

Northeast Minnesota User & Owners/Operators Committees
Fond du Lac Community College
March 2, 2011 10:00 A.M.

Present:

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Erik Jankila | Jeff Anderson | Mike Fink |
| Dewey Johnson | Tim Thomas | Pat Lee |
| Steve Olson | AJ Morse | Mark Stansberry |
| Doug Rotta | John Drahota | Bryan Bushey |
| Dylan Bridges | Jeremy Nelson | Trevor Banks |
| Judy Sivertson | Karla White | Dana Putzke |
| Steve DuChien | Mark Smith | Jason Dickinson |
| Daniel Sathre | Tony Pogorels | Dan L'Allier |
| Kurt Erickson | Steve Van Kekerix | Scott |
| BJ Kohlstedt | Bruce Hegrenes | John Hyde |
| Bill Bernhjelm | Kevin Poffs | Neil Porter |

Erik called for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 2, 2011 meeting.
Steve made a motion to accept, 2nd by Doug Rotta, motion carried.

4.1 Bill Bernhjelm –

- RIC meeting updates – State Patrol converting the northern districts in June, will be going one per week through June. Train the trainer for troopers will be in March. They are developing a permissions form so that agencies can program the state patrol talk groups into your radios so an exchange will be available of talk groups. They're still working on paperwork for that. They are willing to share all their stuff, including the mains, one or two tacticals per district, and their car to car. A condition from State Patrol will be not using the main for chit-chat, only when necessary.
- Grants – 2011 State Homeland Security grand program and IECGP grant program, those applications have been submitted to the state from the regions. The grants work group will continue to fine tune those applications. Bad news is the feds have not released the grant amounts or the grant guidance yet for those programs. Word from Washington is that when those amounts are announced, there will be a very short window of application time.
- There is available money in the state ECN budget for additional ARMER implementation grants, about \$3,000,000 statewide. They will review the current applications that were submitted for the previous grant processes, the participation plans that have been submitted and approved through the SRB, and most likely make allocations to the regions off those plans. I don't know exactly how much money is coming to the NE region but somewhere north of \$500,000 I'm sure. The decision as to who actually gets the dollars goes to the RRB. Because these

moneys are tied to the state budget, they need to be expended quickly as they go away the end of June. Priority will be given to agencies who are ready to go.

- Flood Response – There's a grim outlook on flooding in MN this spring. At a National Guard briefing last Friday, they're gearing up to use the ARMER system in northwest and central MN in preparation for flood response. The National Weather Service has predicted flooding of the Red, Mississippi, Crow and Minnesota River areas. At this time there is high soil moisture, a lot of water in the snow pack, lakes and rivers are full, and the prediction is for a wetter and colder spring. With a normal spring, there's a 90% chance of flooding and a 50% risk of record flooding. In North Dakota, Devils Lake is at record levels and very close to breaking out, creating a new path to the Red River.
- Work is being done on a hard patch for those agencies on VHF to be able to patch their VHF law mains to the ARMER talk groups so patrol and others can talk back and forth.
- State Patrol plans to force all traffic to all towers for every transmission. This makes the tower affiliation issue go away for them, and for people monitoring them, but has the potential for creating system loading issues. After using for a while, will be able to go into the system to see if that is creating too many busies. The state plan is five channels per site. Some areas are adding channel capacity.
- Jackie Mines is on medical leave and Ron Whitehead is the acting director until Jackie is able to return to work. Martha Nzimbi has taken a position as grants person for all of DPS.
- The tax exempt bill is at the legislature. Go to the legislative bill tracker site to follow the status of the bills for ARMER equipment, radios, data equipment, computers. This could have a big impact on the purchase price of radios.

Mike Fink, Motorola – At the end of this year there will be a software release for the XTS1500 that's going to include 256 channels, take that radio from 96 to 256 channels. The price won't change. If you have a 1500 now, there's a software refresh that runs around \$50 to \$75 to cover that change. If you buy now, we can talk about having the refresh included. Motorola currently has a national promotion that is good until March 31 which takes \$200 off the 1500, \$250 off the 2500, \$400 off the 5000, and \$700 off the Dual Band APX 7500. Motorola is in the process of getting the single band APEX 7500 and 6000 certified.

Bill Bernhjelm – As far as the STR goes, the cache radios and trailers, the state is trying to move a grant of about \$12,500 each to be held and used for maintenance, insurance, licensing of the cache and towers.

Mike Fink – Work is being done on a CPS training course for the field. It looks like it will probably be done by the 3rd quarter. Central region is being trained in Schaumburg

but the intention is to roll it out to the field. System management training will also be coming out in the field.

