

NRIN Network Subcommittee on Network Management

July 26, 2012

Attendees: Mark Conrey, Tri County Region; Tim Hofbauer, East Central Region; Sue Krogman, NEMA, Pete Peterson, North Central Region; Jayne Scofield, OCIO; Andra Backer, PPC; Mark DeKraai, PPC; Pat Gerdes, Southwest Region; Chris Heinsley NPPD; Matt Schnell, NPPD; Jeff Cadwaller, OCIO; Jim Sheets, OCIO; Mark Higgins, CSI; Henry Vargas, CSI; Deb Farrell, CSI; Mardell Hergenrader, NEMA

- NRIN progress update:

The initial ring testing is complete. Mark Higgins reported that sites that have completed EHPs have ordered equipment. In the Southwest region, equipment for connection has been ordered from Ogallala to McCook. According to Pat Gerdes, those sites are ready to go. Installation can begin in Ogallala as soon as the materials arrive. The next location should be in Curtis if a tower location can be agreed upon. A connection that can't be seen on the map is from Merna to Cozad though Cozad didn't pass the engineering assessment. Mark agreed to visit Hastings and McCook next week to check on the equipment scheduled to arrive. He will contact Pat when he is out there. It was determined that only one distribution site per region is desirable to receive and store materials. McCook is the distribution site for the Southwest region. Hastings will be the distribution site for South Central, part of the East Central and western part of the Southeast regions.

Sue clarified the purpose of the meeting and stated that the goal is to identify site readiness for each of the regions and map out the order in which progress is going to be made. There are towers on the original RFP that have not yet been analyzed. CSI was informed that tower studies and structural analyses need to be completed as soon as possible so regions can get leases signed and begin to move forward. Information on the tower height and dish sizes required should also be relayed to the regions as part of this process. The Southeast region has a greater number of public owned tower sites and could be in a better position to get things done quicker. Water towers, grain elevators and community towers are also being used as sites in addition to public and privately owned towers. Information from the engineering report done by CSI can be given with the exception of some security-sensitive items.

Mardell asked if NCOR would be willing to agree to use grant funding to purchase additional towers if they are needed to complete a ring. Tim said he would bring it up as a discussion item at the NCOR meeting tomorrow. He said that priority of completion should be given to those areas without any connectivity and no tower options. The next area of focus should be high cost lease areas. Pete reminded the group that we need to focus on the bigger picture. CSI needs to make a commitment to communicate with each regional representative when they run into problem areas. This will allow the locals time to look into the issue and see what other options are available. The tower studies that have not been completed need to be done and those needing to be revisited should be done again quickly.

CSI has been asked to complete an "as built" layout depicting the anticipated completed project and its functions. This should be done within two weeks. This report will include current project status as well as including each site, what equipment is on site and what has been installed to date at each individual location.

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- Routers:

If there is a cost difference between the MX and SRX and it would benefit the system as a whole, then it was agreed that they extra cost was worth it. The endpoints should be the most secure. Junipers are secure enough to act as a firewall at the endpoints. As long as the equipment remains compatible there won't be issues of technology refreshing. The goal is to keep the equipment as simple as possible in the areas in which little is needed and ensure that the sophistication and security are at the core and where they would serve the benefit the most. Changing routers will be discussed at the NCOR meeting tomorrow.

To clarify the original RFP, the equipment is warrantied but the labor is not. The warranty on the equipment is for two years from acceptance of all phases, not just acceptance by each of the regions. If you have an equipment failure and it is related to manufacturing, the maintenance dollars will take care of labor and mobilization. Each region will need testing equipment. Pete suggested each region should have two to three. Mardell is still waiting for FEMA's response to ensure this is an allowable cost.

- Network Monitoring:

Environmental monitoring (who receives alerts) is another consideration that needs to be addressed. It is possible that the system could be monitored by the end user of the system which would be at the PSAP. This committee will need to decide if we wish to recommend a brand that has the desired capabilities for firewall and generator monitoring. Monitoring capabilities should be standardized.

- Network Management:

Additional meetings will take place to determine who will be in charge of managing the system. A decision regarding the maintenance and monitoring piece will need to be made by this committee. However, another conversation about monitoring should also occur. This committee will need to examine the cost/benefit for each option for network management and monitoring. Management of the network needs to be clarified with CSI. CSI needs the capability to view or access the network from a warranty standpoint. If there is a need for a password before this issue is addressed, contact Sue and Mark will send them to her and Pete by next week. A new VPN is needed at the Ogallala site and once that is done then they can bypass the state's network and connect the VPN concentrator to the firewall. Once that is done, then Mark will have access to the portion of the pilot ring that is complete.

- Next Steps:

NPPD needs access to monitor the sites due to the high temperatures and issues of fading. Usernames, passwords and configurations should be sent to NPPD by CSI next week.

A VPN connection for CSI is needed to access the network. NPPD will also need a VPN to access the ring on the state network.

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CSI will complete an “as built” design for the entire project illustrating users, passwords, access, etc. and what equipment is currently on site at each location and send it to Sue in two weeks.

All engineering analyses and tower studies will be conducted and information on tower suitability, height and dishes will be shared with each the regional representatives within two months.

Two or three testing tools should be purchased for each Region once the decision has been made by FEMA if the equipment would be considered an allowable expense.

CSI will need to discuss with Tri-county how the ring will connect to the Tri-county system.

NCOR will discuss using grant funds to build towers where needed, NCOR will also discuss upgrading routers.