

**Northeast Regional Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, February 25, 2009**  
**10:00 a.m., Land Services Building, Brainerd**

**Proceedings:**

Vice-Chair Tim Thomas called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Attendees who signed in, who were recognized, and who joined by ITV are as follows:

1. Arvid Dahl, Grand Portage Reservation (ITV)
2. B.J. Kohlstedt, Lake County (ITV)
3. Ben Crowson, DSC Communications (ITV)
4. Bill Bernhjelm, DPS/ARMER
5. Brian Belich, Carlton County Sheriff's Office
6. Brian Snyder, DSC Communications
7. Bruce Hegrenes, St. Louis County/Communications (ITV)
8. Bruce Grotberg, Koochiching County Sheriff's Office
9. Chris Lentz, Motorola
10. David Dodge, Lakehead Mutual Aid Association (ITV)
11. Dewey Johnson, St. Louis County (ITV)
12. Gene McLain, Pine County HSEM
13. Jeff Anderson, Kanabec County Sheriff's Office
14. Jeremy Vogel, Rogers Two Way Radio
15. Jim Fregin, Federal Engineering
16. John Bowen, Crow Wing County Emergency Management
17. John Strongitharm, Duluth Fire Department (ITV)
18. Kerry Swenson, Cass County Sheriff's Office
19. Kevin Lee, North Memorial
20. Mark Falk, Cook County Sheriff's Office (ITV)
21. Mark Smith, DSC Communications (ITV)
22. Mark Stansberry, North Memorial Ambulance
23. Mike Fink, Motorola
24. Nell Hoey, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
25. Pat Lee, Arrowhead EMS
26. Pat Medure, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
27. Patrice Nelson, Minnesota State Patrol/Brainerd District
28. Randy Fisher, Cass County Sheriff's Office
29. Rey Freeman, GeoComm
30. Robin Roeser, Duluth Police Department (ITV)
31. Roy Holmes, Minnesota HSEM
32. Scott Camps, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office (ITV)
33. Scott Heide, Crow Wing County
34. Steve Ovick, Pine County Sheriff's Office
35. Steve VanKekerix, Lake County Sheriff's Office (ITV)
36. Susan Campbell, St. Louis Co./Duluth P.D. Grant Coordinator (ITV)
37. Tim Lee, Mn/DOT Electronic Communications
38. Tim Thomas, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
39. Tom Hannon, Consultant/State Radio Board

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**I. INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductions are made by those in attendance in the room and via ITV.

**II. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

*A motion is made by Tim Thomas to accept the minutes from the last meeting. Bruce Grotberg seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries unanimously.*

**III. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**A. Training Committee (Mark Falk)**

The RRB did approve the RAC's request for this committee to approve training funding up to \$3,000. The Type III Unit Leader Training in St. Cloud has room for one more person to attend. As it stands, Tim Thomas and Dewey Johnson have volunteered to go to this excellent training. Deadline: February 27, 2009, for application. Training date: March 17-19, 2009. Make your own reservations.

**B. Policy Committee (Pat Medure)**

Pat Medure put together several draft forms for RAC approval to move ahead to the RRB for approval. They regard: disbursements, expense reimbursement policy, billing policy, special committee reimbursement policy, and an expense sheet. Nell will e-mail the forms to everyone.

**C. Technical and Operations Committee (Steve Ovick)**

Nothing new this month.

**D. SRB Operations and Technical (Bruce Hegrenes)**

Some topics at the lengthy 4-hour meeting included: standards, modifications of standards, presentation on statewide talkgroups, satellite cow, fire paging, requesting Motorola come to the next talk meeting to discuss fire paging, audio-visual meeting options (the state cannot just do audio), interoperability (discussed later by Scott Camps), ARMER standards renumbering--which will probably involve the RAC in the future.

