



## **Nebraska Public Safety Communications Council (NPSCC)**

### **2016 Annual Report**

March 2017

### **NPSCC Council Members**

Lt. Governor Mike Foley, Homeland Security  
Director

Jayne Scofield, Office of the Chief Information  
Officer, Statewide Interoperability  
Coordinator

Phil Brazelton, Tri-County PET Region

Roger Foster, League of Nebraska  
Municipalities

Kevin Garvin, Northeast PET Region

Tim Hofbauer, East Central PET Region

Adam Matzner, State Fire Marshal

Tom Nutt, Nebraska Association of County  
Officials

Mark Rempe, North Central PET Region

Ray Richards, Panhandle PET Region

Jon Rosenlund, South Central PET Region

Ray Ryan, Southeast PET Region

Thomas Schwarten, Nebraska State Patrol

Craig Stover, Nebraska Game & Parks  
Commission

Bryan Tuma, Nebraska Emergency  
Management Agency

David Webb, Nebraska Public Power District

## **Nebraska Public Safety Communications Council 2016 Annual Report**

Executive Order (No. 12-01) established the Nebraska Public Safety Communications Council (NPSCC) on October 18, 2012. The Executive Order created the membership of the Council, and identified the responsibilities of the Council related to public safety communications in Nebraska. The Executive Order charged the NPSCC with providing an annual report containing a current assessment of the status of interoperability of public safety in Nebraska that included recommendations for improvements and enhancements to the system.

### **Background**

The NPSCC combines responsibilities and membership of the two groups established in 2008 by Executive Order – the Nebraska Wireless Interoperability Council (NWIN) and the Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR). The NPSCC expanded membership to include representatives from the League of Nebraska Municipalities and Nebraska Association of County Officials along with representatives from the Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska State Fire Marshal, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska Public Power District, and one representative of each Nebraska Planning, Exercise and Training (PET) Communication Region.

The NPSCC was made an official subcommittee of the Nebraska Homeland Security Policy Group on January 27, 2014. The NPSCC operates under the direction of the State Homeland Security Director and Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) and is charged with the following:

1. Provide for the policy level direction related to the planning and decisions regarding development, operation and sustainability of interoperability in the State of Nebraska
2. Provide leadership regarding the development of public safety communications within Nebraska
3. Adopt bylaws for the operation of the Council
4. Promote interoperability for public safety communications within Nebraska, and with border states
5. Provide recommendations for the development of protocols, standard operating procedures and guidelines for use of public safety communications systems in Nebraska
6. Coordinate and provide planning, training and exercise opportunities related to communications interoperability for all necessary and authorized public safety practitioners
7. Establish working groups, as required, to meet the needs of providing interoperability within Nebraska. NPSCC will provide guidance on recommendations that come from these working groups.

8. Develop recommendations and strategies for best utilization of public funds, including grants, to improve public safety communications in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is charged in the Executive Order with providing support to the NPSCC. NEMA contracts for planning support with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center to carry out this duty along with provision of general planning support for communications activities across the state, including maintaining a website to centralize information related to public safety communications activities across the state (<http://www.homelandplanning.nebraska.edu>).

## **2016 Milestones**

**Nebraska Regional Interoperability Network (NRIN) Governance Board.** NRIN is a point-to-point microwave transport system with the capability of moving data as fast as 100 megabytes per second. It runs at 5(9's) capability, so that 99.999 percent of the time it is functioning and there is a redundant connection available. The network can transport large amounts of data, radio, voice and video quickly and efficiently in a secure and reliable fashion. The many circles that are being created are for redundancy. It has the capability to be used in many ways and is currently being used for primary 911 systems, Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) connections for data transport, radio connections for 800 MHz systems and remote siren systems. There are also parts of this network being used as small redundancy areas for both the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). NPSCC chartered the NRIN subcommittee on September 3, 2015. The Committee was charged with developing the governance, management, maintenance, and monitoring of NRIN. In late 2015 and early 2016, the NRIN Committee established an Interlocal Agreement for NRIN Governance and Sustainability, solicited participation by counties and municipalities in the Interlocal Agreement, recruited nominees for board elections, and conducted elections to form an NRIN Governance Board representing all regions of the State.

