



Commissioner Notes

By James M. Thomas

This month we will be highlighting “Interoperability.” As we know, this is and always will be a significant issue in all of the disciplines of public safety. Fortunately, our state has been able to work together in an effort to improve “communications interoperability.”

The article, written by the manager of the DEMHS Communications Unit, Mr. John Gustafson, demonstrates the efforts of many, many individuals from many different agencies, local, state and federal and the impact they have had in communications. We have come a long way from where we were on September 11, 2001, but we know that we are still far from where we want to be.

Unfortunately, due to the space limitations of the DEMHS Advisor, we are only showing a small portion of the white paper written by John on “Interoperable Communications.” We have placed the entire document on the DEMHS website for you to read.

Also highlighted is the Connecticut Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) starting on page 6. It has been demonstrated, many times over, that the membership of the ARES has been able to step up and deliver, in the most difficult of situations, to assure that vital radio communications happen. We are very proud of all of the members of the Connecticut Amateur Emergency Services and appreciate their on-going support to the public safety community here in Connecticut.

I also want to acknowledge the retirements of so many individuals in the public safety community that are taking advantage of the State of Connecticut’s Retirement Incentive Program and retiring from state service. These individuals have been instrumental in making Connecticut a safer place. We wish them and their families a long and healthy retirement and really do appreciate the many years of dedicated service to the citizens of Connecticut. We at DEMHS are sponsoring one reception on July 28th to honor and thank all of the DEMHS staff who are retiring. A flyer providing the specific information is included in this month’s edition of the DEMHS Advisor.

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**Happy
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July**



INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS MOVING FORWARD

Through out Connecticut significant progress is being made in planning and implementing interoperable and operable communications systems. These efforts include development of SOP's, training of practitioners, and establishing long term governance for existing and planned systems.

None of these efforts would be possible with out the dedication and commitment of people from our towns, cities, regions and state agencies.

STATEWIDE PLANNING AND COORDINATION

Interoperable communications in Connecticut is governed by the State Public Safety Interoperable Communications Executive Committee (CPSICEC) which is a sub-committee of the DEMHS State wide Coordinating Council which advises and makes recommendations to the DEMHS Commissioner.

The CPSICEC is representative of all State agencies, local public safety disciplines local government and regions. It meets monthly at the ConnDot Laboratory in Rocky Hill on the third Tuesday of every month. The SEIC has several sub-committees which include, Technical, Training and Exercise and 700 MHz Planning. The group is co-chaired by Michael Varney of DOIT and Bill Hackett of DEMHS.

The CPSICEC mission is:

Provide for statewide telecommunication infrastructure and protocol that will allow timely, efficient and cost-effective communications (voice, data, video) for all public safety and public healthcare agencies (state, regional and local) to be able to serve as an alert system and provide appropriate, coordinated response to any and all emergencies.

The Technical Committee is charged with developing minimum standards for communications interoperability and insuring that communications systems and communications hardware procured meet or exceed the standards. The Technical Committee also develops and reviews designs of interoperable communications systems. The Training and Exercise Committee is charged with planning development and implementation of training programs in the use of interoperable communications systems, and the 700 MHz Planning Committee whose charge is developing and maintaining a plan for the use of 700 MHz radio channels, reviewing and making recommendations to the CPSICEC for action on requests to FCC Region 19 700 MHz regional plan update committee.

In October of 2008, Connecticut hired two Emergency Telecommunications Managers to manage the State's Communications Interoperability initiatives. John Gustafson works for DEMHS and Steve Verbil works at DPS, and both serve as staff to the CPSICEC.

JOB WELL DONE

We would be remiss if we did not pay honor to several people who have played a significant role in bringing emergency communications and interoperability to its present level and are now leaving State service after long and honorable careers. These individuals have left a legacy of progress and cooperation which will be a challenge to duplicate. Leaving for well deserved retirements are Mr. George Pohorilak, Director of OSET; Mr. Mike Stemmler Director of CSP/CST Communications unit; DOT Radio Supervisor, Mr. George Carbonell; Mr. Robert Dibella of the Communications Unit and Deputy Commissioner Wayne Sandford of DEMHS. Commissioner James "Skip" Thomas will also be retiring. Skip, as the chair of the ad hoc interoperability committee established after September 11 2001, and on through his tenure as DEMHS Commissioner, has been a driving force in bringing local, regional and state communications stakeholders together to solve problems and plan for the future.

