

**State Emergency Communications Committee Meeting  
July 19, 2013**

**Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Lincoln, Nebraska**

1. Introductions

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Jim Skinner	Chair
Larry Lavelle	Emergency Management
Bob Eastwood	Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
Brian Smith	National Weather Service
Bob Huber	State Relay
Mark Stottler	Cable Association
Marty Riemenschneider	Nebraska Broadcasters Association

*Other Attendees:* Janell Walther, University of Nebraska Public Policy Center; Aaron Alward, Emergency Management; Herb White, National Weather Service; Alisia LeMay, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; Paul Johnson, Douglas County Emergency Management; Eric Strelow, Sprint Telecom; Mike Gerber, National Weather Service; Al Krause, NET / State Relay

*Committee members absent:* Rod Zeigler, LeeAnn Quist, Lt. Carla Schrieber

1. Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the Feb. 27, 2013 SECC meeting. Bob Huber made a motion to approve; Bob Eastwood seconded the motion. The motion passed by consensus.

2. RMT for IPAWS

Jim Skinner proposed having a required monthly test (RMT) through IPAWS on Sept. 17, 2013 at 10:00 AM submitted through NEMA and NET. This date works for Manny Centano from FEMA, and as such we would be the first state to attempt to run an IPAWS RMT statewide. The test would run through the Paraclete system via IPAWS. The committee discussed the use of audio versus text-to-speech technology for the RMT. Audio files help to ensure correct and regional pronunciation, but text-to-speech reaches multiple sources. For a future drill with Cooper Nuclear Station, and audio test will be completed via Paraclete.

Larry Lavelle made a motion the RMT using IPAWS on Sept. 17 using text-to-speech. Brian Smith seconded the motion; the motion passed by consensus.

3. Status of Authorization for IPAWS EAS/WEA

Buffalo County is authorized to send IPAWS EAS and WEA messages. The Nebraska State Patrol just completed their initial application, and they are waiting on their final COG ID. The State Patrol will be able to access IPAWS system from NEMA's Paraclete box; however, the State Patrol will keep the one box at their headquarters as a back up. Several other counties have applied for their COG ID and as an authorized generator of CAP alert.

4. Non-Weather Emergency Messages through NWS and Future Trends – Mike & Herb

There is an exclusive agreement between the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and FEMA so that AMBER Alerts can be pushed from NCMEC through WEA. The National Weather Service has issued non-weather alerts in the past. NWS is coordinating with FEMA and IPAWS as well as CAP alert vendors to coordinate the flow and creation of weather and non-weather messages through the NWS HazCollect system (which has a primary purpose is to route the messages for CAP) and through IPAWS. In Nebraska and Iowa, AMBER Alerts are generated through the NWS system, and that will need to be addressed in future AMBER Alert planning. In the short term, we will need to monitor alerts so that EAS boxes do not filter out duplicate messages when they are transmitted through analog and digital for AMBER Alerts. This process will require multi-agency input through the FCC. Currently, EAS alerts (such as a Tornado Warning) are issued from NWS and transmitted via CAP to WEA. Once county emergency managers are authorized to send messages through IPAWS, they will be able to send messages to NOAA Weather Radio. However, this capability depends on the software capabilities; Alisia LeMay will look to see if Paraclete can send Hazcollect messages. She has already made application for Hazcollect with the weather service.

FEMA will start hosting a series of webinars beginning July 24 to discuss various alerting tools and capabilities.

AT&T made an announcement on Friday, which means that now all four big carriers are WEA capable and folks have received an update. The 65 Verizon devices are capable of receiving WEA messages. WEA messages are hitting the cell phones very quickly. In some bigger cities where there are a lot of subscription services, people may not know what alerts they are receiving. Outreach is very important for wireless emergency alerts. We have communicated to them that we need more communication on the WEA, which is not supposed to replace other warning systems. As soon as NWS pushes out a warning, an automated process begins to create CAP messages out to IPAWS, then goes transmits to Gateway, a Commercial Mobile Service Provider within seconds, and then the message reaches cell phones from there. Three of the four big carriers transmit the signal from cell towers through radio technology rather than SMS text within a polygon. The fourth carrier transmits outside the polygon if the warning is expected to travel outside the polygon. The cellular companies are collecting and reviewing feedback to make the system robust and effective.

5. Demonstration of CAP through IPAWS on Paraclete.

There are 57 Paraclete boxes throughout Nebraska, and the counties that don't have a Paraclete box can send an alert via VPN. Alisia LeMay demonstrated an example of the CAP alert via email on the Paraclete / IPAWS test.

6. Nebraska State Plan

Nebraska State Plan may include WEA, but there is some confusion as to whether that should be mandatory. The FCC is not requiring State EAS Plans to include WEA yet. The expectation in Nebraska is for the SECC to address WEA as it is a tool that is closely connected to the work already done by the SECC. WEA is an extension of IPAWS and the whole communications alerting system. As a working group of the Nebraska Public Safety Communications Committee, SECC is empowered to work with them to define parameters. As we add WEA to work done by the SECC, Eric Strelow, the Government Liaison for the State of Nebraska, is happy to provide input as it is relevant. Eric will check to see if he may be a voting member or not.

7. Premier Radio Network as EAS PEP

Jim Skinner with the FCC determined that the Nebraska EAS State Plan may not meet the federal requirements because each station must be monitored by two inputs in order to send presidential alerts, which come via EAN. Nebraska had assigned the State Relay and the National Weather Service to provide this role, but NWS does not cover EAN, though they may be able to send EAN in the future. The FCC requires the two agencies have EAN capabilities as well. A commercial broadband provider, such as Premier Radio Network (a transponder of Clear Channel) can send EAN and be an official PEP. We could require a third agency be monitored, like NWS, in the EAS Plan to set a minimum standard. Premier receivers already have the feature to run EAN through their systems so that is a future possibility.

Bob Huber made a motion for the SECC update the State EAS Plan to make a requirement for LP-1's and to pursue two inputs able to relay EAN with a recommendation to include NWS monitoring in the State Plan. Brian Smith seconded the motion; the motion passed by consensus. The plan will be updated accordingly.

8. FCC report on EAS Test

The FCC reported on the National EAS Test. Rod Ziegler provided copies of the Executive Summary; 83% of broadcasters got the message and 73% of cable carriers participating nationally received the messaging. Nebraska found the test to be a success.

9. Changes to Amber Plan

WEA is included in the AMBER Alert plan. Because the National Weather Service issues the Amber Alert in Nebraska, WEA messages will not go through NWS. As a work

around, Brian suggested that the estate sign up for IPAWS and Hazcollect. The Nebraska State Patrol sends Amber Alerts through eSpotter now, which is mainly a way for storm spotters to send in alerts. The SECC will explore other options.

10. Other business:

Sarpy County is reorganizing some of the departments so Larry Lavelle's new title will be Communications Director. His role on the SECC has been to represent emergency management. Larry Lavelle nominated Paul Johnson, Douglas County Emergency Manager, as the Emergency Management representative to replace Larry Lavelle to the SECC. Paul accepted the nomination, and asked Aaron Alward to serve as the backup. Bob Huber seconded the motion; the motion passed by consensus.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in conjunction with the Nebraska Broadcasters Association Conference in LaVista on August 15.