Sixty counties and five municipalities signed Interlocal Agreements to join this network by 2016. The NRIN Governance Board includes two representatives from each of the seven participating emergency management regions and held its first meeting in May 2016. The NRIN Board appointed ex officio members representing NEMA, OCIO, NPPD, and the Tri-County emergency management region. During 2016, the Board met monthly, developed bylaws, elected officers and formed three subcommittees: 1) A Technical Committee to assess technology needs of NRIN, develop standards for NRIN use, create a process for application to NRIN, and evaluate monitoring and management requirements, 2) a Policy/Administration/Outreach Committee to develop strategic communications for NRIN, promote current and potential NRIN uses, and negotiate for services of a fiscal agent, and 3) a Finance Committee to estimate NRIN sustainability costs (e.g., tower rent, equipment replacement, monitoring, maintenance, administration)

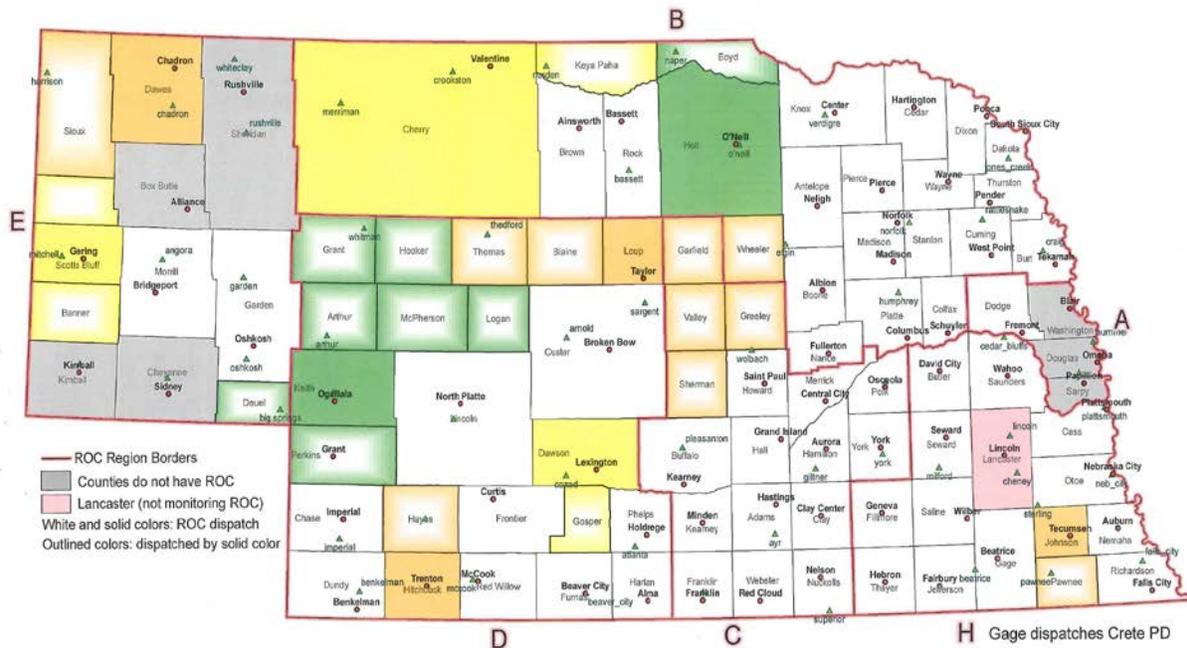
and to identify equitable methods for financing those costs. The Board has been instrumental in monitoring and troubleshooting the NRIN buildout, negotiating with key partners for potential use of the network, and planning for sustainment and growth.

**Statewide Radio System (SRS).** The SRS is an APCO Project 25 (P25) standards based Motorola VHF digital trunked land mobile radio system. It operates on a closed secure network built specifically for the radio system traffic. It networks 59 towers - an increase of 4 since last year - two master controllers, one in Lincoln and one in Kearney. The master controllers are designed with Dynamic System Resilience (DSR.) They are redundant within themselves, each with dual routers; but if both routers fail in the main Lincoln controller, the Kearney controller automatically takes over with no manual intervention required. The SRS is jointly owned, operated and managed by the State Office of the CIO and the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) through an Interlocal Agreement. The System Administrative Group (SAG) has the responsibility for system operations management and new user implementation guidance and coordination. The System User Group (SUG) is an advisory and user support group that meets regularly to share experiences, work out best interoperability practices and recommend system improvements. The System Operating Group (SOG) is the SRS administrative governance group.

The SRS was designed for all public utilities and public safety communications agencies operating in the state including state, federal, county and city agencies. A special set of talkgroups was developed for local dispatch centers to have interoperability with SRS dispatch centers and users. They are the Regional Operations Common (ROC) talkgroups. Of Nebraska's 93 counties, by the end of 2016, all but 5 had the SRS ROC radios in their dispatch operations which gives them interoperability with SRS users through the use of the ROC talkgroups. The remaining 5 are scheduled to implement the ROC talkgroups in 2017. The OCIO originated and coordinates a weekly statewide ROC talkgroup test during all three dispatch shifts with the State and local dispatch centers; and follows up with any that do not respond to ensure they are aware of any training or equipment issues that may need to be addressed. Several local law enforcement and emergency management agencies have joined the SRS. They are Lincoln County Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management, Gage County Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management, Butler County Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management, and Nemaha County Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management. North Platte PD, Beatrice PD, Colfax County and Cass County Dispatch Centers have SRS networked dispatch console systems. Colfax and Cass are planning to bring subscriber units on the SRS in 2017.

