

Meeting Summary
Joint Meeting of SAFECOM and the
National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators
May 2-3, 2017
Marriott San Antonio Northwest, San Antonio, Texas

WELCOME AND MEETING OVERVIEW

Bob Symons, National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) Chair, and Chief Gerald Reardon, SAFECOM Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to San Antonio, Texas, emphasizing the power of in-person collaboration. They introduced new members of the programs (see Table 1).

Dusty Rhoads, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), also provided opening remarks, thanking SAFECOM and NCSWIC members for attending. He emphasized the programs’ imperative roles influencing the ability of the nation’s first and secondary responders to manage incidents. DHS continues to look at SAFECOM and NCSWIC for expertise on the emergency communications ecosystem. Before kicking off the first session Dusty also mentioned several of DHS OEC’s priority areas, including:

- Assisting states with updating their SCIPs to include a roadmap for Public Safety Communications systems for the state;
- Implementing the Governance Guide and NGA White Paper on Emergency Communication through the execution of OEC Technical Assistance offerings, SCIP workshops, and in-person stakeholder conferences and meetings;
- Educating decision makers on the need to take a holistic approach to Public Safety communications systems (i.e., Next Generation 911, long-term evolution [LTE], land mobile radio [LMR], alerts and warnings) with an emphasis on avoiding the establishment of stovepiped governance structures;
- Updating the COMU program to reflect LMR/LTE/Broadband systems support;
- Continuing to drive LMR interoperability through the SAFECOM and NCSWIC Committees; and
- Continuing aggressive promotion and outreach around the SAFECOM Nationwide Survey (SNS) to obtain actionable and critical data that drives our nation’s emergency communication policies, programs, and funding to execute the Nationwide Capabilities Baseline Assessment.

Table 1. New Members

New SAFECOM Members

Name	Association
Brian Howard	National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)*
Chief Johnathan Lewin	Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)*
Brian Schaeffer	National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT)

New NCSWIC Members

Name	State
Angelo Riddick	Virgin Islands
Matt Webb	Georgia
Frank Lujan, Jr.	Guam
Everett Kaneshige	Hawaii

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ASSISTANT CHIEF RODNEY REED, HARRIS COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



Rodney Reed was invited to participate at the meeting as the Keynote Speaker. He is the Assistant Chief of Operational Support for the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office, with over 13 years of fire service. Assistant Chief Reed serves on a variety of emergency services committees, including the Texas Department of Public Safety Statewide Interoperability Training Workgroup and Harris County Radio Special Interest Group. He is also appointed to the DHS First Responders Resource Group and the International Association of Chiefs of Police Environmental Crimes Sub-Committee.

Assistant Chief Reed spoke about the ever-evolving world of public safety telecommunications technology. He reminded members training is key; and focus needs to be given to training the end-user on the use of the new devices, and not just training for large-scale incident communications management. He also briefly discussed the successful deployment of broadband technologies during Super Bowl LI. Assistant Chief Reed ended with a request for stakeholders to share their knowledge and years of experience with the younger generation to ensure the same passion members of SAFECOM and NCSWIC have for interoperable communications endures for future generations.

A LOOK INSIDE SUPER BOWL LI: A PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS PERSPECTIVE

Tom Sorley, representing the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the City of Houston Public Safety, FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee Chair, led a session on planning for and executing communications aspects of Super Bowl LI in Houston, Texas. Local public safety communications experts, Ashley Gonzalez, City of Houston Public Safety Communications, Super Bowl LI Communications Unit Leader, and Niki Papazoglakis, Program Coordinator for Harris County, Public Safety Technology Services, outlined various aspects of the communications planning process and subsequent outcomes. The communications planning working group revised the role and function of the Communications Unit (COMU) for this event, as there were no forms to capture the operationalization of LTE systems (e.g., sharing applications, text messaging, who owns the plan, who keeps the plan, and whether the plan should be archived and for how long, etc.), and received Technical Assistance (TA) from OEC in the form of writing support for the communications plan.

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Leading up to the Super Bowl, communications planners leveraged lessons learned and best practices from other major events, such as the Chevron Marathon. Differences in the level of planning led to major increases in the number of channel plans for 2017 versus 2016, allowing greater operational success. In 2017, there were more local and regional interoperable talkgroups, less special event or agency-specific talkgroups, and an increase in participating agencies.

