

**Northeast Regional Advisory Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, July 21, 2010  
10:00 a.m., Lake County ITV Host**

**Proceedings:**

Chair Marcus Bruning calls the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. This was our fourth ITV meeting. Roll call attendees are as follows:

1. Arvid Dahl, Grand Portage Reservation
2. Bill Bernhjelm, DPS/ARMER
3. Brian Belich, Carlton County Sheriff's Office
4. Bruce Hegrenes, St. Louis Co./Communications
5. Carey Johnson, Lake County Sheriff's Office
6. Dewayne Kvande, Roger's Two-Way Radio
7. Dewey Johnson, St. Louis County 911
8. Erik Mack, DSC
9. Jim Wiinanen, Cook County Emergency Management
10. John Hyde, Duluth Radio Shop
11. John Strongitharm, Duluth Fire Department
12. Karla White, Aitkin County Sheriff's Office
13. Marcus Bruning, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office
14. Mark Falk, Cook County Sheriff's Office
15. Mark Smith, DSC Communications
16. Mark Stansberry, North Memorial Ambulance
17. Mike Fink, Motorola
18. Mike Unger, Brimson Fire Department
19. Nell Hoey, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
20. Pat Medure, Itasca County Sheriff's Office
21. Rey Freeman, GeoComm
22. Robert Jensen, Kanabec County Sheriff's Office
23. Roy Holmes, Minnesota HSEM
24. Scott Camps, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office
25. Scott Heide, Crow Wing County
26. Steve Ovick, Pine County Sheriff's Office
27. Steve VanKekerix, Lake County Sheriff's Office
28. Terry O'Connor, Leech Lake EMS/TERC
29. Tom Ralidak, Minnesota State Patrol
30. Tony Pogorels, Hibbing Fire Department

**I. INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductions are made by those in attendance.

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**II. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

**MOTION** made by Steve VanKekerix to accept last month's minutes as submitted. John Strongitharm seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries.

**III. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**A. Training (Mark Falk)**

Mark has nothing to report at this time.

**B. Policy (Pat Medure)**

Pat misses the first part of the meeting and comes in later.

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

\*\* (Steve comes into the meeting at a later time, so this was done later in the meeting but left in the agenda order). Steve reports that on Monday, the six counties associated with the NE PSAP consolidation met with a vendor and that report will be complete the second week in September and a recommendation will be available. Steve talked about needing a host for the STR, which Bill Bernhjelm spoke about as well, regarding being a host for the equipment.

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

Bruce reports that the OTC met on Tuesday, July 13, 2010, and the first item was the 2009 SHSP DECN allocations (\$1.7 million grant). This grant is to go to any county having an approved participation plan with the RRB by September of last year. Bruce states it is \$175,000 per county for infrastructure and \$40,000 per county for end user equipment. This was sent on to the SRB for approval. Carlton and Pine participation plans were approved and sent to the SRB. Bruce states that there is discussion regarding a subscriber security standard that needs to be revised and questions of programming came up, as the issue is if you sell the radio, the radio has to go back to Motorola to have the advanced security code reset, which could be expensive. Bruce states that more technical info is needed and the matter is tabled for now. He states that there are some June 2010 plan changes for the State ARMER Plan, which will affect Carlton and St. Louis Counties because of the Wrenshall site, which was addressed last month. Bruce adds that if you have changes or plans coming before the OTC, please have a representative there or they will not pass it. Bruce talks a bit about the \$1.7 million DECN grant, which requires a participation plan be completed and approved by the RRB by September in order to be eligible. Breakdown is \$175,000 per county with an approved plan for infrastructure and \$40,000 for end user equipment. Bruce states that they did not have enough money to fulfill all the requests from last year, so they will be forwarded on and there will be another open period to request. Bruce states that there is a subcommittee meeting as part of the SRB called Change Control, which relates to implementing a plan for change control and what to do in the future regarding recommendations to the SRB.

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John Strongitharm asks about more towers being put up somewhere else being the Wrenshall site was nixed and states that they need something to solve coverage issues in the southern part of Duluth. John added that part of the decision to go ARMER was that the State was going to put a tower in Wrenshall, which would help the coverage issues. Marcus adds that there are studies being done regarding coverage and that the State will need to be held to options to provide coverage in that portion of the city, but it did not look like Wrenshall was the way to do it. Marcus states that we will continue to work together as a Region to insure coverage. John is happy with this statement.