4.2 O & O Chair Dewey Johnson – Noted there have been additional meetings held between these monthly meetings in an effort to keep processes moving, wanted everyone to be aware of that.

4.3 User Chair Erik Jankila – Special thanks to BJ Kohlstedt for hosting the extra meetings and to John Keenan for his guidance in moving this process forward.

4.4 Committee Reports

- **RAC** – Steve Olson – advised the RAC on the end user training and the positive feedback that has been received for that training. Sounds like the National Guard will be operating on a state talk group when they're in Minnesota instead of a federal one. The medical standard being developed by the EMS folks has passed the OTC and has been approved at the Statewide Radio Board. Pat Lee noted there will be an amendment on that going to the OTC regarding the hospital groups in Minnesota. Harris mobiles and portables have been approved for the ARMER system by the OTC. The 7.9 upgrade is on schedule for May.

Bill – The ARMER system is upgrading in May to version 7.9, we're currently at 7.7. The state is paying for the upgrade. The system radio I.D. capacity will be increased to 128,000 and during the process of the upgrade, they're going to do a backup of the system as it exists as of April 11. Any program changes after April 11 may be lost if there is a glitch at the time of the upgrade, which will be sometime after May 21st so try to limit any changes during that time frame. The upgrade will take about 5 minutes, at either 2 or 4 a.m. Capacity at this time is 64,000.

- **RRB** – Steve Olson – He encouraged the Radio Board to have their representatives attend more meetings, with a special note to the Owners and Operators due to some quorum troubles. International Falls added a member. The participation plan for the STR cache was presented by Bruce, and the RRB needs to approve that plan in order for us to take possession of the equipment and get it programmed in advance of the spring flood season.

Bruce – he has been named as system administrator and point of contact for the state in the STR Standard. Bruce has three techs trained for programming and one system administrator.

Erik – Regional Radio Board is still scheduled to do their face to face in March at Itasca County. It will be an opportunity to meet the new commissioners. It will also be Nell's last meeting, and will want to express appreciation for the tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work she's done for us.

Bill – the RRB also tried to update mileage reimbursement to \$.51 and that took a hard left, not really sure what the reimbursement rate it at this time but will be verifying that at the next RAC or RRB.

Steve – Think one reason this group doesn't end up with those issues is because we don't ITV. Some of that gets lost on the TVs.

5.0 Old Business

5.1 – Regional Training updates – Dewey – We did three Train The Trainer classes, trained 36 people in Hermantown, 27 in Lake County, and 27 in Eveleth. In the evals, the only negative comment was it wasn't long enough. My proposal is to do another one in Crow Wing County if we can get dates set and Cook County in Grand Marais in November. Even if people don't want to be a trainer, it gives a good general knowledge on the system.

Steve O asked Bruce about the timeline for dispatcher end user training in Lake County.

Dewey – We own that curriculum that was created for us. As we make regional decisions on functionality of the radio, Tom will update it.

Dewey – COML – tentative date is May 23 to 26 at the Pike Lake EOC.

Dewey – Dispatcher Train the Trainer – trying to get some dates to hold one in Lake County in the next month or two.

Dewey – CASM training – trying to get someone from each agency so they can update their own data. Karla White – she has someone from each agency except Pine County.

Tim Thomas – will have an agenda item at the RAC meeting that Itasca County is looking for grant dollars for training for system administrators. If anyone is looking to attend a similar type of training, contact Tim to maybe put together a packet for presentation at the meeting.

5.1.b – D2L Alex Tech training – Erik said John Keenan has been talking to Linda at Alex Tech and requested CDs and to make copies of them for our region. Dewey wondered if we ordered copies of these CDs in mass bulk, would there be an interest in handing them out in our region. This is the Radio 101, online basic.

Bill – If you're in a position to make decisions or advise people on how to program radios, even if you're not a trainer, the Train the Trainer class will expose you to a lot of the decisions that need to be made in terms of how the radios get programmed, set up, and so forth.

5.2 – Regional Planner update – Erik – we have been meeting in a work group session in Silver Bay. John Keenan has helped us tremendously through this process. In terms of

the grants that are available to keep funding him, those are a work in progress. He's come up with a great list of suggestions we have implemented. Typically we've been meeting in the time frame after the RAC and before our next meeting, and we set the agendas at those meetings. The subject of ITV was discussed at our last meeting and we feel it is working out fairly well for most of us at this time with the room we have and the people who show up. There is also driving involved for several people to attend ITV as well. We'll keep it on the back burner and if anybody has an overwhelming desire to move towards the ITV process, we can migrate that way. We have not seen it as a benefit for us yet, and a prime example is the communication problems Steve and Bill were talking about at the last RRB meeting, and at the Radio Board meeting before that a lot of time was spent correcting what others were saying.