Ashley spoke of the function and role of the Communications Resource Working Group, specifically efforts to include necessary local, state, and federal agencies in the process and use historical information and a baseline test to identify potential points of interference from other major previous events held at NRG Stadium, and other Super Bowl LI sanctioned-event venues. The Working Group had a year to move from the Final Four to the Super Bowl. Ashley also explained the process used to coordinate the use of interoperable talkgroups across multiple venues for all operational groups, specialized units and command staff.

Niki reported on the successful first-time use of mobile applications and LTE technology by public safety personnel at a large-scale event. Niki discussed her efforts hosting a series of requirements-gathering workshops with agency stakeholders to facilitate planning for the operational use of mobile data in lieu of any defined processes within the Incident Command System (ICS) framework. Tools utilized during the Super Bowl were identified based on functional requirements. A series of application tool testing events also contributed to the success of the event. The events assisted with device deployment and strategy, communications, educating various teams, up and down the chain on new capabilities, and shed light on how tools and devices were being used by public safety.

The team also performed an exercise scenario to test new capabilities, which led to the resolution of standard operating procedures (SOP) and development of an information architecture for the preferred mobile application. Originally, all participants were assigned devices; however, devices were later connected to a partner system with one communications person manning them and one intelligence person assessing the environment. Use of the Moxtra application provided a powerful use case, as evidenced by the fact that six agencies that typically did not coordinate were able to quickly locate and arrest a suspect among a crowd of 100,000+ people.

Evolution of Communications Planning Collaboration
<p>NCAA FINAL FOUR STATS (MARCH-APRIL 2016) 3 ACTION PLANS 6 MONTHS OF PLANNING 19 TOTAL AGENCIES 37 TALKGROUPS</p>
<p>SUPER BOWL LI STATS (JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2017) 1 ACTION PLAN 4 MONTHS COML PLANNING 13 MONTHS RCS PLANNING 60 TOTAL AGENCIES 166 TALKGROUPS</p>

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As a best practice, Tom mentioned the need to approach technology from an operational standpoint and integrate these considerations into ever-evolving, hands-on training. The team is working on an after-action-report to include data collected on missing information. The need for best practices as a result of challenges during the event included streamlining strategies for handing off and communicating passwords for devices, modifying application accounts to load on city-issued (non-band 14) devices, procuring applications serviced for future use, and mitigating coverage gaps. The team is working on an after action report and expressed a desire to leverage SAFECOM and NCSWIC to further their efforts.



Figure 1: Data Application Information Architecture

T-BAND UPDATE

Chief Gerald Reardon, SAFECOM Chair and Joint Technology Policy Committee Co-Chair, provided an update on the federally-mandated T-Band Relocation initiative and emphasized how critical it is for public safety to come together to develop a single message responding to the mandate. Chief Reardon began his presentation by providing historical background on migration requirements, noting T-Band (470-512 MHz band) provisions were introduced as part of the “Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012” (Public Law 112-96), which also established the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) and granted public safety the 700 MHz D-Block. In order to receive D-Block spectrum, public safety licensees were required to “give-back” the public safety T-Band spectrum. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), there are 925 public safety entities with T-Band licenses. These systems are licensed within the country’s eleven largest metropolitan areas (i.e., Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Dallas/Fort Worth, TX; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; Miami, FL; New York, NY and Northeast New Jersey; Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburgh, PA; San Francisco/Oakland, CA; and Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia), with public safety entities that serve more than 90 million citizens. Urban areas intend to use auction proceeds from the competitive bidding system to cover relocation costs for public safety entities migrating from the T-Band spectrum. However, public safety agencies and T-Band licensees are concerned revenue generated from the auction will not cover migration costs; and currently, there is not an adequate alternative.

In July 2016, the FCC released the “Public Safety T-Band Fact Sheet” reassuring its commitment to the continuity of mission critical communications for public safety. Subsequently, the Joint Technology

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Policy Committee reviewed the FCC's Fact Sheet and determined it did not provide a definitive competition date for the migration, nor did it provide conclusive data proving auction proceeds will fully cover T-Band migration costs. It remains imperative for the public safety community to continue to communicate concerns to the FCC and government officials as well work together to find solutions. The Joint Technology Policy Committee will closely monitor T-Band Relocation developments. For more information about the migration, please see the SAFECOM website for a [fact sheet](#) on the effort developed by the Joint Technology Policy Committee.