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

\*\*(Scott comes in later and updates the group. This segment is left in agenda order.) Scott states that this committee met yesterday. He states that they moved on the 2009 DECN funding requests; they had no quorum, but they passed everything with the consensus of those in attendance, as it had already been through the OTC and Finance Committee. Scott adds that there were more requests for funding than there was funding available; funds were moved around and will be deferred to the 2010 process. He states that \$1.75 million was allocated to DECN from Homeland Security grants, up to \$30,000.00 for participation plans; up to \$175,000 for infrastructure; up to \$40,000 for end user subscriber units. Scott suggests getting applications in quickly, as funds are going quickly. He states they talked about the 2011 grant process, which he will speak about later in the meeting.

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

Karla states that she is compiling a list of representatives from each county and getting it to John Dooley at the State. She states that he will give out passwords so that the information that has been entered can be verified. Karla adds that there was online training that was worked on this week..

**G. NERAC Interoperability Committee (Scott Camps/Tim Thomas)**

Nothing to report.

**H. User Committee (Marcus Bruning)**

Erik Jankila could not be at the meeting today, but Marcus stated that the User Committee is working hard and are a very active committee.

**I. Owners and Operators Committee (Dewey Johnson)**

Dewey stated that they had poor attendance at the last meeting and did not have a quorum. He states that they are working on policies from the User Committee and will vote on them at the next meeting on August 4, 2010, at the Fond Du Lac College. Dewey states the combined meetings with the User Committee are working well, but they do have some issues with how to separate votes; however, he states they do have some ideas on how to do that.

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**IV. Old Business**

**A. ARMER Update (Bill Bernhjelm)**

- Bill comments on the Wrenshall tower and states that it will provide coverage for Duluth and that the issue is will it be part of the simulcast site. He states that GeoComm is looking into the issue as well and there is discussion going on regarding how best to cover that area.
- 2011 IECGP and 2011 SHSP information is out. Guidance to come later. Amounts will be similar to last year.
- HSEM requires quarterly progress reports that need to be done on WEGO for the grants that are currently outstanding.
- Strategic Technology Reserve update is that there will be a transportable 50' tower and repeater system available in each region. The regions will need to identify someone to become the host agency and provide transportation and a technician to be able to operate the system. Hennepin County has a SAT cow that worked great at the air show in St. Cloud. This system has been supported through a lot of federal/grant dollars. A cache of around 30-50 radios is also available with the tower. Bill encourages people in the NE Region to think about who should be the host agency.
- Jackie Mines, State 911 Manager talked at the RIC meeting in St Paul about PSAP consolidation and how the studies are continuing. Bill states that it is his understanding that a group in SW MN is proceeding with an implementation study, and they have hired a consultant to do the policy side and technical side to study the idea of consolidating PSAPs in the SW corner of the state. Bill reports that GeoComm is continuing to work on the studies that have been contracted for in the NE Region.
- Jackie also told that group that with the advent of Next Gen, there is pressure by software and telephone vendors to sell merchandise that is not needed. Bill adds that people should check with Jackie first to get the real deal, before they spend any money. She will be sending out a fact sheet to PSAP managers and sheriffs so they know of projects with Next Gen.
- Bill states that Jackie Mines is also available to come up and do a presentation on the progress of Next Gen to Owners and Operators, User, and RACs.
- Bill reports that preliminary work is being done for the interop conference next year. Bill invites people to call him with concerns or input.
- Interoperability with the surrounding states is being looked at and a way to do that. Bill states that what appears to be emerging is that county sheriffs affected by interstate borders will make contact with the border neighbors and the State will offer equipment (control stations) to those Minnesota agencies that can be loaned to neighboring states, so there is remaining control of how the equipment is used. Information is being put together regarding this matter.
- Training and education: The division is working very closely with Alex Technical College to develop more online training classes. They are looking at Radio 101, Governance, Standard Radio Use, and Use of

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Interop Talk Groups. They are also looking at doing one for radio control station training for dispatchers, who can have it accessible through the console at dispatch centers.

- Bill states that an ARMER technical specialist may be hired to work with his office and with anyone in the state who is concerned about how to technically achieve interoperability.
- Audio logging has been discussed. The Central Region has an idea of how to do audio logging on a regional basis, as opposed to having logging equipment at each PSAP. Advantage: cost. The technology is there to put the audio logger at the MSO. Bill will inform the group of any updates to this topic as it is looked into further.
- Bill reports that currently in the scanning mode with the Motorola dual band radios, there is a little delay in moving from VHF to an ARMER talkgroup. He states that Motorola is working on the issue.
- Motorola is planning to do some system manager training locally as opposed to having to have people go to Schaumburg. They will come to St. Cloud in the near future. Bill will update accordingly.