In 2016, the NSP, OCIO and Motorola Solutions developed an innovative radio trade-in program that has resulted in 29 sheriff's offices and several emergency management agencies signing an intent to join the SRS. As the NSP changes out their XTL5000 VHF SRS mobile radios for new mobiles, Motorola authorized service shops pick up and refurbish them. Local law enforcement and public safety agencies can fill out an application for the refurbished mobile radios. A committee of NSP, OCIO and Motorola representatives review the applications and send out award letters to those who will receive them. Radios were still available for award at the end of 2016 and will continue to be awarded throughout 2017 until the supply is gone.

Nebraska Dispatch & ROC Regions



**Public Safety Broadband Network Working Group.** The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) received a federal grant to conduct stakeholder identification, outreach, education and other planning activities for an expanded nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety entities. This national initiative is referred to as FirstNet. The Nebraska Public Safety Broadband Network Working Group was chartered as a working group of the NPSCC on January 17, 2014. In March of 2015 Nebraska held its Initial Consultation Meeting with FirstNet and 125 local and state stakeholders in Kearney. Nebraska public safety agencies collected data to provide FirstNet with information needed to draft a Request for Proposals (RFP) to design and build the Network along with coverage and business plans for Nebraska. FirstNet released the RFP in January 2016 with proposals due in May 2016. Review of the

proposals was occurring in late 2016 into 2017 when a court challenge was filed regarding the selection process and all parties are awaiting a ruling from the courts. Nebraska has hired an analyst who will review and assess the State Plan FirstNet delivers to determine how the Plan compares to the coverage, cost and priority issues Nebraska's first responders identified at regional meetings during the data collection phase. Outreach efforts are continuing statewide such as the FirstNet metro area briefing that was held for responders, elected officials and other decision makers in the Omaha, City of Lincoln, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington county areas. More information about this project is available at <http://www.cio.nebraska.gov/ps-broadband-network-planning-project.html>.

**Nebraska State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC).** This working group was established under the NPSCC on December 12, 2012. The group had been operating since 2011 as a subcommittee of the Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR) which was subsumed by the NPSCC. The purposes of the SECC are set out by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The SECC includes representatives from state agencies, local emergency management, radio, television, cable systems and the National Weather Service. This group writes and maintains the state Emergency Alert System (EAS) plan. The updated Nebraska EAS plan (March 2015) was resubmitted to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in February 2017 and is currently under review.

## **Accomplishments and Recommendations**

The following system accomplishments and recommendations have been discussed at the NPSCC meetings in 2016:

- Work has progressed to build out NRIN across the State. Portions of regions are operational and being used for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), mutual aid base station connections, environmental monitoring and remote security. Depending on grant dollars available, the NRIN build-out is scheduled to be completed in late fall of 2018. The NRIN Board is fully functional and is developing a sustainability plan. There are 60 counties and 5 municipalities that have joined in developing a quasi-governmental entity through Interlocal Agreement to govern NRIN.
- At the end of 2016, 88 of 93 counties (about 95%) now have interoperability with the SRS users through their dispatch centers' ROC Plan participation. The remaining five counties are scheduled to implement the ROC talkgroups in 2017. The OCIO will continue working with Motorola and NSP to provide refurbished mobile radios to local law enforcement and public safety agencies in 2017 until the supply is gone.
- The OCIO performs SRS educational outreach at conferences to increase awareness about the SRS and its availability. They exhibited at the annual Nebraska Association of Emergency Management (NAEM), the Nebraska Sheriffs' Association and Police Officers Association of Nebraska (NSA/POAN) and the Nebraska Association of County

Officials (NACO.) They were also speakers at the NSA/POAN which generated additional interest in joining the SRS.

- The NPSCC has approved recommended changes in the Charter for the Public Safety Broadband Network Working Group. The NPSCC has been briefed regarding the FirstNet planning activities and will provide input on the bids submitted in response to the RFP and recommendations regarding the FirstNet State Plan and Nebraska's decisions regarding participation in FirstNet.
- The State Emergency Response Commission updated and resubmitted the State Emergency Alert System (EAS) plan to the FCC.
- Nebraska contracted with Alert Sense to provide access to Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for state and county agencies. Regional IPAWS trainings are being conducted across the state.
- Nebraska's annual TERREX exercise highlighted the need to continuously update Tactical Interoperability Communications Plans (TICPs), as they were discovered to be very valuable in an event of this scale. NEMA continues to work with the emergency management regions to update TICPs.
- Nebraska continues to refine its Investment Justification Process and to include important stakeholders from across the State. This process ensures that Homeland Security Planning Grant dollars for communications and other projects meet state priorities and are aligned with Nebraska and regional Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) processes, the Nebraska State Preparedness Report (SPR) and the Training, Exercise and Planning Workshop (TEPW) and training calendars.

*This report was prepared by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center with assistance from the OCIO and NEMA.  
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