



To see how the VA Radio Cache helped during a recent tornado, see Field Reports, page 4.

Successful Radio Cache Deployment During Papal Visit

“We saw [this event] as a training opportunity for some of the large events happening in the future”

When Pope Benedict XVI arrived at Andrews Air Force Base on April 15, 2008, officials knew they were in for one of the Nation’s highest-profile events this year. The Pope’s three-day visit was guaranteed to pose challenges not only to the Washington, DC Metropolitan Police Department, but also to the U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Pope’s security detail—the Vatican Police and Swiss Guards. With thousands of people expected to crowd the streets and 50,000 people flocking to the Washington Nationals baseball stadium, the National Capital Region (NCR) diligently prepared for the event. This resulted in smooth communications during the first Papal visit to the United States since 1979.

District Begins Preparations

Communications planning began over a month prior to the Pope’s scheduled visit when communications officials began attending general event preparation meetings to assess the tactical communications needs for the event. The Communications Unit Leader for the Pope’s visit, Lieutenant John Desautels of the DC Fire/Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Department, noted that preparations were extensive. “We had meetings with Federal and local agencies to set up networks that had radios that could talk to each other,” he said.

“It was really a matter of coordination to make sure that all the players were present and everyone had their role,” said Lieutenant Wes Rogers of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and the Virginia/NCR Communications Cache. Prior to the event, the communications team completed the Incident Command System Form 205 Communications Plan with all of the participating agencies’ channel assignments. Following

National Incident Management System procedures, the Planning Section completed the Incident Action Plan.

As the event unfolded, the DC Joint Operations Command Center was responsible for the coordination of communications among 300 additional officers from across the region. Additionally, fire and EMS agencies were standing by with experts in hazardous materials and weapons of mass destruction ready to help if needed.

NCR Radio Cache Program Used in District’s Response

The NCR Urban Area has 25 separate communications systems for agencies located in Washington, DC, Virginia, and Maryland; all of which are operating on separate, but interconnected, 800 megahertz Motorola SmartZone systems. The NCR Radio Cache consists of more than 1,200 portable radios and ancillary support equipment.

Approximately 125 radios were distributed onsite and each recipient was given a quick usage tutorial. “I tried to set it up before giving it to them. This included the first battery, setting up the specific channel they’d be on, and showing them how to use it,” said Lt. Desautels.

With hundreds of safety officials on scene, keeping the airwaves clear was a challenge for Lt. Desautels. To avoid interference and extend network coverage, officials set up two additional tactical repeaters prior to the Pope’s arrival—ensuring that if interference occurred, officials could quickly solve the problem. “We ended up using the repeaters and switching to a national mutual aid channel,” said Lt. Desautels. This allowed the agencies on the scene to patch into the mutual aid radios and drastically decreased the amount of interference.

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Interoperable Communications for Planned Events Guide

The *Interoperable Communications for Planned Events* guide, released in January 2008, assists emergency response officials responsible for designing and executing interoperable communications plans for planned events, such as festivals, concerts, and sporting events. Developed with practitioner input, the tool includes lessons learned and best practices for planning.

The *Interoperable Communications for Planned Events* guide is available at www.safecomprogram.gov.



About

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) supports and promotes the ability of government officials and emergency responders to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters, and works to ensure, accelerate, and attain interoperable and operable emergency communications nationwide.

OEC is a component of the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications (CS&C) within DHS's National Protection and Programs Directorate. CS&C is responsible for the overarching mission to prepare for and respond to incidents that could degrade or overwhelm the operation of our Nation's information technology and communications infrastructure. This mission is part of the larger DHS strategy to ensure the security, integrity, reliability, and availability of our information and communications networks.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY's mission is to provide the emergency response community; policy makers; and Federal, State, local, and tribal officials with information about the latest in emergency communications nationwide; including current and upcoming DHS initiatives, stories from our partners and from the field, best practices, and lessons learned.

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Director's Message

The National Emergency Communications Plan

The Road Leading to Nationwide Interoperability

In its first year, the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) has focused on advancing operable and interoperable emergency communications nationwide. Since standing up the office in April 2007, OEC has worked with Federal, State, local, and tribal emergency responders and government officials, as well as industry, to ensure that interoperability efforts address the real needs of public safety stakeholders. On July 31, OEC completed a "capstone" initiative for the Office and for the Nation—the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

The NECP is a strategic plan that sets national goals and objectives for improving interoperability, operability, and continuity of communications for Federal, State, local, and tribal emergency responders. OEC set out to build a national plan, not a Federal plan—and with input from the emergency response community and government officials at all levels, as well as the private sector, the NECP truly is a national plan.

