

**Northeast Regional Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, July 15, 2009**  
**10:00 a.m., Itasca County Sheriff's Office Training Room, Grand Rapids**

**Proceedings:**

Vice-Chair Tim Thomas called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Attendees who signed in are as follows:

1. Bill Bernhjelm, DPS/ARMER
2. Brian Snyder, DSC Communications
3. Brian Youso, Koochiching County Sheriff's Office
4. Chris Lentz, Motorola
5. Jim Fregin, Federal Engineering
6. John Bowen, Crow Wing County Emergency Management
7. Karla White, Aitkin County Sheriff's Office
8. Mike Fink, Motorola
9. Nell Hoey, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
10. Pat Medure, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
11. Randy Fisher, Cass County Sheriff's Office
12. Rey Freeman, GeoComm
13. Scott Camps, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office
14. Steve Ovick, Pine County Sheriff's Office
15. Steve VanKekerix, Lake County Sheriff's Office
16. Tim Thomas, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
17. Tom Hannon, Consultant/State Radio Board
18. Tony Pogorels, Hibbing Fire Department

**I. INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductions are made by those in attendance.

**II. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Scott Camps makes a motion to accept last month's minutes as submitted. Steve VanKekerix seconds the motion. The motion carries.

**III. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**A. Training Committee (Tim Thomas for Mark Falk)**

Tim gives an update on the Training Advisory Group (T.A.G.), which is part of the statewide interop committee. Second meeting was in Shoreview on June 26, 2009. Top four issues the group wants to focus on are: Interoperability, Dispatch Training, Radio Skills, and Standard Operating Procedures. Discussion ensued regarding coming up with a plan and what items needed discussion. Gary Fletcher also gave a presentation. Gary is a battalion chief for St. Cloud Fire. One item Tim noted from Gary's presentation was that a number of fire departments showed up for a fire they had in St. Cloud without being called. The issue then becomes managing a group you requested and then managing one you

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had not planned on that shows up. Tim said it was a good presentation. Tim states that they looked at the needs assessment that the state had as a whole. Tim reports that they will recommend training standards to the interop committee regarding what type of training dispatch and those on the ground need in order to accomplish interoperability. Website discussion was held as well. The next meeting will be July 24, 2009, in Shoreview. August 28, 2009 will be the next scheduled date, according to Tim, and future video conferencing will be done. Mark Falk, Tim Thomas, Dewey Johnson and the State Patrol were there for the meeting. Tim reports that all regions throughout the state were represented.

**B. Policy (Mark Falk)**

Nothing to report here.

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

Nothing new here. Steve hopes that between St. Louis, Carlton, and Pine there may be a summary of what happened at the Hell's Angels rally.

**D. SRB Operations and Technical (Scott Camps for Bruce Hegrenes)**

Scott reports that he has received no update from Bruce.

**E. SRB Interop Standing Committee (Scott Camps)**

Scott reports that the State received a little bit less in grant funding than what they anticipated and instead of cutting the regions, they will cut from the allocation made to the Division of Emergency Communication Network. Regarding the 2009 Homeland Security, an MOU is going out to the RRBs. This MOU just gives the State authorization to expend funds on behalf of the local entities, which will make it easier for purchasing. Scott reports that much of the money will be used for infrastructure, participation plans for agencies migrating to the ARMER system, mobiles, portables, and local enhancements. This is good news for the counties migrating to ARMER. Regarding the COML training, that committee is developing criteria/policy for state certification as a Communications Unit Leader Trainer. A few other things they will be working on in the near future will be the interoperability between ARMER and non-ARMER systems, a frequency plan, and standardized naming.

**F. Regional CASM (Karla White)**

Karla reports that if she gets any new replies, she sends them on to the State. Karla reports that the participation has been rather slim. Tim Thomas suggests that maybe it is something that can be brought up at the dispatch/coordinator bi-monthly meetings.

**IV. Old Business**

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

Rey's slide presentation will be included with the minutes. Discussion and questions that arose out of the presentation are as follows:

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- Tim Thomas asks if there will be a vendor issue as the deadline approaches. Mike Fink, Motorola, states that he does not expect that. Chris Lentz, Motorola, stated that their concern was if they had enough workers to support the migration.
- Pat Medure states that many areas do not know what direction they are going and feels that will put people behind. Rey states that there is time, but people cannot wait too long. He states that licensing and frequency applications can be an issue and take time.
- Tom Hannon states that it is important to get the assessments completed.
- Scott states that he has seen something regarding steps involved if migrating to the ARMER system and that other things needed to migrate, such as timelines, could be helpful. Tim Thomas states that a good starting point could be referenced to Rey's first slide listing steps taken with time involved. Some items listed would be land purchases and how long that generally takes, licensing and how long that generally takes, etc. Rey states it takes about 18-24 months to do an ARMER implementation. Pat Medure adds that partnership with the State is key and added that Itasca County built the towers and billed it back to the State, as there wasn't the zoning issue when the County did it. Pat states that the State process is cumbersome and it eliminated that part for Itasca County.

**B. Federal Engineering (Jim Fregin)**

Jim states that the requirements for the study FE is doing are slightly different than the requirements for GeoComm. One difference is that the end assessment they are doing gives three alternatives to select or disregard and provides a cost of ownership that the county boards can view which will depict costs over the next ten years. Jim's status report and survey statistics are listed below:

**Table 1 – Report status**

Report statistics	Queued	In progress	Q/A	Review	Revising	Approved/ Completed
Existing infrastructure						
			St. Louis	Koochiching -1		Lake Pine Cook Kanabec Carlton
Alternatives reports						
	Cook Kanabec		Pine			

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**Table 2 - Survey statistics**

<b>County</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Distributed</b>
Carlton	11	19
Cook	6	15
Kanabec	9	15
Koochiching	3	28
Lake	3	14
Pine	closed	closed
St. Louis	14	176

**C. User Committee (Tony Pogorels)**

The User Committee will meet after the RAC meeting in Hibbing next month. This will help them to see what the RAC is all about. The RAC will meet at 10:00 a.m. on August 19, 2009, and invite the User Committee. Tony will let Nell know about the venue. Scott asks Nell about the responses from people interested in being on the User Committee, and she guesses that the responses were around 20 some.

