenergize their governance structures and bolster member participation in the NCSWIC. The committee envisioned a one-page document that would emphasize continued support for improving interoperable communications across the state.

Finally, the committee discussed the development of a NCSWIC Achievement Award. Members felt the award would recognize individuals that have served a certain number of years and/or have gone above and beyond to help other members of the SWIC community. The committee seeks to leverage the SAFECOM recognition standards as a starting point to determine appropriate criteria and discussed other specifics, such as type and timing of the award.

Planning, Training, and Exercises

During the Planning, Training, and Exercise Committee meeting, Jessica Kaputa, OEC, and Committee Vice-Chair John Stevens, New Hampshire SWIC, led discussions on a variety of topics. John introduced the idea of developing a Planning, Training, and Exercise Guide for SWICs to use. Members brainstormed potential topics including:

- Overview and features of communications systems and equipment
- Delivery of training, including frequency, availability of on-line content, classroom format, course outlines, audience-specific content (potential end users included first responders and dispatchers), job aids, roll call briefings, training evaluation forms
- Exercise checklists by type (tabletop, functional training, and full scale exercises)
- Training and exercise materials by response type or event type (scenarios)
- Incorporating content from the OEC guide, ICS Communications Unit Implementation and Best Practices



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Members also discussed adding a resource section to include links to available materials including academy information and available training and refresher courses. Additionally, several members felt it would be beneficial to leverage the DHS Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS) system in the resource section. The LLIS assists with identifying scenarios in which improved radio end user proficiency may have resulted in a better outcome, or in which better communications training and exercises may reduce the risk of recurrence. The group discussed using this tool in the future to influence future training and exercise focus areas. The committee discussed developing a standardized “COMEX in a Can” Communications Exercise plan. Instructors could use the plan to inform training and exercises. Additionally, the committee considered the need for Communications Plans and Field Operations Guides assigned to mobile units (staffed vehicles). Currently, many emergency vehicle is required to carry a Hazardous Materials Response Guide. Additionally, the committee felt a companion piece on establishing and maintaining interoperable communications should also be required.

Finally, the committee discussed developing an interoperability graphic —a visual aid to help depict the roles of the SWIC in planning, training, and exercises. Jessica sought ideas for what the graphical image should depict. The committee will continue development of the graphic during the next committee conference call.

Funding and Sustainment

Ken Bradley, OEC, Tom Roche, SAFECOM Committee Chair, and Victoria Garcia, NCSWIC Committee Co-Chair led discussions with members during the Joint Funding and Sustainment Committee meeting.

Matt Leveque, Alaska SWIC, kicked off the meeting with an overview of the reasons behind the production of Alaska’s LMR video. Earlier in the year, Committee members viewed Alaska’s LMR video and requested a presentation on the video’s development. Matt noted that an outside organization had been pushing Alaska to drop its LMR system, creating confusion amongst Alaska’s leadership and elected officials. The vendor responsible for maintaining Alaska’s LMR system funded and developed the informational video to help inform Alaskan officials on the importance of sustaining LMR. Ultimately, the video had little impact on decision making. Matt believes part of the problem is clearly conveying the difference between LMR and Long-Term Evolution to elected officials. Matt said his team is still trying to find a better way to message the importance of LMR. Robert Schwent, Washington SWIC, added that his state produced a similar video with the help of a nearby university. Victoria noted the key to addressing leaders and elected officials is to remember your audience. Even if you have the best speech, it will mean nothing if you do not reach your audience.

Committee members also reviewed of a variety of products, including the LMR Brochure, LMR Presentation, LMR Action Memo, and the Project 25 Waiver Letter. Committee members provided updates to the documents, which will be incorporated following the meeting. Once the Committee approves final versions, each document will be sent to the SAFECOM and NCSWIC Executive Committees for approval and publication.

Technology Policy

The Technology Policy Committee received updates on the T-Band topic, discussed ICAM, received an overview of the TFOPA Report, heard an update on the LMR encryption fact sheets, received an update on the IMIS-CMM effort, and discussed the PSG white paper.

The T-Band effort, to date, produced a SAFECOM-NCSWIC Fact Sheet and Executive Briefing Talking Points for members to use as resources for sharing information on T-Band issues with decision-makers. Jim Goldstein, IAFC, and Gerald Reardon, SAFECOM Public Safety At-Large and Committee Co-Chair, also updated attendees on the latest T-Band news. Harlin McEwen and Gabriel Martinez presented on efforts from the FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee and DHS to find a nationwide solution for ICAM. They engaged the committee in a discussion about the



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complexity of ICAM and the challenges of developing and managing any potential ICAM solution. The committee expressed interest in helping to learn more about and inform this effort. Moving forward, the committee will consider where and how it can best contribute. Trey Forgety, National Emergency Number Association, explained the FCC's TFOPA report and some of its primary concepts. The Task Force met over the past year and proposed cybersecurity and PSAP organization concepts for the public safety community as they migrate to NG-911. At the committee's request, Jim Downes, OEC, and his team drafted a series of LMR fact sheets to provide an overview of the Federal Partnership for Interoperable Communications' (FPIC) LMR encryption documents. The fact sheets are under internal review and will be distributed to the entire Committee shortly. Ron Langhelm, DHS S&T, briefly explained its efforts to develop a tool to help public safety communities improve their information sharing and data interoperability capabilities. They thanked committee members who supported the effort and encouraged the group to continue providing feedback. Craig Allen, Iowa SWIC and TP Co-Chair, led a conversation with committee members to scope the PSG White Paper. NCSWIC agreed to take on this white paper, highlighting the need to define public safety grade at a high-level. Some members cautioned against getting too specific or creating new standards for public safety grade as there are already organizations and guidance documents focused on those areas.