DISCUSSION ON ENCRYPTION AND STANDARDS

James Downes, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), facilitated a discussion with Chief Gerald Reardon on encryption challenges impacting LMR and public safety communications. The proliferation of digital systems coupled with the need for operational security has increased both the feasibility and usage of encrypted radio systems for public safety. However, confusion still exists among the public safety community concerning encryption and standards-based features for Project 25 (P25) LMR as well as manufacturers' promotion of proprietary and non-standards based features, which are often touted as easy fixes included as free upgrades.

Jim and Chief Reardon emphasized the importance for SAFECOM and NCSWIC to address these issues with leaders of the public safety community, providing guidance and a better understanding of the facts. Guidance for public safety stakeholders will include justification for standards-based features (i.e., even if the equipment is more expensive), support for requirements and compliant standards to ensure interoperability, and recommendations enforcing stronger testing and compliance acceptance. Additionally, the panel recommended the public safety community adopt a holistic approach to evaluating encrypted communications. This will require public safety users and decision-makers to:

- Determine overall need for encrypted communications
- Consider advantages and disadvantages for implementing encryption
- Consider the impact of encryption on interoperability
- Determine need for protection and the number of encrypted channels

The panel also acknowledged several critical questions public safety officials and system managers need to answer before implementing encrypted communications:

- What type of encryption should various public safety organizations implement?
- How do system administrators ensure adequate key management procedures?
- How do agencies coordinate keys with other public safety entities?
- How does public safety assess whether encryption will help or disrupt interoperability?

Members agreed, it is critical that both the Joint Technology Policy Committee and the Federal Partnership for Interoperable Communications (FPIC) continue developing guidance materials and advocate for standards compliance from the vendor community to ensure interoperability.

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SUSTAINING SYSTEMS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Jim Downes, DHS, OEC, facilitated a panel discussion with Darryl Anderson, Stark County (Ohio) Sheriff Department, and Scott Wright, Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), on sustaining systems through collaborative partnerships. Jim provided an overview and reported sustainment initiatives led by the FPIC through collaborative opportunities with SAFECOM, NCSWIC, and its public safety partners at all levels of government. Lack of funding and resources remain a persistent challenge for public safety. The sustainment of resources and operational capabilities supporting LMR is vital to public safety mission critical communications. Panelists identified catalysts to achieving enhanced operability and interoperability, including collaborative partnerships, improved interoperability, increased coverage, decreased costs, and shared resources (e.g., spectrum, land, and infrastructure).

Darryl Anderson shared lessons learned and best practices from the Ohio Multi-Agency Radio Communications system (Ohio MARCS-IP). The Ohio MARCS-IP system was approved by the Ohio State legislature in 2012, with infrastructure build-out starting in 2013 and completion in 2015. Despite being a “home-rule” and “self-government state,” the Ohio MARCS-IP has more than 300 radio towers, is P25-compliant, and includes partnerships with most metropolitan areas throughout the State of Ohio. Much of its success (i.e., leveraging existing resources, mitigating costs, expediting build-out, implementing processes) is attributed to the ability of municipalities, government officials, decision makers, and public safety practitioners to build trust and establish long-standing relationships.

Scott Wright acknowledged the invaluable role collaborative partnerships played in the precipitous growth and expansion of the Connecticut Telecommunications System (CTC) for public safety. Connecticut is also a “home rule” state with lots of local control and few financial incentives for sharing resources among public safety entities. Municipalities and public safety agencies were focused on securing their own resources rather than interoperability. Originally, built in 1999 as a state police-only system, collaborative partnerships transformed the CTC into a system with 65 tower sites, active user base across the state, and fully-interoperable public safety answering point (PSAP) centers. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), which is the Nation’s largest transportation network, serving a population of 15.3 million people over 5,000-square-miles spanning New York City to Connecticut, needed better coverage in the state. MTA partnered with CTC, providing both organizations access to the system while significantly improving coverage. The state is also completing a P25 build-out for the CTC system.

FUNDING AND SUSTAINING COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS UPDATES AND WORKING SESSION

Update on SAFECOM Grant Guidance

Bess Mitchell, DHS, OEC, provided an update of the 2017 SAFECOM Grant Guidance. Changes this year include additional cybersecurity resources, FirstNet Guidance on broadband policies, and additional guidance on data information sharing. The 2017 Guidance will be published to the SAFECOM website after appropriations are enacted (estimated May 2017) to ensure grantees have the latest information.