**B. Jurisdictional Updates**

- Steve VanKekerix states that Lake County applied for dollars for interop radios for their boat and water division.
- John Strongitharm reports that they applied for a fire grant for fire portables and mobiles (Lake County did this as well).
- Pat Medure reports that Itasca County met with their three county hospitals, and they will join 800; fleet maps are being developed. Itasca County also had meetings with the four school districts, and those campuses are also going to join 800. A grant was applied for through DECN, which was approved, for the school districts. The hospitals will put in money to make it happen, and Itasca County will look for other grant dollars to offset costs (nothing applied for at this point).

**C. PSIC Grant Funding Increase (Scott Camps)**

Scott states that the PSIC grant funding proposal was brought to the RRB last month and the City of Duluth was not present at that last RAC meeting where the proposal was agreed upon. He states that Duluth had an amendment that they brought to the June RRB meeting and that the RRB wanted Scott's proposal revamped. John talks about his amended proposal to include people who did not take PSIC funding last time: City of Duluth, tribal governments, City of Virginia, Lake County, and a portion to go to St. Louis County--because they only chose to take a portion. The share would be around \$41,000 with the match and grant. The remaining dollars would be used for governmental and non-governmental public agencies. Any monies not used by the tribal governments, Cities of Duluth and Virginia and Lake County would go into the remaining funds so other governmental and non-governmental agencies could use it. Scott adds that the revamped proposal will be brought to the RRB meeting tomorrow. Bill Bernhjelm adds that because it is budget time, it would be a good time to request a line item for grant contingencies because of the non-supplantation rule. He

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further states that it needs to be separate from your radio line item.

**V. New Business**

**A. Frequency Planning Steering Committee (Marcus Bruning)**

Marcus states that Federal Engineering will guide us through the development of a new state VHF frequency plan. Marcus states that Tom Hannon is requesting that each region name a representative to assist with the process. Bruce Hegrenes volunteered to do this (at the end of the meeting Scott Camps also volunteered).

**B. Leadership Group Meeting (Dewey Johnson)**

Dewey explains that it is a meeting of RAC chairs, owners and operators, users committee, RRB members, etc., and they will meet in St. Cloud at the Mn/DOT office on Monday, July 26, 2010; they meet as a group and then disciplines break out. Last time, the hot topic was naming conventions for regional talkgroups. The SE does not want to go with 1-12 and wants to stay with the A-TAC, P-TAC, and F-TACs. Dewey states that after the breakout sessions the group meets as one to discuss what was talked about in the groups. Dewey said he has learned a lot and if anyone has a topic, call him or Bill Bernhjelm, and they will mention it there.

**C. DOT Talkgroups (Bruce Hegrenes)**

Marcus reports that a letter came from the DOC regarding a request for authorization to use talkgroups not owned by the requesting agency. Bruce adds that DOC has decided to go to ARMER and had a participation plan approved two months ago. They are not only requesting access to 911 talkgroups from the NE Region but from each individual county. The problem, Bruce states, is they have not approved our NE Regional TACs and only Itasca County has approved their 911 TAC; therefore, we are not in a position to approve this for DOC because we are not far enough along in the process. Bruce recommends that we send a letter to DOC explaining this matter.

**D. 2011 SHSP and IECGP Grants (Scott Camps)**

These grant opportunities were sent to everyone via e-mail. Scott states that in 2010 we applied for funding through the IECGP for the NE Region for participation funds for those who had not completed them. No paperwork has been received by Itasca County for that grant as of this time. Regarding the grant for 2011, Scott states that we need to think of projects and funding requests, which can be used for training and exercise. Applications are due at the end of October for this funding.

Regarding the SHSP dollars, Scott states that those funds have not been allocated to the states yet. This time there is more time to think about projects and plans. The dollars anticipated are about \$5.5 million for interop communications; in the past couple of years, an allocation was made to DECN out of that funding that allows for participation plans, infrastructure, and subscriber units. Scott states that each region submits an application and we would be competing with five

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other regions for dollars. Scott suggests that we look at projects that could benefit everyone in the NE Region. He suggests that we apply for \$650,000 in subscriber radios; half of the allocation would be split between all the joint powers agencies (15); the other half could be based on population; additional request of \$125,000 would be used for the five tribal agencies, and a review by a grant committee with tribal involvement would decide how to allocate those additional funds among the tribal agencies. Marcus requests to record this in the minutes, Scott can get the breakdown to Nell, and formal action can be looked at next month. Pat Medure adds that this is an excellent idea but cautions about the time element. Bruce states that we still have dollars for interconnecting PSAPs. Scott Camps adds that there were two funding sources for that one in 2009: Kanabec County is the fiscal agent, and it covers three microwave links from PSAP to ARMER and in 2010, St. Louis County is the grant holder and there is no contract yet. These dollars amount to around \$450,000 to connect up to three PSAPs into the ARMER system, which would complete the six remaining PSAPs in the NE Region.