We wish them all health and happiness in their well earned retirement.

THE PLAN LIGHTS THE WAY

The guiding force of interoperable communications in Connecticut is the State Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). The Plan outlines the short and long term strategies for interoperable communications in Connecticut. First developed in 2007 through a yeoman effort on the part of Municipal, Regional and State stakeholders, the plan is annually reviewed and up dated. On June 17th the Federal Department of Homeland Security Office of Emergency Communications held a SCIP Plan review session at Rentshler Field in East Hartford. Representatives from local regional and state practitioners attended this all day effort, designed to identify changes which were needed in the plan, evaluate it in relation to the National Emergency Communications Plan, and discuss strategies for implementation.

Using the results of this session and feedback already maintained, the State Interoperability Committee will revise the plan for approval by the DEMHS Commissioner. The SCIP Plan can be found on the DEMHS Web Page.

Using funds from the Federal Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP), our regions have undertaken to write the Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP). While the SCIP and other Plans are strategic in nature and lay out plans for future improvements and enhancements, the TICP Plan outlines how the region will conduct communications operations if the incident occurs. This process in Connecticut has been facilitated with assistance from the Department of Homeland Security ICTAP Group from the Naval Space and Aviation Warfare Center in San Diego. All Connecticut Regions will have functional TICP Plans by January of 2010. The next step will be the creation and maintenance of a Statewide TICP Plan.

Using the IECGP Grant funds our regions are developing the procedures and training required to insure that the plans are exercised and modified as required.

One of the training initiatives outlined in the SCIP Plan is the training and credentialing of Communications Unit Leaders (COML). In the Incident Management system, the COML is responsible for establishing and implementing the communications networks required by the Incident Commander to effectively control and mitigate the incident, insuring that interoperable networks exist where needed and obtaining the communications assets required to mitigate the incident.



Upcoming Training & Exercise

- | | |
|------------|--|
| July 27 | Terrorism Training Extremism in CT: Groups, Individuals, Symbols & Tattoos—POSTC |
| July 30 | WebEOC Training— Hartford Armory—EOC |
| Aug 18-20 | Transit Terrorist Tools & Tactics—Bridgeport |
| Sept 10-11 | Bioterrorism: Mass Prophylaxis & Planning— New Haven |
| Sept 26-27 | CERT Weekend—Windsor Locks |

For training & exercise questions contact the Training Unit at **860-256-0840**.

Fax: 860-706-5539 or email: Training.demhs@ct.gov

You may register for these courses as listed at: www.ct.gov/demhs; or through POSTC at www.ct.gov/post; or through the CT Fire Academy (CFA) at www.ct.gov/cfca.

STATEWIDE INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS DEPLOY AND DEVELOP

ICALL/ITAC - The Connecticut ICALL/ITAC System, operated by the Department of Public Safety State Police Communications Unit (CSP/CTS), provides command and control communications to support the incident management system at local and statewide events as required or requested by the local incident commander.

Each local Police, Fire, EMD and EMS agency has been provided with a portable radio which will operate on these channels. The network, operating on the FCC-allocated 800 MHz Interoperability channels, consists of 38 transmitter sites spread throughout the State. In addition to the portable radios, control stations have been installed in each Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and CMED, giving local dispatch centers access to these communications channels. The fixed network is supplemented by 35 mobile repeaters, housed in the 34 Mass Decontamination Trailers distributed to fire service agencies statewide, and in each of the CSP/CTS Telecommunications Engineers vehicles. Non-government entities may request authorization to operate on the ICALL/ITAC system by request to the State Public Safety Interoperable Communications Executive Committee.