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Funding and Sustainment Life Cycle
Funding Project

David Soloos, Oregon SWIC and Joint Funding and Sustainment Committee Co-Chair, provided an update on the Committee’s initiatives. David noted the number one challenge sustaining public safety communications systems as cited by public safety agencies: funding. While agencies have traditionally turned to grants to fund communications upgrades, grants are not as readily available as they once were. The Committee has been examining funding challenges and options. Tom Roche, IACP, discussed common challenges related to reductions in grant funding, the inability to maintain and sustain current systems, and lack of knowledge by funders. David Soloos introduced a new Life Cycle graphic that reflects changes to the life cycle, including three new elements:

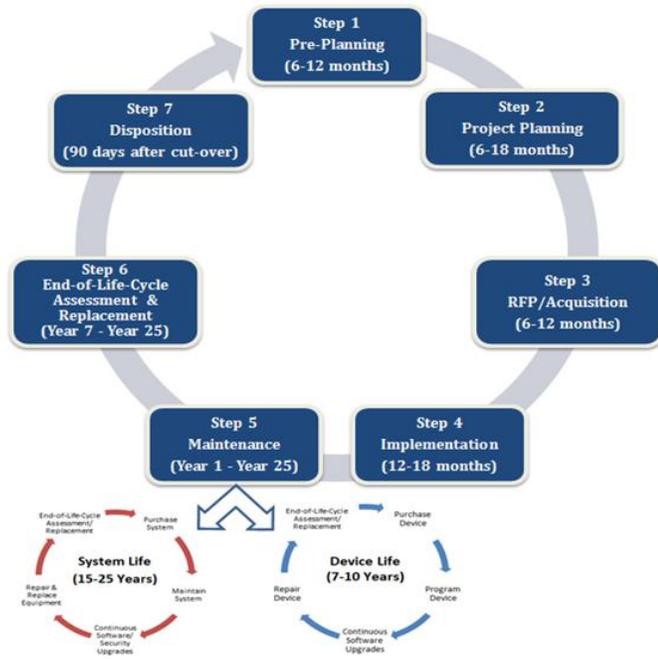


Figure 2. Life Cycle Graphic - Revised

1. A pre-planning phase to encourage agencies to plan before seeking funding (Step 1)
2. Edits to the overall graphic demonstrating how stakeholders are not managing a single life cycle for emergency communications, but multiple, long-term life cycles for systems and infrastructure and shorter-term life cycles for devices (Step 5)
3. A starting point for agencies to think about replacing equipment and systems (Step 6)

Figure 2 shows the revised life cycle graphic. The goal of these changes is to help agencies demonstrate to decision-makers the need for one-time capital investments and on-going support for and replacement of equipment and devices. Tom and David asked members to complete the “Life Cycle Survey,” which asks them to estimate the life cycle of systems vs. equipment. The results from the survey will be compiled, shared with the committee, and used to inform future products.

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NATIONWIDE COMMUNICATIONS BASELINE ASSESSMENT (NCBA) STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



Dusty Rhoades, DHS, OEC, opened the 2017 SAFECOM Nationwide Survey (SNS) session with the principle, “What gets measured, gets funded!” Dusty also reminded the audience of the positive impact the 2006 SAFECOM National Interoperability Baseline Survey (NIBS) had on the stakeholder community. Eric Runnels, DHS, OEC, continued with important updates pertaining to the SNS development and launch.

OEC is on track to satisfy all Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) requirements by the end of August 2017. Eric also explained that the August PRA signoff by the White House Office of Management and Budget will allow SAFECOM to launch the SNS in the September 2017 timeframe. Additionally, he confirmed the SNS will be available for a 30-day period for respondents across the Nation to complete and submit. Support from SAFECOM and NCSWIC members is critical to help drive SNS participation and response rates.

During the working session, SAFECOM and NCSWIC competed against each other in a modified version of Family Feud, which asked questions related to 2006 and 2017 efforts. Charlee Hess, DHS, OEC, and Kristin Buda, DHS, OEC, introduced and facilitated the friendly competition. Eddie Reyes, International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and Nikki Cassingham, NCSWIC Vice Chair and Oklahoma SWIC, served as team captains. Using real-time audience feedback, the SAFECOM-NCSWIC version of Family Feud aimed to achieve three objectives:

1. Re-visit best practices and lessons learned gained from SAFECOM’s 2006 survey, such as the value of statistical validity, a clear focus on public safety communications, and high response rates;
2. Encourage SAFECOM and NCSWIC Members to drive SNS outreach, such as request specific, cost-effective ways members can help promote the SNS via social media, distribution lists, websites, and briefings; and
3. Explore incentives and impacts aligned with SNS results, such as funding, progress comparisons, capability improvements, updated programs and services, and reliable data and findings of value.