**E. State Radio Board Interop Standing Committee (Scott Camps)**

The meeting was last Tuesday and was dedicated solely to hearing investment proposals from each region throughout the state for 2009 Homeland Security funds related to interop communications. Scott made presentations on behalf of Region 2 for \$803,000 (microwave link into the ARMER backbone from each of the remaining six PSAPs in our region); \$975,000 for remaining dedicated microwave bandwidth to complete northern border project. An e-mail was sent out requesting additional information on each investment justification. Those are

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due by March 20, 2009, and Scott will answer those questions. On March 25, 2009, they will get together as a grant workgroup on the Interop Committee to review the new questions submitted. At that time, they will try to develop recommendations for the Interop Committee regarding which projects to put forward for funding. There is only about \$5.8 million in funding and approximately \$26 million in requests. They need to whittle this down.

**F. Fiscal Agent (Pat Lee)**

Pat states there was about \$1,500.00 allocated to the RAC and the only invoices he received were from Pat Medure for the RRB convening meeting. Pat Lee asks for invoices to be sent to him if there are any out there, as he is working on closing out the grant.

**G. Regional CASM Representative (Karla White)**

Karla was absent, and Tim Thomas reports that there were no updates.

**H. PSIC Allocation Committee (Mark Falk)**

The RRB did approve their recommendation that the funding is distributed equally among the 15 entities of the RRB. Pat Medure tells the group that he applied for the PSIC grant through WEGO but has not received the paperwork yet. Once it arrives, he will have the Board approve it as the fiscal agent and everyone can draw down on the allocated funds. Scott Camps reminds the members of the RAC to look at how they will spend the allocation and reach out to those groups within their individual jurisdictions (tribes and NGOs). The grant amount is \$42,848.34. The RRB decided that the commitment is to be made by July 1, 2009. If it is not used by September 1, 2009, it is returned to the pool.

**IV. Old Business**

**A. GeoComm Regional Radio Survey Update (Rey Freeman)**

Rey reports the City of Duluth section and the Koochiching County section are completed for review before final publishing and they are currently working on the St. Louis County section and the EMS agency section. GeoComm has also received five more survey responses in the last month from St. Louis Co. (bringing them up to a 94% response). Once the reports are finalized, they are posted to the website for viewing.

**B. Status of Local and Regional Assessment Project - Federal Engineering/Jim Fregin, Project Manager for the Northeast Region**

(This presentation was moved to the end of the meeting.) Jim reports on the progress of reports coming in and does a power point presentation on what the reports will look like. He addresses the technologists surveys that went out to Koochiching, Pine, and St. Louis Counties. He urges the return of these surveys ASAP. He states that a weekly status has been going out to each county involving surveys returned from the users and stakeholders and mentions that some areas

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are doing well and some areas are not doing so well in returning the surveys. Jim explains that maps and pictures will be included in these reports with much additional information, such as what needs improvement, what is good, equipment lists, repeaters, base stations, tower locations, maps of towers, coverage of portables and mobiles, paging coverage, etc.

**C. Training Committee Approved - Scott Camps**

The RRB approved the Training Committee with the addition of a member of the RRB to sit on this committee as well. Kevin Troupe (Kanabec County) volunteered. This approved committee consists of: Tim Thomas, Mark Falk, Marcus Bruning, and Kevin Troupe. This committee will authorize training expenditures up to \$3,000 and can make training decisions when there is a short timeline.

**D. COML Training - Tim Thomas**

Already discussed. Turn in bills for mileage, room, and meals to the RRB.

**E. PSAP Consolidation - Bill Bernhjelm**

Bill states that the Governor signed an executive order in January creating this workgroup, which will consist of many parties, including the RRBs, sheriffs, chiefs, etc. The study will look at another study done in 2004, looking at PSAP consolidation and ways to save money via cooperation between PSAPs (county, state, etc.). The workgroup will look at comments in the 2004 report about the State not mandating this but helping to support the concept of PSAP consolidation where there are willing partners. Bill will keep everyone posted of the selection process and timelines when he learns of it. Pat Medure reports that he is the rep from the MN Sheriff's Association and will be sitting on this committee.