Over the past year several changes have been made to the ICALL/ITAC System, including deployment of additional fixed repeater sites and the introduction of "Simulcast" technology to the system. This technology allows for the CSP Message Center Dispatch staff to immediately receive and communicate with an incident commander seeking use of the system. In addition, the Message Center staff can set up the ICALL network as a Statewide Simulcast channel allowing the Incident Commander to communicate directly with resources or assets responding from anywhere in the state. Plans are ongoing for future refinements and enhancements to this vital system.

CS-PERN - One of the critical day to day interoperability issues faced by the Law Enforcement community is the ability for individual police units to communicate with each other across municipal and department jurisdictions. To alleviate this, the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, Department of Public Safety, and Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security partnered to develop the Connecticut Statewide Police Emergency Radio Network. (CS-PERN)

CS-PERN is a single, statewide, 800 MHz simulcast channel provided on the CSP radio network infrastructure, installed in all police units, which allows direct two way radio contact between law enforcement vehicles. It is available 24 hours per day and does not require dispatcher intervention to set up or use. In addition, the ICALL/ITAC control stations in each PSAP have been reprogrammed to include the CS-PERN Channel in addition to the ICALL/ITAC Channels.

Early this year DEMHS Commissioner James Thomas recognized that the current financial crisis has slowed if not stopped the implementation of this vital system. Using some available Federal Grant monies, DEMHS has arranged to provide CS-PERN radios to local Law Enforcement agencies at no cost and provide for installation into their vehicles. This month, notice will be made to the Law Enforcement community on how to apply for these radios up to the limit of available funding.

STOCS - Fire, Law Enforcement, EMS, Local, State and Federal Government Agencies in Connecticut operate two-way radio systems using a variety of frequency bands which makes on-scene tactical communications difficult, if not impossible. In an effort to address this communications gap, DEMHS has developed and deployed the State Tactical On-Scene Channel System (STOCS). The STOCS System is designed to utilize existing portable radio equipment, which these departments/agencies use daily, to communicate at an incident regardless of their frequency band.

Phase 1 and 2 deployment of STOCS CBR units is almost complete. Seventy-eight (78) units have been deployed or are allocated and awaiting deployment. There are a number of units which have not yet been allocated. Municipalities or services who may wish to be assigned a STOCS CBR unit should send an e-mail to DEMHS Emergency Telecommunications Manager John Gustafson at John.G.Gustafson@ct.gov.



NEW INTEROPERABLE PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES MOVE FORWARD

Based on the goals and objectives of Connecticut SCIP Plan, the Department of Homeland Security in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Commerce, issued a Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant in the amount of almost \$13 million to Connecticut to accomplish the goals outlined in our plan.

The grant has three major investments: the first is the procurement and installation of an APCO P25 Phase 2 message switch which will replace the switch currently in use in the DPS Statewide Trunked Radio System. In addition to supporting the existing CSP radio system this device will be shared with local and regional radio systems to provide for interoperability, support and enhancement of the local and regional systems.

The second investment will be to procure six quick response communications vehicles, five of which will be strategically located within municipalities. These vehicles will increase the capability of regional or local communications systems in an emergency or planned event.

In conjunction with the rapid response communications vehicles, a Strategic Technical Reserve of radio transmitter equipment antennas, coaxial cables and mobile antenna towers will be established and stored to be deployed to assist in restoring Local, Regional and State communications infrastructures which may be damaged by a man-made or natural force.

DEMHS and DPS Emergency Telecommunications Managers have begun developing a plan to provide for common 700 MHz channels for the exclusive use of the states regional HazMat Teams, SWAT/ESU, Bomb Squads and USAR. The CPSICEC 700 MHz planning committee is developing a state plan for use of 700 MHz channels to insure that adequate spectrum is available as the proposed migration occurs over the next 10 to 15 years.

Thanks to the New York Metropolitan area Transit Security Grant and Connecticut DOT Rail, a joint project by DEMHS and DPS is establishing a new interoperable voice communications pathway which will be deployed in municipalities along the Metro North Rail Line from Greenwich to New Haven.