In closing, Charlee noted a key takeaway overall is that promotion is key to SNS success. Reiterating this theme, Chair Gerald Reardon, SAFECOM Chair, and Mark Grubb, SAFECOM Vice Chair and Representative to NCSWIC, expressed their support. They echoed the importance of SNS results for members and their organizations, and requested assistance leveraging pre-developed OEC SNS materials, and cascading information and encouragement beyond the meeting to increase state-, local-, and regional-level participation. Lastly, Eric thanked SAFECOM and NCSWIC leadership for their advocacy. OEC has established an e-mail inbox for questions and interest in SNS-related volunteer opportunities at sns@hq.dhs.gov.

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FIRSTNET UPDATE

Lesia Dickson, Region 6 Lead for the FirstNet, provided updates and next steps on FirstNet. On March 30, 2017, FirstNet announced its partnership with AT&T to build a multi-billion dollar wireless broadband network for America's first responders, with the goal of modernizing emergency communications infrastructure, saving lives, protecting communities, and creating jobs. FirstNet intends to have public safety users on the nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN) by the end of 2017.

As a result of protest action regarding the acquisition process for the NPSBN, the United States Court of Federal Claims ruled FirstNet had executed the procurement correctly. This allowed FirstNet's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to move forward with the 25-year agreement between FirstNet and AT&T. Draft state plans will be ready and available by mid-June 2017. FirstNet will provide 20 megahertz (MHz) of high-value, telecommunications spectrum and success-based payments of \$6.5 billion over the next five years to support the network buildout. AT&T will spend about \$40 billion over the life of the contract to build, deploy, operate, and maintain the network with a focus on ensuring robust coverage for public safety. Finally, AT&T will connect FirstNet users to the company's telecommunications network assets, valued at more than \$180 billion.

FirstNet's number one priority is user experience. Lesia assured SAFECOM and NCSWIC members that coverage would be the same, if not better, than what it is now. Additionally, the price would be the same or lower. Lesia also indicated FirstNet and AT&T's commitment to providing coverage in rural areas. She stated there will be a dedicated Help Desk available 365-days a year for those with questions or concerns. Finally, FirstNet will present state plans to stakeholders around June 19 for their comments. FirstNet encouraged states to submit comments on their state plans during the 45 day comment period following initial release.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS EVOLUTION BROCHURE GRAPHIC WORKING SESSION

For the past year, the Education and Outreach Committee has discussed revising the Public Safety Communications Evolution Brochure, including the brochure graphic. The Committee developed four graphics to demonstrate the evolution of emergency communications technologies in different ways as well as relationships among public safety affected by the introduction and implementation of new and emerging technologies.

The Committee showcased the graphics during the SAFECOM and NCSWIC Joint In-Person Meeting to introduce the concepts and messaging and gather feedback from both groups. After the graphics were presented, Education and Outreach Committee members and federal staff facilitated table discussions about each graphic's message, strengths and weaknesses, and appearance. Participants provided feedback, which was recorded onto worksheets for the Committee to analyze and better understand preferred components of each graphic for the development of a fifth graphic.

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NCSWIC LEADERSHIP AWARD

Bob Symons and Nikki Cassingham presented Darryl Anderson, retired Ohio SWIC, with the inaugural NCSWIC Leadership Award. The award is presented to current or former SWICs who exemplify the mission of the NCSWIC and whose effort has greatly enhanced public safety communications interoperability, and who have significantly and consistently contributed to the effectiveness of the NCSWIC in its mission to guide DHS in the improvement of public safety



SAFECOM AND NCSWIC COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

SAFECOM Education & Outreach Committee

The Education and Outreach (E&O) Committee convened to elect a Committee Vice Chair, discuss work products, review [SAFECOM website](#) updates, and conduct a *SAFECOM Highlight* interview of Tom Roche, IACP. Vice Chair nominees gave candidacy speeches. The Committee elected Mike Murphy, SAFECOM At-Large, to the Vice Chair position.