Coordination with the emergency response community is part of OEC's practitioner-driven approach to our initiatives. These initiatives support the vision for nationwide interoperability outlined in the NECP and include OEC's technical assistance, grants, and cross-border initiatives. The NECP is designed to be the overarching strategy that will continue to promote these partnerships and activities.

Through statewide partnerships, all 56 States and territories now have approved Statewide Communication Interoperabil-



Chris Essid, Director
Office of Emergency Communications

ity Plans (SCIPs)—a first for our Nation. With locally-driven, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-disciplinary strategic plans in place, this collaboration will continue in the implementation phase. You can read more about OEC's and our partners' efforts to support SCIP implementation in this issue of the EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY, including Montana's Interoperable Communications Conference and the new Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program. Our next step is to work with our State, local and tribal partners to align the SCIPs with the NECP and ensure we are pursuing a cohesive nationwide strategy for emergency communications.

OEC will work with our stakeholders at all levels of government and within the emergency response community and private sector to implement the NECP and SCIP initiatives. The NECP, SCIPs, and the partnerships that inform all of OEC's initiatives are driving change in emergency communications nationwide.

To access a copy of the NECP, please visit http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/national_emergency_communications_plan.pdf.

For more information on the NECP or other OEC initiatives, please contact us at OEC@hq.dhs.gov.

Papal Visit - Continued from Page 1

Washington, DC successfully deployed the cache during the Pope's visit and due to months of planning, it was prepared for any unforeseen incident. "We had people on the scene for standby radio coverage, more tactical repeaters, and a team of technicians on scene in case anything happened," said Lt. Rogers.

Lessons Learned and Thoughts for the Future

In addition to regular training and exercises done by the agencies, real-life events can be used as learning opportunities. "We saw [this event] as a training opportunity for some of the large events happening in the future—most notably, the 2009 [Presidential] Inauguration," said Lt. Rogers.

Lt. Desautels' advice to cities hosting large national events is "to figure out

who needs to be there and who needs to talk to whom early on," he said. Lt. Rogers agreed, saying that since national events include many different agencies that are not used to working with each other, it is beneficial to get the players together early.

The arrival of Pope Benedict in Washington, DC undoubtedly raised some unique public safety challenges in the area. But the preparation, planning, and efforts of the NCR public safety community—including the successful deployment of the NCR radio cache—ensured that the visit occurred without incident.

For more information on this story, please contact Lieutenant Wes Rogers at John.Rogers@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Questions and answers in the **Jeopardy** game were based on the **SCIP** and the **IM Project**.



Audience members at the Interoperability Montana Retreat participate in a game of SCIP Jeopardy

Elizabeth Wing Spooner
Public Safety Services Bureau, State of Montana

Interoperability Montana Uses **Jeopardy** to Promote Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan

A simulated game of Jeopardy may seem like an odd way to teach a group about Montana's Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP). But that's exactly what took place on April 24 in Billings, Montana with more than 100 participants. Audience members consisted of county commissioners; local fire, police, and sheriff's representatives; Disaster and Emergency Services coordinators; State employees; and representatives from the National Governors Association and the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC).

The Interoperability Montana (IM) Project sponsored the retreat to inform stakeholders about the IM Project and solicit ideas to move it forward. Questions and answers in the Jeopardy game were based on the SCIP and the IM Project. Participants were advised to study the SCIP in anticipation of the Jeopardy game. Categories consisted of Acronyms, Sites, IM History, Potpourri, Statistics, and Graphics, to name a few.

"It served as a great ice breaker," said Chris Christensen, Montana's Public Safety Services Bureau Chief. "Participants had a lot of fun formulating the correct questions to the answers that were presented."

Before the two-day retreat, the SCIP was placed on the IM Project's website (<http://interop.mt.gov>) and the link was advertised in the retreat brochure. At the event, 50 printed copies of the plan were provided and quickly picked up by participants. In addition, 100 copies of

the plan were distributed on CD. Several working sessions took place to inform participants about progress and discuss issues related to the SCIP and the IM Project.