CITIZEN VOLUNTEERS STAND READY TO COMMUNICATE

Communications is vital to the successful response and recovery from any disaster or emergency. In Connecticut we are fortunate to have a dedicated group of Amateur Radio Operators affiliated with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service, or the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL). Last fall this group hosted a training exercise in at the DEMHS Region 5 office in Southbury.

This article has been edited to allow for space considerations. To see the complete article please go to:
http://www.ct.gov/demhs/lib/demhs/communications/interop_comm_moving_fwd.pdf

“Spring Training” - A Grand Slam for Emergency Communications Operators in Connecticut

Communications is key to success in any emergency. And when critical systems are down or backup communications are needed, amateur (ham) radio operators volunteer their time, skills, and equipment to support DEMHS and their local emergency management team. In addition, they provide support to the Red Cross, The Salvation Army and other agencies in times of crisis. Amateur radio emergency operators pride themselves on being able to set up communications and operate when all other systems and communications fail. Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) is an organization of amateur radio operators who volunteer their time and energies to serving others by bringing their unique skills to solve the critical need for reliable communications.

Using a spring training baseball theme, over 65 ARES members gathered in Southbury for a full day of education, updates, demonstrations, and workshops. The Region 5 headquarters building was the venue for this “Spring Training” event for area emergency communicators from the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) team. Robert Kenny – Region 5 DEMHS Coordinator and the Region 5 DEMHS team hosted the event that drew emergency operators from all corners of Region 5 and from adjacent regions as well. This event turned out to be one of the best events of it’s kind in recent history. Through a series of workshops, operators were able to focus on one theme - improving emergency communications skills.

Over the past few months, one of the buildings at the old Southbury Training School has undergone renovation and preparation to house the new location of DEMHS Region 5 Headquarters. During this time, the building has received a number of repairs and upgrades to prepare it for its new role.

Part of this new role will be to use the facility for events and meetings that support the mission of DEMHS and other support functions of the state, especially training events like this.

Thanks to the support of the local DEMHS team, this event was expertly executed and coordinated with subject matter experts from across the country assembling to share their knowledge and insights on various topics with the attendees.



The planning for this effort was kicked-off in early January with the support of Robert Kenny, Paul Estefan – Danbury, CT Emergency Management Director, the Danbury amateur radio team coordinated by Oscar Fuller (KO1F) of Danbury, and the Region 5 Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) team. Estefan has supported and developed a team of local hams to staff the Danbury EOC in times of need. Paul was an early instigator of this event and provided continuing support throughout the operation. Danbury continues to be in the forefront of finding ways to utilize these volunteers to support the city operations and provide needed backup. Paul comments that, “The Danbury ARES team is an excellent example of kind of communications support that any municipality could develop. They are well organized, well trained and always on hand when needed and give the city that extra cushion of communications support when needed.”

Other communities in Region 5 and around the state either have already or are in the process of expanding their amateur radio support program.

The Region 5 HQ in Southbury will have an amateur radio station as an integral part of its communications plans and capabilities.

ARRL – The national association for amateur radio provided support and donated various publications to be used at the event workshops. Betsey Doane (K1EIC) the ARRL State Section Manger was on hand to participate in the program. In addition, Wayne Gronlund (N1CLV) the ARRL / ARES State Emergency Coordinator was also there to lend support and participate in the program.

John Gustafson – Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security -Emergency Telecommunications Manager for the State of Connecticut was on hand to deliver the keynote address during the opening program. John applauded the work and dedication of the emergency communicators assembled and shared with them his vision of how Amateur Radio operators could be used more effectively in Connecticut’s emergency management. He is working with the ham radio community and ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services) to fashion a formal mission for amateur radio volunteers within the emergency planning strategy for the state of Connecticut. Formalizing their role will provide the state with an additional resource for communications, one that is already trained, tested, and with proven abilities.

