

Minutes from SECC Meeting February 17, 2011

NEMA Lincoln NE, 10:05 AM to 12:50 PM

The Nebraska State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC)

Committee Members present: Bob Huber, Bob Eastwood, Brian Smith, Rod Zeigler, and Jim Skinner.

Guests present: Marty Riemenschneider NBA, Sue Krogman & Rod Hutt NEMA.

Committee Members unable to attend: Larry Lavelle and Bob Richwine.

The committee reviewed and briefly discussed updates from discussions at the November SECC meeting. The state terrestrial data network was discussed from a January conference call. This has become a strong candidate compared to expensive yearly satellite fees.

Rod Zeigler reported on the EAS National Town Hall meeting. Federal officials from FCC & FEMA are suggesting that the September 30 deadline for EAS boxes may be extended again. However, the EAS grant for Nebraska cannot be extended.

We decided to have an SECC meeting near the time and location of the FEMA Region 7 Planning Conference in LaVista Nebraska at Embassy Suites. The dates are July 28-30.

We discussed extensively how the Nebraska EAS upgrades will be administered. Sue Krogman is concerned that the SECC is a volunteer group. She offered to approach the Governor's office and seek direction for how the state should administrate the EAS system required by the Federal Government.

Rod Zeigler read the FCC rules section which specifies that the Governor of each state has the right to specify alerts which must be broadcast by stations and cable in that state. It is already in the rules. The SECC plans to make recommendations to the Governor of what EAS alerts should and should not be required.

The question was also raised as who chooses local EAS originators, who trains and who certifies. NEMA and/or OCIO could logically play roles in these jobs but once again the Nebraska Governor needs to decide and assign resources to accomplish the tasks before us. The SECC represents broadcasters and cable systems to help support the EAS service in Nebraska as the Governor directs.

Required Monthly Test delays were discussed. KVNO in Omaha has delayed the RMT by 58 minutes recently. Jim Skinner wrote a letter to KVNO requesting they transmit the RMT immediately. Management from KVNO has offered, in writing, to make the maximum RMT delay 15 minutes instead of 58 minutes. They also offered to have staff on duty whenever RMTs are scheduled and manually push the RMT as quickly as possible as it fits in programming. This way the delay would be less than 15 minutes in most cases.

NET Radio often delays the RMT test as well. Their maximum delay is already 15 minutes. The SECC will accept the offer from KVNO with thanks. It was proposed that the updated State EAS Plan should call for all State Relay stations to delay the RMT a maximum of 15 minutes.

Bob Eastwood has been working hard each month to monitor and log stations EAS RMT test. His monitoring is very labor intensive and only represents Lincoln and Omaha stations. He was encouraged to stop the monitoring procedure. There is interest in having automatic reporting from the new CAP compliant EAS equipment.

The decision was made not to release an update of the State EAS Plan until the CAP system and new FCC Rules are established. The committee wishes to put it's efforts into the new system rather than minor updates of the plan.

Brian Smith of NWS was asked if the NOAA Radio system in Nebraska would be interested in sharing duties with issuing Required Monthly Tests (RMT). Brian is concerned sending tests late at night and waking people. It was suggested that NWS could send daytime tests and NET would send night tests. NWS would NOT rebroadcast RMTs sent by NET. This will be pursued for EAS Plan update and the 2012 Nebraska RMT schedule.

Brian continues to seek information from national NWS on Hazcollect. That should be key in disseminating information on local emergencies.

NWS Valley has included "All of Nebraska" and "All of Iowa" FIPS codes on their weekly tests recently. That has been removed.

Jim Skinner reported speaking with Deb Collins of Nebraska State Patrol (NSP). They consider the present connection to NWS for Amber Alerts to be adequate. The NSP is willing to consider if a CAP data connection is needed for other emergency alerts such as dangerous road conditions.

The State Terrestrial Data System was discussed. The system will connect to 24/7/365 facilities such as 911 centers, not necessarily county EOCs. Rod Hutt joined us and passed out maps. Jim Skinner will contact Mark Higgins at CSI to discuss last mile radio links to stations and cable systems.

Jim Skinner raised the point that the Texas Association of Broadcasters website offers lists of Local plans and support to encourage local EAS plans and LECC groups. The Nebraska SECC intends to develop ways to encourage local participation in EAS preparedness.

It was decided that the SECC needs to meet monthly. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday March 17, 2011 at 9:00 AM.

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY JIM SKINNER SECC Chair, 2/18/2011