

**Joint Meeting of  
Northeast Regional Users Committee  
&  
Northeast Regional Owners & Operators Committee  
Fond du Lac Community College  
August 3, 2011 10:00 A.M.**

Bill reported the latest on the tower construction. Right now it is a contract by contract situation. About three weeks ahead of the state shutdown, all contractors were notified they wouldn't be paid. Some contractors made the decision at that point to pull out and some waited until the actual shutdown to pull out. In most cases the contractors working on the towers left so the situation for the state right now is determining how to compensate these guys for demobilization, remobilization, etc. These tower contractors are national or international and moved on to different states when the MN projects were dumped.

**Roll call:**

Kevin Poffs	Dan L'Allier	Dylan Bridges
Steve Olson	Leif Lunde	Judy Sivertson
Aaron P Johnson	Dan Sathre	Pat Lee
Monte Fronk	Tom Ralidak	Jeff Anderson
Cynthia Suess	Karla White	Jeremy Nelson
John Keenan	AJ Morse	Mark Lallak
Jess Roncheti	Mark Smith	Bill Bernhjelm
Tom Rogentine	John Hyde	Kerry Swenson
Erik Jankila	Dewey Johnson	

**3.0** Dan Sathre made a motion to accept the minutes from the July 6 meeting. Steve Olson seconded. Motion carried.

**4.1** Leadership team meeting was held last Monday in St Cloud. Members are leaders from the regional committees around the state plus the state folks and anyone else who would like to join. The SRB questioned the group to see if they should be formalized as a committee of the SRB. The group declined feeling they wanted to stay informal. The team is designed to be an information exchange from around the state.

There was a rumor that some counties had decided against migrating to the ARMER system because of declining fire grants. That isn't true. Counties are looking at different financing options at this time.

In the NW region, Hubbard County is committed to coming on ARMER. The NW Users Committee is meeting again tonight (August 3), in Park Rapids after a two year break.

Dewey said the break-out group he was in discussed the training needed, even for those counties who are not migrating to ARMER right away, to enable them to operate and integrate.

Bill said Tom Justen is a LT with St Cloud PD and the State's contract was with the PD for Tom's services. Tom's work load at the PD has increased to the point that the State has decided to put out an RFP for a contractor to cover Central and Metro. The state is also putting out another RFP to develop more training products. Tom's still involved through his position with the city of St Cloud.

Federal Engineering just signed a contract with the State to provide training materials and operational standards for the VHF overlay, a network for the ARMER tower system to continue to remain connected to the VHF world.

Central Region asked Bill if the NE Region could do a presentation for them on the National Weather Standard, maybe in September.

US Dept of Agriculture, Rural Development Program, has a grant & loan program to help cities under 20,000 population needing fire halls, fire trucks, radio systems, etc. Bill has the contact information for local offices around the state.

Regarding the general grant picture, the 2012 federal budget has not been approved but the grants will maybe be cut. The grant programs themselves will also become more restrictive.

Two extensions were approved for the PSIC grant. One was for the tower grant and the training portion of the PSIC was also extended for a year.

Still checking on sales tax exclusion. The five million that was going to be transferred from the telephone tax account did not happen.

State Patrol conversion was finished by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Cynthia reported they're still dealing with some spotty coverage areas at this time. There are a couple in Duluth, one east of International Falls, and the Jay Cooke area.

Mark Gieseke left the electronic communications, (towers), section of MNDOT and just transferred to another area of MNDOT. Mukhtar Thakur has taken over and been on the job about three months. There was no interruption of ARMER service during the state shutdown.

Jackie Mines has had some health issues but is doing better. Her former position as 911 program manager was posted, and now they're going to re-post it again and widen the search area. The State is also working on hiring a Standards Coordinator state wide.

DPS website – think the state standards are all on the website now. If you look for something that isn't there, notify Bill who will check on it.

The spring interop conference planning is in the works – looking at April 16, 17 & 18. Monte Fronk is the NE Region representative on the conference planning so if there are any specific topics wanted, let Monte or Bill know.

Brandon has been tasked with looking into how to deliver secure public safety grade data services in conjunction with the ARMER system. The State did an RFP and hired a company out of the state of Virginia to look at where data services are going and one of the considerations is also where the federal government is going within the allocation spectrum to be able to provide these services. The broadband network would probably be a replacement for the air card system because the air card system is really not public safety grade. The stuff on the CAD screen is competing with air time and space with the 14 year old that sends 5000 texts per week, and there's no assurance that the public safety would get priority. Senate Bill 911 concerns allocating broadband spectrum for public safety.

**4.2** Dewey – feels group is headed in right direction.

Bill – NECP Gold II – the NE Region is 100% complete. Good job!

John Keenan – AREMA working on critical infrastructure issues, a capability assessment. Data gathering is being done with the use of a new FEMA tool.

Bill – State training and exercise planning workshop has been pushed to the regional as well. The NE regional at MIFC is coming up next week and the idea is to try to coordinate the planning of training and exercises under the emergency management umbrella, to coordinate all the different responses to avoid duplication.

John K – USCG having an exercise August 24.

**4.3** Erik – nothing at this time.

**4.4** RAC – Steve Olson – the Tower standard passed, the NECOM standard passed. The RRB did not meet in July so those will pass the RRB in August.

Discussion was held on getting appointment letters send to Chairman Dowson.

**5.1** Dewey – working on Train the Trainer. Trying to make contact with Tom Justen regarding the dispatch training. Alex Tech has another module available online. The last Train the Trainer end user will be Cook County towards the end of the year. Itasca had Administrator training.

**5.4 a.** Portable Tower Standard – has been approved by RAC

**b.** Pat Lee – nothing new on the hospital standard – meeting next week.

**c.** Dan L'Allier - metro standard is very inclusive. Have decided not to including mining company specifics, leave it as is. Will send out for the next meeting.

**d.** Erik – metro has the only standard on bi-directional amplifiers. According to Bruce, if it doesn't link into the ARMER system but used as in in-building amp enhancement similar to what Itasca has done, it only needs system administrator approval. If linked into the ARMER system, it has to go to the statewide OTC. No final product to vote on here yet.

**6.1** Weather Standard – meeting with National Weather Service hasn't happened yet.

**6.2** No standards review by city or county this meeting.

Next meeting will be September 7.

Steve Olson made a motion to adjourn. Bill seconded. Meeting adjourned.