**F. User Committee - Scott Camps**

Scott states that he has questions on establishing this committee due to the largeness of it and mentions that as agencies transition to the ARMER system, maybe a User Committee could be put together then. Tom Hannon adds that our region is the only one that does not have one, the Joint Powers Agreement requires it, the RRB has issued the call for the formation of the User Committee, and it is a governing part of the RRB. Bruce suggests that each county hold a meeting with all the users in their county and then select one or two to sit on the User Committee. Steve Ovick states that the issue in Pine County is money for mileage and asks if anything has been addressed to the RRB regarding this issue. Pat Medure says his draft documents that will go before the RRB address that issue. Tim Thomas asks each entity to come to the March meeting with at least one recommendation for the User Committee.

**G. Homeland Security Grant - Pat Medure/Scott Camps**

As far as 2008 Homeland Security funds, money has been allocated to RRBs for cross-spectrum radios (\$102,564). VHF users can acquire ARMER radios or ARMER users can acquire VHF radios. The RAC looked at agencies directly

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affected by the transition to ARMER. Scott asks if we need 800 MHz radios in cars because Itasca Co. built in VHF frequencies to be used for interoperability. Bruce Grotberg mentions that the northern border isn't close to being ready to use 800 on the State towers. Bill Bernhjelm says they would probably be ready this year. Bruce states that until we know what equipment is going in there for sure, how do we know what will have to happen. Scott concurs and reminds the group that there is a deadline for using these funds, and we need to decide on how to allocate the funding. Bill Bernhjelm states that there is a use for these radios regarding monitoring other agencies. Scott asks the group what they want to recommend to the RRB regarding this funding for cross-spectrum radios. Mark Falk reminds the group that the decision was made at the last RAC meeting in Duluth and that Scott Camps suggested it go to Itasca because they had 800 MHz and it would assist in interoperability between bordering counties to Itasca. He states that Pat was to come back with a list of affected jurisdictions. Scott Camps concurred that he recalled his statement as well. Pat Medure reports that there are about 40 on his list. Pat Medure asks Scott Camps if he would like to get together with him, discuss it, and bring it back to the next meeting. Scott agrees.

Pat Medure also mentions that there was another grant he applied for (IECPG) for \$61,476. Scott Camps states that participation expenses will be covered. These dollars will reimburse the User Committee members for expenses, and things of this nature. Tom Hannon adds that the requirement for use of the money is threefold: 1) You have to adopt a policy specifying how the expenses will be reimbursed; 2) You need to develop a form on which that will be reported; and 3) You need to develop a budget allocating how the funds will be spent. Expenses for individuals representing the region on statewide committees (OTC, etc.) could be eligible if our policy addresses it. It is NOT intended to replace the existing expenditures for county board members who serve and get a per diem.

**V. New Business**

**A. Website - Do we need it? Is it a function of the RRB?**

Mark Falk reminds the group that the Grand Portage/IT Department was going to take it on, but the person is no longer employed with G.P. The new IT person (Jeremiah) would be willing to take it on. Steve Ovick states that it would be helpful for those wanting updates, meeting notices, etc. Scott Camps states that there will be a cost for hosting it and work will be required of the RAC for coming up with content. John Strongitharm suggests visiting the other sites to incorporate their ideas into our website. Pat Medure suggests content could be meeting notices, minutes of RRB/RAC/User Committee, meeting dates, link to State Radio Board. Tom Hannon suggests documents; such as: studies, RFPs, contracts, standards, reports, forms, flowcharts, etc. He states it is easier if the administrative agent takes care of the website. Pat Medure states he will talk to his MIS people to see if they can take it on and suggests Grand Portage do the same on their end and both parties can report on findings at the March meeting.

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**Addition to Agenda - John Strongitharm**