Workshops

During the course of the day, attendees had the option of choosing and attending 4 of 8 workshops centered on emergency communications. Workshops included:

NVIS – Chuck Rexroad of Bolton, CT, a recognized expert on Near Vertical Incident Skywave (NVIS) antenna systems shared the advantages of developing and deploying NVIS antennas in emergency situations. This system of antenna design and transmission, allows for very effective communication on high-frequency bands that is easy to deploy and use especially in emergency situations.

Propagation and Space Weather – Pete Kanderfer (KB1PCK) was there to help us better understand how to get the best signal out of our radio systems and how “space weather” will affect how well we can communication over short and long distance.

D-Star – Scott Honaker N7SS from Seattle, WA – An expert in ICOM Radio D-Star Digital Communications System delivered a workshop on this new digital technology for both voice and data.

Data Communications – Ned Bassic (KA1CVV) and John Kalotai (N1OLO) - Representatives from West Mountain Radio of Norwalk, Connecticut provided the latest information on using computer sound card and data communications techniques for amateur radio.

Emergency Power – This workshop included three topics of great interest to the emergency communicator and provided techniques to ensure power is available to operate no matter what the conditions. Topics included using Solar Power – Bill Thoren (N1TIW) of Bethel, CT. showed how to set up and manage a solar power array to keep batteries charged and optimized for field use. Rosty Slabicky (N2FEX) was on hand to discuss how to most effectively and efficiently manage the battery power you may have on hand during an emergency. Again, the West Mountain Radio team (Ned Bassic and John Kalotai) provided hands-on training on using PowerPole technology to ensure quick connectivity for any emergency deployment.



WiFi / APRS – WiFi – Ken Weith (KD1DD) showed us how to set up a wifi network and - using the ham bands send / receive any type of data – voice – large messages. This is a fairly new application of a familiar technology and holds great promise for use during emergencies. Automatic Position Reporting System – Bill Covey (W1GTT) delivered a workshop on APRS - (ARRS – is a copywrite term by Bob Bruninga, WB4APR) Bruninga says “It is a two-way tactical real-time digital communications system between all assets in a network sharing information about everything going on in the local area. This means if something is happening now, or there is information that could be valuable to you, then it should show up on your APRS radio in your mobile. APRS also supports global callsign-to-callsign messaging, bulletins, objects email and Voice because every local area is seen by the Internet System (APRS-IS)! APRS should enable local and global amateur radio operator contact at anytime-anywhere and using any device.”

RF Safety / RFI – Ed Hare – W1RFI of Burlington, CT - a nationally known authority on the topic and Author of *RF Exposure and You* was on hand to share information on radio frequency safety and the best way to deal with various types of RF interference.

STOCS / ICALL / ITAC - Dave Brown – Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security – State Training Supervisor. Dave presented an overview of ICALL / ITAC to the attendees and provided hands on training on STOCS (State Tactical On-scene Communications System).

Demonstrations Vehicles

In addition to the eight workshops that were a part of the day, three demonstration vehicles were on hand for tours, demonstrations, and questions from the attendees.

Region 2 Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) vehicles were there to show their new operational state-of-the-art mobile stations. In addition to viewing and demonstrating their abilities, they supported the event by acting as the event network control and key communications vehicle for the event.

The 14th Civil Support Team – Weapons of Mass Destruction – Communication Support Vehicle was on hand for the attendees to tour and ask questions. This vehicle provides critical communications support during any applicable emergency where their services are required.

The Red Cross – Emergency Communications Response Vehicle (ECRV) was there to show its capabilities. Amateur operators are trained to manage and operate this vehicle by the Red Cross and are regularly deployed to disaster scenes to establish and maintain several communications modes serving the Red Cross internal operations.

Go Kit competition

In addition to the workshops, the attendees were encouraged to bring their personal “jump kit” or “go kits” they have assembled and packaged to be ready to go on a moments notice to respond to an emergency situation. Each kit is a stand-alone radio station designed for portability and ease of use. Operators design and build their own go-kits and incorporate all the various components needed to ensure good station operation. Packaging and portability is key. The attendees then “judged” the kits in a good-natured competition, certificates were awarded based on type of communications modes (HF / VHF / Digital). The real objective of the competition was to create a forum for sharing ideas and show what is possible when ingenuity and clever packaging combines with radio technology.