Pat Medure ask if anyone has a handle on how many counties in the NE Region have done participation plans or are in the process of doing so, as if there are some, perhaps we need to reach out to those counties and encourage them to apply for the current funding or create a funding mechanism in one of these grants to do that sooner, rather than later. Marcus states that it is believed that Koochiching County is the only one that does not have one. Bill Bernhjelm adds that he sent Brian Youso the two draft resolutions in May and recently got an e-mail from him where he basically said he was not able to get the board to move on either resolution. Pat Medure stated that he will contact Brian to see if there is a way we can help via other county commissioners or any other way.

**E. Request to Apply for DECN Grant (Pat Medure)**

Pat reports that he would like to apply for a DECN grant so Bearville can transition to 800. Pat states that he believes the dollar amount requested would be more than \$40,000.

**MOTION** by Mark Falk to seek RRB approval for Pat Medure (Itasca County) to apply for a DECN grant so Bearville Fire can transition to 800. Steve VanKekerix (Lake County) seconds the motion. After discussion and upon a vote, the motion carries.

**F. SCIP (State Communication Interoperability Plan) (Bill Bernhjelm)**

Bill states that the SCIP is posted on the ARMER website. He adds that one of the conditions of the IECGP and the SHSP is that the requests align with the SCIP. He adds that all federal grants have to come through the SAA (State Administrative Agent), which is HSEM, but anything that has to do with radio communications is coming through ECN and there is a review process.

**G. USDA Meeting (Mark Falk)**

Mark reports that approximately two weeks ago, he and Sheriff Johnson, (from Lake County) were asked to attend a meeting in Ely on August 3, 2010, with the USDA. Mark reports that every year they go to a different region or forest to see

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the area, and they were invited up here because of the movement of the State of Minnesota toward ARMER, the interoperability issues, and what that means to the US Forest Service. Mark states that one of the bigger issues, from his perspective, for Cook County is that the State has proposed three or four tower sites on national forest land, and they are in the process of land acquisition with the Forest Service--exchanging land they own within the BWCA to land outside-- and tower sites are a priority. Mark states that it will be a very important meeting and partnering up with the Forest Service and getting them on board is certainly important. He adds that there may be some opportunities to expedite issues. Mark states that he will provide an update at the next meeting. Marcus asks for the electronic copy to go to the group to see if anyone else is interested. Mark adds that Lake County will provide some boat rides to certain areas and will be flying the whole area on ones of those days. Pat Medure states that he was invited to the meeting in Grand Rapids and Mike Hogan will be there to discuss how we can partner up. Mark states that Scott Wiggins will be giving a brief presentation on the ARMER system to this group as well. Bill Bernhjelm interjects that he and Tom Johnson will most likely be at the Ely meeting as well.

**D. Other Issues**

Bill Bernhjelm mentions that the NE Regional TAC Plan has not been finalized and that it may be time to get that going. He suggests that the RAC specifically task the Owners and Operators and User Committees to review the draft, discuss it, and come forward with a recommendation to the RAC that can be moved to the RRB. Marcus states that he will make the recommendation. Bill states that he will be more than happy to work with these guys if they need additional information or anything.

Nell reads an e-mail from Monte that he sent to the tribal government leaders encouraging them to give direction regarding joining the JPA. Monte states in his e-mail that he has not heard a reply from any of the tribal governments regarding this issue. Marcus adds that he has reached out to them to include them in the RAC regarding feedback, input, etc. Nell reports that she asked Monte for the addresses of the tribal leaders because the next step may be to write to them and get an answer back stating they either are or are not interested so we have something in paper form.

**MOTION** by Pat Medure (Itasca County) requesting RAC approval to request that the RRB formerly pass a motion to direct Chairman Dowson to draft a letter to the tribes requesting an answer from them regarding the JPA issue. Terry O'Connor seconds the motion. There is discussion and Scott adds that this was discussed before with an addition of sending the letter to the RAC representative as well as the tribal chairman. He adds that we need to explain in the letter that we just want to do the process one time and do not want to do it five separate times. Upon a vote the motion carries.

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**VI. Future Meetings**

- August 18, 2010, Pike Lake EOC will host this meeting via ITV
- September 15, 2010, Pine County via ITV

**VII. Adjourn**

**MOTION** made by Dewey Johnson to adjourn the meeting. Mark Falk seconds the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 11:07 a.m.