John reports that at a meeting he was at a few weeks ago, they had to make a decision regarding an expenditure for radio enhancements in the region (close to \$9 million). The question brought up was should the NE MN Homeland Security Region 2 be making those decisions or should they be sent to the RAC or RRB and how should these organizations interact. The concern is that future decisions made at the NE MN Homeland Security Region 2 level may not work with what the RRB wishes to do. John wants the RAC to discuss how they want to move forward and asks if they feel that the RAC and the RRB should be driving the boat on communications, or should it be kept the way it is. Bruce Grotberg states that there should be some interaction so the left arm isn't going one way and the right another. John feels there should be more formal interaction so the RAC and HSEM Region 2 can discuss matters prior to having something done in less than a week's deadline. He asks how to do this. John states that he asked who at the State was monitoring what money for communications for HSEM--whether it's a police grant, a Mn/DOT grant, or a DNR grant to make sure it all works together. He states that the purpose of the RRB was to try to bring it all together. Tom Hannon states that the issue of coordination between Homeland Security and the RRB is a difficult one. He points out that our RRB and Homeland Security Region 2 mirror each other and that isn't true of all regions. He also says that the beauty of the system is that under the radio boards' structure, they are a joint powers entity (governmental agency), which gives you the spending authority and governance authority that the Homeland Security regions cannot provide. It's better when the two can be brought together. Tom suggests that it may be appropriate to pull a workgroup together to see if there are any changes, from a structural perspective, to make that happen. Tom would be willing to assist--and volunteers Bill Bernhjelm. John states he would like to be sure that there is a good way to communicate so we don't do things that the RRB may do differently a year later.

Bill Bernhjelm states that right now, the money flows through Scott Wiggins and states that Scott is involved with the DPS and HSEM in allocating the grants that relate to communication. He adds that there has been a disjointed approach and short timelines. Bill reports that there will be more time when the 2010 program begins. Bill also asks if the RAC or the RRB will want to exert their authority to be the POC for any radio activity that goes on within a region.

Pat Medure states that we have the connections and feels that the missing piece is that we are not communicating enough to the RRB. He points out that because we have some of the same players, we have a bigger advantage than some of the other regions who do not have the same players. John Strongitharm agrees and states that much of this may be growing pains, as the RRB and RAC are new. John states that we could communicate better with the areas around us as well.

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Roy Holmes suggests getting together with Bill Bernhjelm to see if they can figure out how to communicate better. Bill agrees. Pat Medure suggests they come back to the next meeting with their findings.

**B. Discussion on the Contract Between Mn/DOT and the RRB - Tim Lee**

Handouts will be e-mailed to others. Tim explains that there is a plan approval process which comes out of the State Radio Board Standard 1.10, it must be approved by the RRB and Mn/DOT and the State Radio Board. Tim states that there is also a contracting process. Agencies must contract with Mn/DOT to be part of the ARMER system (Standard 1.19). The RRB must have a contract with Mn/DOT. Mark Gieseke is working on what should be in that contract. Mark asked Tim to bring the graph to the RAC and have the RRB look at it. Comments should be directed to Mark regarding additions, questions, etc. John Strongitharm asks if each agency needs a contract with Mn/DOT or if they are covered because they are members of the JPA with the RRB and they will have a contract. Tim Lee states that if it is for interop purposes, it can be through the RRB; however, Mn/DOT needs to know about those contracts since the FCC licenses are held by Mn/DOT. Tim states that the FCC requires a list of users operating under that license. Recommendations will be brought back to next month's meeting.

John Strongitharm asks how the RAC could find out ASAP if the RRB has a directive so they can research it ahead of time. Bruce Hegrenes asks if the RRB minutes could be sent to the RAC. Nell will send them out.

**Addition to Agenda - Bill Bernhjelm**

Bill states that he received an e-mail from one of the members of the RRB inquiring about money available through the stimulus package. There will be several billion devoted to the development of broadband across the country. He states that he expects there should be some specific allocation related to public safety, but it is too soon to know exactly what is coming through. Bill will update others as he gets more information.

Bill reminds the group to communicate with their RRB member and that they are communicating back so they understand the issues. He states that it is critical to make sure your interests and your county's interests are represented.

Bill also encouraged the POCs to stay on top of the surveys and get them to Jim Fregin.

Another item Bill brings up is a "list service." It is like an automated e-mail program. Information is posted on the list serve, and then the list serve automatically e-mails participants notifying you of mail. It doesn't bog down the e-mail system because of the size of attachments. Bill can put together information if anyone is interested.

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**VI. Next Meetings**

- March 18, 2009, 10:00 a.m., Pine County
- April 22, 2009, St. Louis County

**VII: Adjourn**

*Scott Camps makes a motion to adjourn.* Bruce Grotberg seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion passes unanimously. The meeting adjourns at 12:06 p.m.