Chris Lombard, E&O Committee Chair, reviewed revisions to the [Public Safety Communications Evolution Brochure](#) as well as efforts to develop a replacement graphic portraying the evolution of emergency communications technologies and their relationships. The Committee also discussed developing a white paper to explore the decline of interest in the emergency communications field among younger generations. Lastly, the Committee reviewed updates to the new SAFECOM website and discussed reorganizing the Resources webpage to streamline navigation of products. The next SAFECOM E&O Committee call is on Wednesday, June 28 at 2 pm ET.

SAFECOM Governance Committee

The SAFECOM Governance Committee discussed current and future initiatives for each of the active working groups, including the Membership Working Group (MWG) and the State Governance Review Working Group (SGRWG); discussed developing a revised work product approval process for full SAFECOM review and comment on the products and initiatives developed by committees; continued to work towards providing the SAFECOM Executive Committee (EC) with recommendations for new SAFECOM membership; and discussed future initiatives for the remainder of 2017. The Committee reviewed the SGRWG development of the *SAFECOM Standards for Statewide Public Safety Communications Governance Structure ("Strawman")*, including comments and feedback received from the SAFECOM and NCSWIC Governance Committees. The Working Group will schedule a meeting to update language in the *Strawman*, including language emphasizing the importance of collaboration.

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The MWG developed a report of the findings from the SAFECOM Membership Survey, and came to the consensus that there are no “gaps” in SAFECOM’s membership, but rather opportunities to increase participation. Additionally, the MWG used survey findings to discuss opportunities for new membership. Members agreed on the need to develop an annual process to review SAFECOM’s current membership and recommend new membership.

The Committee also discussed several proposed paths to allow all SAFECOM members, regardless of their primary committee, an opportunity to review and provide feedback on products prior to final approval by the EC to increase awareness of overall SAFECOM product development. Members felt the need to further discuss the pros and cons of each option discussed and desired to see a draft organizational chart for these processes. For the remainder of 2017, the Governance Committee is slated to develop an Intellectual Capital Assessment for SAFECOM’s Membership, conduct an effort to streamline the *SAFECOM Charter*, and develop a supplemental by-laws document. The next SAFECOM Governance Committee call is on Tuesday, June 27 at 4 pm ET.

Joint SAFECOM & NCSWIC Funding & Sustainment Committee

Joint Funding and Sustainment Committee members introduced themselves and shared challenges. Members noted their ongoing quest to fund and sustain current systems. Members were appreciative of materials the Committee developed for educating decision-makers, noting their use and prevalence of dissemination. The committee discussed FirstNet’s award announcement and how it may impact public safety communications. Members shared concerns about mission critical voice and devices that will withstand public safety demands. All members expressed a need to continue to educate and communicate with elected officials and decision-makers on the entire public safety communications portfolio.

The committee finalized four sections of the Life Cycle Planning Guide:

- Introduction
- Pre-Planning
- Planning
- Acquisition

Members reviewed and discussed the Equipment Life Cycle Survey and determined next steps, including a compilation and review of responses on the June call. The findings from the survey will be used to inform the Maintenance chapter of the Life Cycle Planning Guide. The next Joint Funding and Sustainment Committee call is on Wednesday, June 21 at 3:30 pm ET.

Joint SAFECOM & NCSWIC Technology Policy Committee

Ted Lawson, DHS, OEC, welcomed members and provided an overview for the working session. In the coming months, Craig Allen, Iowa Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) and NCSWIC

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Technology Policy Committee Co-Chair, plans to retire as the Iowa SWIC. Joseph Galvin, Illinois SWIC was nominated as the successor to Craig Allen, and will serve as the new NCSWIC Technology Policy Co-Chair. The Committee thanked Craig Allen for his commitment and service.

The Committee examined its definition of “Public Safety Grade (PSG)” and the accompanying PSG White Paper. The PSG White Paper will feature the Committee’s PSG definition and is intended to provide the public safety community with guidance on standards-based communications equipment. It also aims to assist public safety procurement officials and decision makers with making informed procurement decisions. The Committee agreed more research and discussion is needed to further develop content.

In response to equipment procurement challenges raised by SAFECOM and NCSWIC members at October 2016 In-Person Meetings, the Committee identified challenges related to requests for proposal (RFP), including justification for increased expenses; interpreting language used by vendors and its impact on procurement (e.g., use of the terms “equipped” versus “capable”; incompatible features, interfaces, or software; understanding and planning for the expected lifecycle of communications equipment; understanding emerging technologies and features; encrypted communications and the use of non-standards based features (e.g., ADP); and overcoming compatibility issues and understanding what’s needed to ensure interoperability throughout a jurisdiction, county, state, or region. The Committee decided to develop guidance materials on RFP development and requirements gathering for subscriber units. The intended audience will be public safety procurement officials, agency leadership, and financial officers as well elected and appointed officials.

