

Nebraska SECC Meeting
Thursday, November 1, 2012
1:00 to 4:00 PM CST
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Lincoln, NE

Minutes

- **Introduction and quorum**

Attendees:

Member Name	Organization	Representing
Jim Skinner, Chair	KPTM/KXVO	Broadcast Television
Bob Huber, Vice Chair	NET	State Relay
Rod Ziegler	KRVN, NRRRA, PEPAC	Radio
Bob Eastwood	NEMA	State Emerg Mgmnt
Brian Smith	National Weather Services	National Weather Service
Larry Lavelle	Sarpy County Emergency Management	Emergency Management
Kevin Knorr	Nebraska State Patrol	State Patrol, Fusion Center
Marty Riemenschneider	Nebraska Broadcast Association	Broadcast Association

Other Attendees: Janell Walther, Public Policy Center; Lynn Marshall, Sarpy County Emergency Management; Paul Johnson, Douglas County Emergency Management; Doug Ahlberg, Lancaster County Emergency Management; Al Krause, NET / State Relay

Committee Members Absent: Bob Richwine, LeeAnn Quist

Common Acronyms	
CAP	Common Alerting Protocol (digital format for emergency info)
EAS	Emergency Alert System (Traditional and CAP)
CMAS	Commercial Mobile Alert System (cell phone alerts)
WEA	Wireless Emergency Alert (same as CMAS)
EAN	Emergency Alert Notification (code for Presidential EAS alert)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standard (EAS county codes)
IPAWS	Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (FEMA Agregator)
NEMA	Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
NOAA	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
NWS	National Weather Service
SECC	State Emergency Communications Committee (FCC appointed)
NIAC/Fusion Center	Nebraska Information Analysis Center (State Law Enforcement)
Paraclete	Radio interconnect system in Nebraska (CAP capable)

- **Minutes from last SECC meeting**

The last SECC Meeting was held in conjunction with the Nebraska Broadcasters Association Convention, where the committee and attendees heard a presentation from Manny Centeno from FEMA. Janell Walther will email the minutes for review and approval.

- **Election of SECC Officers**

SECC officers are in place for two years, but there are no term limits. The Public Policy Center serves as the SECC secretary. Chair and Vice Chair will need to be elected.

Bob Huber nominated Jim Skinner to serve as chair and made a motion to close nominations. Larry Lavelle seconded the motion; the motion passed by consensus.

Jim Skinner nominated Bob Huber to serve as vice chair and made a motion to close nominations for vice chair. Larry Lavelle seconded the motion; the motion passed by consensus.

- **Website Activity – Janell Walther, PPC**

Janell Walther presented the NE-EAS.org website traffic for September and October 2012. The website is a useful tool and a good place of reference for the state plan. In the last two months, the website had 92 unique visitors. Renewal for the site comes up in January. Different options to pay for the \$12/year site cost were discussed including having NEMA make it an independent contribution to the SECC, Jim Skinner paying the cost, or the Public Policy Center paying the fee.

- **State Plan to FCC**

The State Plan was sent July 10, 2012. Jim Skinner spoke with the FCC and the Nebraska State EAS Plan is still pending approval. Nebraska is unique in that it does not require LP-1s. The EAN comes through the State Relay System, and most of what gets broadcast is through the National Weather Service. The Tornado Waiver did go through quickly. The local plan in Douglas County is complete and ready to send. Jim Skinner will alert of any changes in approval. The SECC will make an update in 2013 to include new technology, such as IPAWS, in the plan.

- **NEMA on IPAWS**

EAS is the traditional Emergency Alert System. Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) is a digitally delivered service that allows messages to be sent through a national aggregator. IPAWS Open is an aggregator that takes messages from various inputs and authenticates them and redistributes the messages to the other alert systems – EAS, WEA, NOAA, etc.

NEMA

Local authorities will have to work together on cross-jurisdictional emergency alerts. There will be a tool for generating emergency alerts at the local level in the future. Determining who can send the messages, where the authority to send messages comes from (vetting of messages), and what training will be required to send messages will be important considerations in the future.

Alisia LaMay and Sue Krogman, NEMA, went to the IPAWS Laboratory in Washington, DC, to test the Paraclete[®] server, which is the state system that is used for inter-connecting radios. Since Paraclete[®] is already installed in the state and can be integrated with the State Radio System, it is ideal for use generating CAP messages. Paraclete allows messages to be generated locally, which is what NEMA has in mind. Local and Regional representatives will need to work to plan and integrate the CAP/EAS/CMAS alerting technology and how to use it across County and State borders.

NEMA will install statewide IPAWS alert capability from the State EOC. Most emergencies occur at the local level. It was not clear if the Amber Alerts will be able to be generated into a CAP message by State Patrol using Paraclete. Many technical issues still need to be resolved.

FEMA does the Required Weekly Test (RWT) every Monday morning at 11 AM CT due to broadcaster demand as it is a closed circuit test (log and ignore). It was suggested that local 911 centers which are authorized to issue CAP alerts be required to send a weekly closed-circuit test to the counties wherein they are authorized to send alerts. NEMA will need to work out the details, the state EAS plan will need to make such requirements clear.

Jim Skinner reminded the SECC that our role is to write a plan that reflects how Nebraska CAP and EAS works, not decide on the system. However, NEMA asks for the input of the SECC as the members play an integral part in the alerting system.