About the IM Project

Montana's emergency communications system is being developed from the bottom up, rather than as a State-imposed mandate. Federal, State, county, local, and tribal agencies formed eight voice consortia to assist with the funding and deployment of the IM Project. In addition, a ninth consortium (Mobile Data Terminal Consortium) was created to develop an interoperable mobile data system.

Created through a Memorandum of Understanding in November 2005, the IM Project Directors (IMPD) board consists of project directors elected from each consortium. The board provides direction in the development of the connected, statewide communications system. Three State agencies (Highway Patrol, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation) were added to the board in December 2006.

"Montana is fortunate to have public safety professionals representing 56 counties and seven tribal nations working diligently within their consortia to meet the goals of interoperability," said IMPD Chair and Glendive Chief of Police Alan Michaels. "The IM Project is a cooperative effort with many partners, including a private railroad company," said Mi-

chaels. "This collaboration makes sense because no single agency could take on the enormous costs involved in building a system of this size. You've got to understand that Montana is the Nation's fourth-largest State and it shares a 550-mile border with Canada."

The IMPDs are assisted by members of the IM Technical Committee (IMTC), which consists of representatives from each consortium and State agencies. The IMTC was instrumental in providing input into Montana's SCIP and developing its Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Investment Justifications.

The IMPDs approved the final version of the SCIP on November 6, 2007 and the plan was submitted to OEC on December 3, 2007. Final approval of Montana's SCIP and its PSIC Investment Justifications was received on April 4, 2008.

"Great progress has been seen, primarily due to leadership from the local level," said Christensen. "The SCIP approval was a critical milestone in our partnership to advance interoperability."

Chief Michaels added that "Events such as the IM Retreat—along with the lively Jeopardy game—help keep the SCIP in the forefront of people's awareness. I think Montana's grassroots process will continue to be effective in implementing interoperability systems and developing workable solutions based on achievements and 'lessons learned' to date."

For more information, please visit <http://interop.mt.gov>.



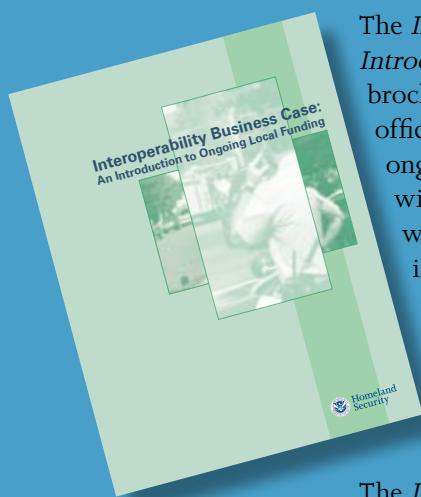
The Fairfax County, Virginia Radio Cache is deployed to a tornado-damaged neighborhood

... Responders were able to **work together** to complete a damage assessment, **search for potential victims**, and **communicate seamlessly** throughout the response.

Radio Cache Keeps Responders in Communication after Virginia Tornado

Lieutenant Wes Rogers
Fairfax County, Virginia Fire and Rescue Department

Interoperability Business Case: An Introduction to Ongoing Local Funding Brochure



The *Interoperability Business Case: An Introduction to Ongoing Local Funding* brochure assists emergency response officials in establishing the need for ongoing local interoperability funding within their community. Developed with practitioner input, the brochure includes four success stories from communities across the United States that achieved “buy-in” from community leaders and established dedicated funds for interoperability projects.

The *Interoperability Business Case: An Introduction to Ongoing Local Funding* brochure is available at www.safecom-program.gov. Also, look for additional Office of Emergency Communications guidance documents, currently in development, to be released in the near future.

On the evening of May 9, 2008, a tornado ripped through a Stafford County, Virginia neighborhood. More than 100 homes were damaged, with residents potentially trapped inside. Due to the severity of the incident, nearby Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (Fairfax FRD) deployed a Technical Rescue Response Team to assist Stafford County’s efforts.

The Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department (Stafford FRD) operates on an ultra high frequency (UHF) voice radio system for all day-to-day activities. Fairfax FRD, however, operates an 800 megahertz trunked radio system, incompatible for direct communication with a UHF system. To achieve on-scene communications interoperability, Stafford County also requested the use of the Fairfax County Virginia Communications Cache (Fairfax Cache), a strategic radio cache used during mutual aid events.