Amateur Radio Operators

Amateur radio operators are all licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and must pass a series of exams to be granted a license. These licenses grant the operator the privilege of transmitting on a variety of frequency bands, using various modes including AM, FM, SSB, Packet, and more. Many amateur operators focus their attention on emergency communications and most are fully trained and qualified in all Incident Command protocols. These operators train regularly and have equipment standing by which means they can be deployed anywhere / anytime as the need arises. Connecticut amateur (HAM) operators have been deployed to trouble spots across the country including support after Katrina, flooding in the mid-west, ice storms in Massachusetts, to mention only a few.

In addition to the emergency services work, these hams volunteer regularly to support community and charitable events using the same skills and equipment they would apply in an emergency to better manage communications at various events. Additionally, these volunteers train regularly within their own organization to exercise their skills and build new capabilities. They also participate in state and national drills and exercises to keep their skills sharp.

This “sold out” event clearly demonstrated the functionality of the Southbury facility to house this type of training. DEMHS was pleased to host this event and to make such very good use of the training facility at the Southbury Region 5 Headquarters. More importantly, it was an excellent opportunity to build an even stronger relationship with our amateur radio communications partners here in Connecticut.



Incident Management Team “All Hazard Incident Commander”

These six First Responders completed an intensive week of All Hazard Incident Commander training developed by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and offered by Region 4, Regional Emergency Planning Team (REPT), Training and Exercise Committee and Connecticut Incident Management Team 4 (CT-IMT 4). With the completion of this training Connecticut is one of only five States and the first in New England to have local responders complete this recently revised program.



(From Left to Right)

Joe Wood Instructor,
Don Moore Bloomfield
Police,
John Cunningham
Groton Fire,
Dave Steel Noank Fire,
Ron Samul New London
Fire,
Nick Delia Groton Fire,
Anthony Manfredi Mystic
Fire,
Rich Olson Instructor

In the months to follow, several other position specific training courses will be offered in Connecticut. The next offering is Logistic Section Chief June 22nd through the 26th in New London being offered by Region 4, REPT Training and Exercise Committee and CT-IMT 4. Following Logistic Section Chief is Planning Section Chief being offered at the Connecticut Fire Academy June 29th through July 2nd and Public Information Officer August 24th through 28th sponsored by Capitol Region Council of Governments and CT-IMT 3.

On behalf of DEMHS and the Regional Incident Management Teams, we would like to invite anyone in the public or private sectors who is currently on or desires to hold a position on an Incident Management Team by taking advantage of this rare opportunity of position specific training courses being offered in our State. The minimum required training to enroll is NIMS 300 & 400.

To register for Logistic Section Chief contact Chief Nick Delia delian@yurservice.com

To register for Planning Section Chief or Public Information Officer do so via www.ct.train.org

For more information please contact Don Moore at (860) 209 9470 or dmoore@bloomfieldct.org

COMMISSIONER
JAMES M. THOMAS
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
WAYNE E. SANDFORD



RICH FOURNIER
REGION 1 COORDINATOR

DEMHS RETIREMENT DINNER

WITH SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO THE CT STATE POLICE PERSONNEL
ASSIGNED TO DEMHS

JULY 28, 2009 5PM COCKTAILS – FAMILY STYLE DINNER

TICKETS--\$40.00

CASH BAR



MAKE MONEY ORDERS OR BANK CHECKS
PAYABLE TO DEANNA CHAPARRO

DEADLINE FOR PURCHASE: 7/21/09
NO TICKETS SOLD AT THE DOOR

BOBBI JULIANO
REGION 5 SECRETARY



FOR TICKETS CONTACT:

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DEB ARRIETA / LEE TOFFEY / SANDRA BAKER

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
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MARY REEVES-BROOKS
REGION 3 SECRETARY

PLEASE – NO GIFTS OR INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS. ALL PROCEEDS TO GO TO CHARITY.