**D. Grant Updates (Pat Medure)**

Pat states that there are a lot of unknowns regarding filling in information for the grants and if there is a need to modify, it will be modified. Regarding the PSIC funding, a letter went out to every entity asking for a commitment. Out of the 15 entities in the NE Region, the ones not heard from or not committing to the PSIC grant are: Aitkin County, Lake County, City of Duluth, and City of Virginia. Scott Camps reports that there will be turn-back money from those agencies not using the funding. Pat Medure recommends that everyone get some line item in place for the 2010 budget for a 20% match. John Bowen suggests talking to user groups in local jurisdictions as some police departments are talking about allocating money for grants that may come down the line. Scott reminds the group that one of the components of the PSIC grant is to make sure that funds are available for the NGOs and tribes. He encourages the group to talk to these people as well.

A motion is made by Pat Medure to have Nell contact the three entities not heard from regarding the PSIC funding. John Bowen seconds the motion. The motion carries. Nell will follow-up by contacting the three entities not heard from to see if they are interested. Duluth sent a letter stating they were not going to participate.

**E. Website Update (Nell)**

Chris Worth is still working on the prototype.

**F. Updates (Bill Bernhjelm)**

- Control stations going to St. Louis, Carlton, and Lake Counties are en route to Duluth. They have been programmed and Bruce is arranging to have them installed at those three counties. They will be ready for the Hell's Angels event.

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- Tom Johnson has scheduled a border conference with the northwest counties that border on Manitoba. That meeting is planned for July 30, 2009, in Roseau. He is planning on one in August for the counties that border Ontario. These discussions revolve around interop opportunities with the Canadians.
- The MOU relates to money allocated from the 2009 State Homeland Security Grant to the Division of Communication Networks for the purpose of ARMER participation plans, ARMER infrastructure improvements (local enhancements), and subscriber radios. The MOU will be e-mailed to everyone. Some RRBs would not have use for the money, so it will be managed as a statewide pool. There is up to \$30,000 available for the participation plan to migrate to ARMER; up to \$175,000 to individual counties or units of government for infrastructure; up to \$40,000 per unit for mobiles and portables. The MOU is an agreement between the RRB and the State to manage the money that would normally go to the RRB. It will be first come, first serve. Bill states that there should be money similar to this in the future so not to worry if you miss this cycle. Pat Medure makes a motion to act on this MOU and recommends that it be sent to the RAC for approval. Scott Camps seconds the motion. The motion carries. Pat Medure has a question regarding available dollars for a region that are not spent and asks if it is reallocated back to other regions. Bill states that this money will be held in a common pool at the State and guesses a lot of the money will be taken by the Central Region, as there are counties there that are four steps ahead of folks waiting for reports. Bill reminds the group that they need to look at some regional standards for the talkgroups; such as the one Itasca came up with or common pool so there aren't so many talkgroups. Tim Thomas states that if the statewide LTACs, PTACs are set one way and regions go another way, it is confusing the issue. He states that he believes it should be standardized. Bill states that there should be a presentation on what the State standards are on issues. Tim Thomas adds that those standards and procedures will become more clear as agencies' systems become upgraded and there is a familiarity with how they are laid out and how they run. Pat Medure asks if it makes sense for the RAC to make a recommendation on what make, brand, and model of cross-spectrum radios people should be buying in the NE Region. Bill states that every radio purchased will have to be approved to be used on the ARMER system. Pat Medure asks if there are five different cross-spectrum radios, do we as a Region sit down and look at what is best for the Region. He points out that all public safety has a certain make and model in Itasca County (portable and mobile) and all non-public safety has a certain make and model. That way those radios look familiar to them even though the talkgroup is different. He asks if there is value in that as a region. Tom Hannon points out that the Joint Powers Agreement provides that with the direction of the Board and the cooperation of the RAC, the User Committee shall recommend the establishment of minimum equipment specifications for mobile and portable devices authorized for the use on regional and local systems. The User Committee is also charged with

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working with the RAC to develop training standards and policies and procedures for consistent reliable quality radio interoperability throughout the region.

**V. New Business**

**A. Joint Powers Insurance Information (Pat Medure)**

Pat reports that it would cost \$2,500 per year for the Joint Powers group to be insured through MCIT. Tim Thomas makes a motion to move this forward to the RRB. Scott Camps seconds the motion. The motion carries.

**B. Training Funding Request (John Bowen)**

John Bowen, Crow Wing County, is requesting \$800.00 for fleetmap training for the user groups of Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Cass Counties. Pat motions that something be put in writing and to get it to Nell so it can be recommended to the RRB from the RAC. Steve Ovick seconds the motion. The motion carries. Scott Camps encourages the group to use these funds for their communications training so the training funds can be spent down. He adds that it is easier to get more funds in the future if we show that we are using them.

**VI. Next Meeting**

- August 19, 2009, in Hibbing. RAC Meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. The User Committee will follow the RAC meeting. User Committee members will be invited to attend the RAC meeting. Tony Pogorels will let Nell know the venue.
- September 23, 2009, 10:00 a.m. in Pine County.
- This meeting adjourns at 12:07 p.m.