COMU Working Group

The COMU Working Group met with other SAFECOM and NCSWIC members to discuss the current COMU environment. Chris Lombard, COMU Working Group Chair, explained the establishment of the COMU Working Group and its efforts to explore the COMU environment. Participants received an update from Dick Tenney, OEC, on the TA findings from the COML survey that SAFECOM and NCSWIC developed and distributed to the SWICs. OEC received 42 responses and concluded that more than half of the states and territories did not have a COML advisory board or working group, 83 percent were interested in COML recertification/refresher training, and 61 percent agreed on developing a "career ladder" training process. Dick also reviewed which states and territories have a governance structure or a working group body and how many COMLs are trained throughout the country.

Participants also received presentations from a panel of SWICs on successful COMU programs. Throughout the session, the SWICs shared their successes, challenges, and discussed their state's governance bodies. An ongoing challenge that each SWIC mentioned was the issue of funding and attracting personnel with a unique skillset. The information was important to the COMU Working Group as they develop a nationwide COMU structure. Karla Jurrens, Texas Deputy SWIC, spoke about Texas' COMU program which qualifies/certifies only 10 percent of the candidates once the course and requirements are met. She mentioned that many of the people who take the course take it for the learning experience rather than for certification. Texas is the first state to sponsor a Communications Exercise (COMMEX) and has developed a state certification process for COMLs, COMT, and trainers.

Cathy Dawson, alternate Alabama SWIC, spoke about Alabama's COMU successes during the 50th anniversary of the Selma-Montgomery March. The COMU team was able to successfully provide the required equipment and technicians, even when faced with a lack of inclusion in the state's planning discussions. The team was forced to develop its own interoperability logistics for the operation, comprised of 65 people stretched over the 100-mile course from Selma to Montgomery. Using a strike team for the first time, its abilities were unmatched, and local officials took notice. This experience emphasized the importance of having technically skilled people on COMU teams. As such, she is involved in the development of different training scenarios and is striving to build a stronger team.

John Miller, New Jersey SWIC, spoke about the origins of the state's robust COMU program. Before the establishment of a COMU program, the state utilized a governance structure of 16 people invested in the exploration of communications, including public safety personnel. The body determined that personnel who have completed the COMU training and requirements would be "credentialed" versus "qualified" based on legal stipulations within the state. New Jersey boasts a strong COMU program due to the vigorous requirements for refresher training and certifications. John also spoke to the



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communications success of the recent Papal visit, requiring coordination across New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania state borders.

Brad Stoddard, Michigan SWIC, shared parallels between New Jersey's and Michigan's programs. He noted that a lot of Michigan's COMU program was modelled after New Jersey's program. One of the biggest challenges Brad faced with Michigan's COMU program was a large number of candidates requesting sign off on task books without his knowledge of the candidate's qualifications. To resolve this issue, he worked with the COMLs to determine how they structured and ran their own programs and developed a COMU program with a governance body vetted by their peers. In addition, Michigan established a member of the Statewide Interoperability Governing Board (SIGB) as a co-chair of the working group in order to share information with the SIGB. The working group convenes about three times a year to discuss interoperability and different communications aspects.

Chris Lombard and Brandon Smith, OEC, spoke to the Working Group about the FEMA proposal for a communications "refresh." FEMA welcomed comments on the *National Incident Management System (NIMS) Refresh* proposal until May 9, 2016. Brandon distributed copies of the proposal and commented on the limited amount of attention paid to the COMU. Many members found this troubling and decided to include the following feedback which OEC will provide to FEMA for consideration via the FEMA provided form:

- Elevate the COMU to the branch director's level as an effective means of addressing concerns involving logistics and operations;
- Focus on integrating the COMU into all planning, operations, and incident action plans; and
- Develop training and structure for organizing the elements of the COMU.

The COMU Working Group also discussed the *White Paper on a Nationwide Communications Unit Governance Structure* product in development. Members discussed the problem with the current lack of structure and the entities that should be involved in the governance body. The Working Group noted the challenge of different COMU programs throughout the country and within public safety associations. This is a problem, as some states and associations will not acknowledge externally certified/qualified personnel responding to an emergency. Other problems included strategic-level and tactical-level problems, and attracting people with the capabilities and skillsets needed for evolving technology. Working Group Members held a discussion on the different entities to include in the discussions and suggested mirroring the governance structure of well-established COMU programs, such as the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, FEMA, and New Jersey. The Working Group emphasized the importance of refresher training and re-certification in the proposed nationwide governance body. They also discussed the need to include technology specialists in the governance body. Strengths and weaknesses for the entities' governance structures were also discussed. The COMU Working Group will continue to develop the *White Paper on A Nationwide Communications Unit Governance Structure* over conference calls and possibly at an in-person meeting this summer.