It was again emphasized that trust is crucial for broadcasters and NWS to be willing to broadcast messages from Emergency Managers. CMAS only responds to the highest levels of alerts like TOR Warnings. Apparently cell companies filter and authorize the CMAS messages to make sure only important and genuine emergency messages get transmitted.

CMAS Update – Brian Smith

CMAS and IPAWS alerts are going to work either by County FIPS codes or by polygon technology. NEMA and FEMA prefer the polygon technology for alerting area. This is a large issue for cellular companies. WEA Alerts (e.g. flash flood, blizzard, ice storm) started going through IPAWS in June. CMAS alerts are limited to 90 characters that should say what is happening and the area affected as well as who initiated the alert. CMAS is an opt-out service for cellular customers, but so far all WEA capable phones are being shipped with CMAS activated. Major carriers are already selling several WEA compatible phones.

There are three CMAS alert target schemes being used:

- 1) **Limited Polygon**, if a cell tower resides in the polygon area of the emergency alert it will transmit a CMAS alert. Some cell coverage in the polygon could be excluded.
- 2) **Expanded Polygon**, if cell coverage is within the polygon area of the emergency alert the respective tower will transmit a CMAS alert. The tower itself may be outside the polygon.
- 3) **County Wide**, the CMAS alerts are sent by FIPS Code, where an alert is sent to all cell towers serving the affected county. This design could signal many phones outside the alert polygon.

The titles of these designs are not official, but are used for clarification in these minutes. It seemed obvious that the Expanded Polygon model makes the most sense. However all three scenarios' have been installed around the country at various locations and by different cell companies. It is unclear if wireless providers will be able to standardize the CMAS coverage anytime soon.

Brian Smith mentioned EAS on mobile TV is a topic being considered by Government Agencies. The Nebraska SECC discussed how many services such as Satellite TV & Radio, IPTV and Mobile TV might carry national alerts, but do not seem to be equipped to broadcast a State or Local Alert. Perhaps CAP on IPAWS will enable and encourage these systems to include local alerts.

Historically, the SECC's primary charge has been EAS for broadcast and cable, but absent of a CMAS committee, working on CMAS, the Nebraska State Plan also includes cell phone coverage. Rod Zeigler has invited representation from cellular phone companies to attend SECC meetings.

NPSCC Update – Janell Walther, Public Policy Center

A new executive order was issued that dissolved the Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR), but putting in a new committee, the Nebraska Public Safety Communications Committee (NPSCC) that is made up of regional and state representation. The SECC had status as a working subcommittee of NCOR. The purpose is to provide an avenue to discuss statewide digital communications system with local and regional Emergency Management. The SECC would like to seek to serve as a working group of the NPSCC. Janell Walther will craft a letter for review by the SECC to request position as a working group under the NPSCC.

Bob Huber made a motion for the SECC to request to become an official working group of the NPSCC. Rod Ziegler seconded the motion; the motion passed by consensus.

- **First RMT from NWS on Nov. 8**

The Nebraska EAS Required Monthly Test (RMT) will be originated by the NWS on November 8, 2012 at 2 PM. RMTs have always been sent by NET representing NEMA. NWS is set up for the RMT, which will go out with code NE000 similar to Amber Alerts. It will be important to watch for any delay or rebroadcast of the message. If there is an issue with the NWS alert and an alert is not heard statewide, the State Relay (NET) can issue the RMT at 230 PM pending a call from NWS.

- **RMT Plan for 2013**

RMTs in 2013 will be scheduled for the third Tuesdays of each month at 10 AM in odd months and 11 PM in even months. Bob Eastwood will populate the Yahoo calendar with the scheduled dates. NWS will issue the alerts in March, July, and November. If there is severe weather during the day of the event, the RMT will be suspended to the next day.

Rod Ziegler made a motion to approve the 2013 RMT schedule as proposed. Bob Huber seconded the motion; the motion passed by consensus.

- **Report to Nuclear Power Plant Emergency plans**

Brian Smith reported on the update to the Nuclear Power Plant Emergency Plans. It was proposed that the NWS issue the EAS alerts in the future. Non-EAS related messages would remain handled by the media. KNCY is near the Cooper Power Plant so they will be asked to serve as an LP-1 for the Power Plant are. KFAB/KGOR has expressed the desire to step down from responsibilities of generating Nuclear Power Plant alerts and tests. SECC Chair Jim Skinner expressed the concept that broadcast stations should carry the alerts generated by Emergency professionals, not be the originator. KFAB should be thanked for their many years of service.

NWS will meet at Fort Calhoun in November, where Brian will discuss EAS messages. FEMA has already met with NWS and the Power Plants about the use of CMAS and IPAWS for emergency power plant messages. The 90 character CMAS limit makes it necessary for the WEA message to guide people to tune into local media.

- **Other Comments**

Lynn Marshall, Sarpy County and President of Nebraska Association of Emergency Managers reported that he and a group will present on December 13, 2012 at the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) at their conference. Chris Rodgers, president of the National Association of County Officials, and his successors will also be presenting at the meeting. Contact Lynn for more information.

Marty Riemenschneider reported that there will be a national EAS meeting on Monday, March 4, 2013 in Washington, DC. Jim Skinner is invited to attend to represent Nebraska. Bob Eastwood agreed to submit a request for NEMA funds to send Jim. NBA is willing to help also.

- **Adjourn for Tour of NEMA Office**