Before adjourning the meeting, Charlee Hess, DHS, OEC, provided updates on the Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) Working Group and Jim Downes reported on actions led by FPIC. In addition, the Committee will explore opportunities to provide guidance to the public safety community on the use of emerging technologies, overcoming information overload challenges, and evaluate lessons learned from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (B-Top) Early Builders Pilot Projects. The next Joint Technology Policy Committee call is on Tuesday, June 27 at 3 pm ET.

NCSWIC Governance Committee

The NCSWIC Governance Committee met to review and finalize survey questions for the NCSWIC Intellectual Capital Assessment. The Assessment is meant to collect demographics, employment information, experience, and areas of expertise from all SWICs. The information will be used to develop a high-level external fact sheet showcasing the background and broad range of expertise among the NCSWIC and an internal Membership Database to allow SWICs easy access to information about each member. Following the meeting, OEC will incorporate suggested edits to the survey and present a final version to the Committee for a vote on the May 25th committee conference call. Members also began discussions on establishing a repository of statewide governance examples on the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN). During the meeting, Bob Symons, NCSWIC Governance Committee Chair, stepped down from his role as Committee Chair in preparation for his retirement in September. He thanked each of the Committee members for their hard work and dedication to furthering the NCSWIC’s mission. Following the meeting, Ken Hasenei, Maryland SWIC, graciously volunteered to take on the role

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of NCSWIC Governance Committee Chair moving forward. The next NCSWIC Governance Committee call is on Thursday, June 22 at 1:30 pm ET.

NCSWIC Planning, Training, and Exercise Committee

The NCSWIC PTE Committee met to discuss current and future committee products. John Miller, New Jersey SWIC, led the discussion on the COMU Personnel PTB Sign-off Process Template. The COMU Personnel PTB Sign-off Process Template aims to fill state COMU accreditation program gaps until a program is established. Specifically, this template gives states a starting point for developing their own COMU Position Task Book sign-off process. During the meeting, members reviewed feedback and finalized the document.

At the Joint SAFECOM and NCSWIC In-Person Meeting in October 2016, PTE Committee members identified the need to identify best practices for developing a Field Operations Guide (FOG). During the month of April 2017, the committee surveyed NCSWIC members on best practices and lessons learned for FOG development. The committee reviewed survey responses and began brainstorming the document.

Pam Montanari, DHS, OEC, provided members with a high-level overview of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Mission Readiness Package. Committee members agreed this would be an important and beneficial feature for every region. Members advocated a communications piece be added to the EMAC Package. Lastly, PTE members reviewed the list of current TA offerings and suggested developing short informational videos on the five lanes of governance to assist with marketing them. The Committee plans to lead efforts developing scripts for the videos. The next SAFECOM Governance Committee call is on Tuesday, June 27 at 3 pm ET.

COMU Working Group After-Hours Meeting

The SAFECOM-NCSWIC COMU Working Group met in person to discuss COMU issues involving governance, training, and credentialing/certification. The COMU Working Group is moving forward with creating sub-groups to focus on those three areas, as they relate to COMU. Developing sub-groups to oversee each of these efforts will allow for each issue to be properly explored so recommendations can be developed in a timely fashion.

Dick Tenney, DHS, OEC, and Wes Rogers, Federal Co-Lead of the COMU Working Group, DHS, OEC, introduced efforts the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance (ICTAP) Branch have been developing to support the communication unit. Drafts of the programs will be distributed to the working group for review and feedback. Ashley Gonzalez and Niki Papazoglakis, Harris County Central Technology Services, shared some of their own experiences supporting the COMU and overcoming some technical and personnel management obstacles.

The COMU Working Group will meet in-person meeting (pending meeting approval) in August 17-18, 2017 in Denver, CO to continue discussions and product development.



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Wes recently joined the COMU Working Group as co-lead alongside Kristin Buda, DHS, OEC. His practitioner background and extensive knowledge of emergency communications are positive additions to the working group. The next COMU Working Group call is on Monday, June 19 at 2 pm ET.

For more information regarding committee meetings, please reference individual committee and working group summaries.