Erik – By signing up to the ARMER system, we are in principle adopting or adhering to the Statewide Radio Board standards. It was the recommendation of our planner to move forward and formally adopt the SRB standards and as we come across standards that need change based on our particular needs, we will do that. We just can't make a standard less than what the state requires. So our recommendation is to vote to adopt the SRB standards knowing that we can amend those we change. The standards already discussed will be in as we've adopted them and will override the state standard. So what we're doing is adopting the state standards and starting today going down from the very beginning with a systematic review of each standard.

Owners & Operators Committee:

Dan L'Allier made a motion to accept SRB standards, Dylan Bridges 2nd, Motion Carried
Users Committee:

Dan Sathre made a motion to accept SRB standards, Doug Rotta 2nd, Motion Carried

6.0 Old Business

6.1 Committee Work Groups – Standards 3.33.0 & 3.33.1 Strategic Reserve and Radio Cache. Steve Olson presented. Committee came up with two more bullet points to be added to the standard 3.33.1. The first one says that if the need for the cache is incident related, requests should go through the MN Duty Officer. An incident would be an actual incident that is happening. If the need for the cache is event or training, requests go directly to the non emergency administration desk at St Louis County, 726-2920. No language was added to the standard regarding radio cache delivery.

Bill – If you don't have a method or means for St Louis County to charge, there won't be a way to get reimbursement from FEMA related incidents. There needs to be a policy in place to establish those charges ahead of an incident happening. Discussion followed. Agreement was to add a line to the standard stating that actual costs incurred by the hosting agency for delivery, programming, etc., will be reimbursed by the requesting agency. Dewey entertained a motion for approval of the standard. Karla White made a motion to approve, Trevor Banks 2nd, motion carried.

Standard 3.33.2 has not been worked on yet. Bruce mentioned the standard should include that the hosting agency will maintain vehicles to pull the trailer.

6.2 Standards review – Aitkin County presented highlights of 1st three standards

Standard 1.1.0, Operational Management, presented by Jeremy Nelson

Standard 1.1.1, Protocol for Use of MIMS Channel, presented by John Drahota

Standard 1.1.2, Criteria for the Installation of Base Stations and General Operations on MINSEF, presented by Karla White

Bruce H – there will be 109 ARMER sites in MN with MINSEF

Dan – Standard 1.1.2 says Law Enforcement only but MINSEF is used by air medical and fire departments. How will that be addressed?

Bruce H – according to the standard, the only ones that are authorized according to state law are law enforcement and ambulance services if they have approval from the state and the local law enforcement. At this point fire departments are not even supposed to have it in their radios.

Bill – until the helicopters and everybody on the ground is on ARMER, the controlling dispatcher will have to set up a patch between the helicopter and the ground crew.

Cass County is up next with the next three standards.

Dewey – FYI – have Kanabec County participation plan. Jeff Anderson – Granite Electronics has been hired to do their participation plan. We've requested to be on the agenda at the next RAC meeting. Our towers will be lit up by June and we hope to be active after that.

Bruce H – When Itasca County initially went on the system, the RRB wasn't formed yet, or the NE RAC. They made some assumptions at the time, such as naming regional tacs. The problem is that Itasca County has an extensive amount of radios programmed with what was the original assumption. Need to take a look at what is there and rather than creating brand new talk groups, take a look at what's there with Itasca and come with a reasonable association of these tac groups that will work with Itasca County. If that's agreeable, we could produce a document for the next RAC to get it approved so we can go through with programming the STR radios.

BJ – Need to think about having a NE regional Emergency Management talk group. Right now the state has an emergency management talk group and if we talk on that, all the emergency managers in the state will be listening. Discussion followed.

Doug Rotta – any money available for Itasca County to re-program their radios?

Erik asked Bruce if he was looking for a motion regarding Itasca County radio programming. Bruce stated he is looking for a group consensus, something to take to the RAC. Bruce and Tim will work on that.

Bill – need committee to look at regional standard for NE Emergency Management talk group. Erik appointed emergency managers, BJ, Karla & Tim.

Bruce – Public health talk group will be needed. Technical, St Louis County will be requesting region wide access for a technical talk group.

Bill – three more towers came on the air in Cass County this last week.

Bruce H made a motion to adjourn, Neil Porter 2nd, meeting adjourned.