SAFECOM-NCSWIC Town Hall

Chris Essid facilitated an open forum on Wednesday, April 27, for SAFECOM and NCSWIC members to raise questions for OEC, SAFECOM, and NCSWIC leadership. Topics included:

- Concern regarding the DHS National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) transition; *Promoting Resilience and Efficiency in Preparing for Attacks and Responding to Emergencies Act* (PREPARE Act– HR 3583)



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- Eliminating duplicate efforts between OEC and the DHS Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC), and coordinating with FEMA regarding the roles of the Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups (RECCWG) and SWICs
- Leveraging OEC Technical Assistance offerings to help offset the austere fiscal climate in states and to ensure SWIC issues are on the forefront of governors' agendas
- Leveraging Esri and Intermedix (i.e., WebEOC) software to more effectively integrate the Communications Asset Survey and Mapping (CASM) tool
- Seeking and obtaining OEC commitment to fund and support in-person committee and working group meetings
- Suggesting the NCSWIC Governance Committee review the current governing structure of the NCSWIC
- Promoting increased tribal participation and helping to develop an enhanced tribal marketing strategy to ensure proper recognition with states
- The SAFECOM-NCSWIC meeting format:
 - Overall preference for April 2016 format
 - Need to incorporate more voices (i.e., interest in learning more about federal and tribal issues setting up communications systems; unique challenges faced by stakeholders in the non-contiguous U.S.)

Upcoming Meetings

The NCSWIC or NCSWIC EC will convene on the remaining dates in 2016:

- May 10, 2016; EC Conference Call
- July 12, 2016; EC Conference Call
- September 13, 2016; EC Conference Call
- October 24-28, 2016; Joint In-Person Meeting; Norman, Oklahoma (*pending approval*)
- December 13, 2016; EC Conference Call

The Joint Committees and Working Groups will convene on the remaining dates in 2016:

- June 8, 2016; Joint Technology Policy Committee Meeting, San Diego, California
- August 22-23, 2016; COMU Working Group, Location TBD (*pending approval*)



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ATTENDEE ROSTER

NCSWIC

| Name | State |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Cathy Dawson | Alabama |
| Matthew Leveque* | Alaska |
| Jeremy Knoll | Arizona |
| Penny Rubow | Arkansas |
| Budge Currier | California |
| Roger Bishop, Russell Gibson | Colorado |
| Mark Grubb* | Delaware |
| Joshua Jack | District of Columbia |
| Phil Royce | Florida |
| Victoria Garcia* | Hawaii |
| Todd Herrera | Idaho |
| Joe Galvin* | Illinois |
| Steve Skinner | Indiana |
| Craig Allen | Iowa |
| Jason Bryant | Kansas |
| Derek Nesselrode | Kentucky |
| Steven Mallory | Maine |
| Ken (John) Hasenei | Maryland |
| Bradley Stoddard | Michigan |
| Dent Guynes | Mississippi |
| Quinn Ness | Montana |
| Bob Wilhelm | Nebraska |
| John Stevens | New Hampshire |
| John Miller | New Jersey |
| Wynn Brannin | New Mexico |
| Seth Russell | North Carolina |
| Michael Lynk | North Dakota |
| Richard Schmahl | Ohio |
| Nikki Cassingham | Oklahoma |
| David Soloos | Oregon |
| James Wrightstone | Pennsylvania |
| Thomas Guthlein | Rhode Island |
| Robert Steadman | South Carolina |
| Jeffrey Pierce | Tennessee |
| Todd Early, Karla Jurrens | Texas |
| Gordy Coles | Utah |
| Adam Thiel | Virginia |



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| Name | State |
|------------------|---------------|
| Robert Schwent | Washington |
| 1/LT G.E. McCabe | West Virginia |
| Gene Oldenburg | Wisconsin |
| Robert Symons* | Wyoming |

**Denotes NCSWIC Executive Committee (EC) Member; all members are Statewide Interoperability Coordinators, unless otherwise noted*

FEDERAL PARTNERS

| Name | Organization |
|--|--|
| Scott Jackson | Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration |
| Sam Macklin | DHS, NPPD, National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center |
| Brian Carney, Dante Randazzo | DHS, Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| Ralph Barnett, III, Ken Born, Ken Bradley, Kenzie Capece, Chris Essid, Dan Hawkins, Ron Hewitt, Jessica Kaputa, Jim Lundsted, Gabriel Martinez, Marty McLain, Pam Montanari, Michael Obrock, Dusty Rhoads, Bruce Richter, Brandon Smith, Dick Tenney, Chris Tuttle | DHS, Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) |
| Chris Lewis | Department of the Interior |
| Brian Marengo | Federal Communications Commission |