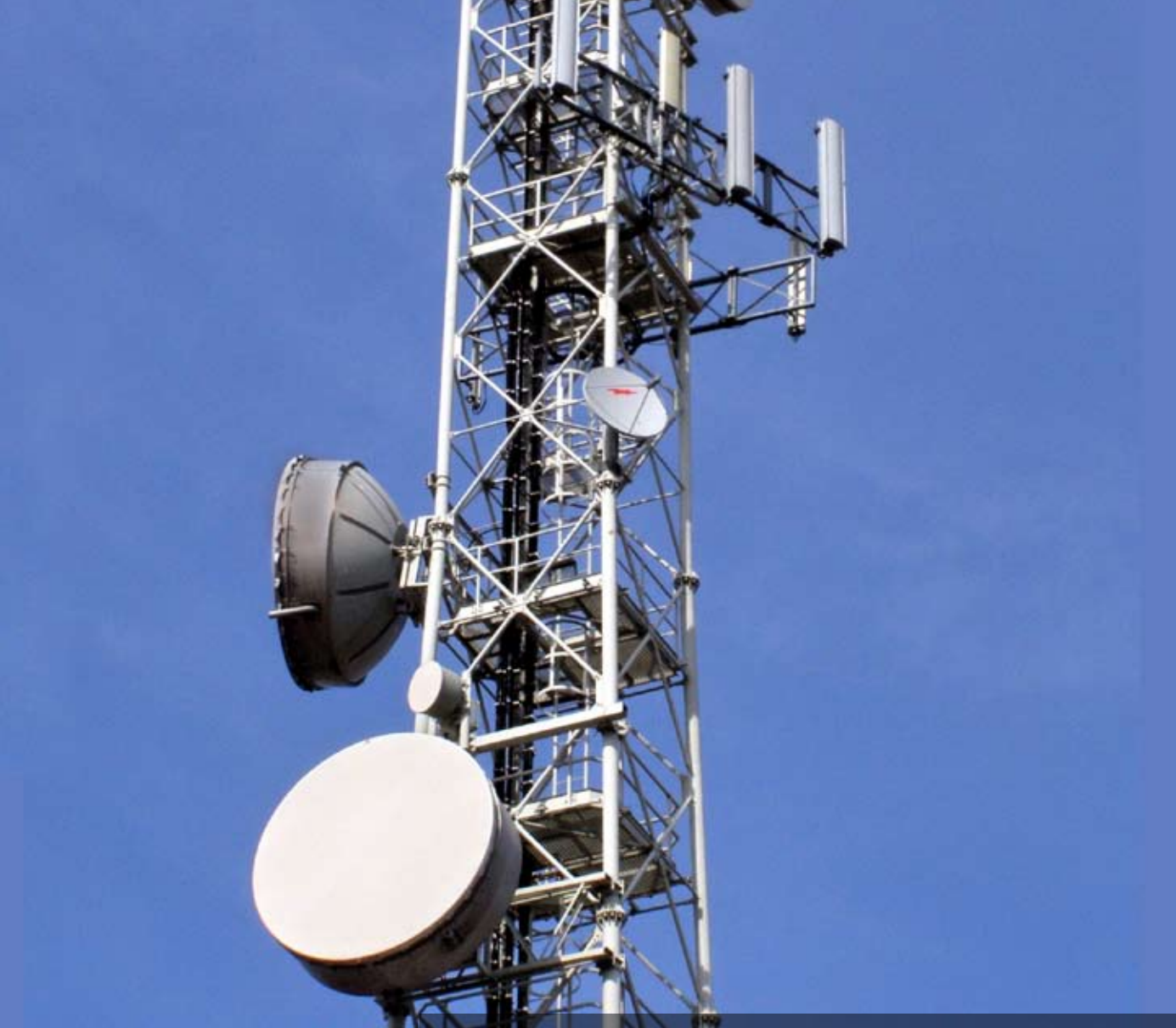
The State of Virginia established three strategic radio caches for interoperable communications. The caches are strategically placed around the State and are managed by Fairfax County, Chesapeake/Hampton Counties, and Rockingham/Harrisburg Counties. The Fairfax Cache was established with \$1.9 million from the Fiscal Year 2006 State Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) for a Type II strategic radio cache. The funding allowed the purchase of equipment, including a mobile antenna tower with repeaters tuned to the national interoperability channels, a cache of 300 portable radios, and tactical portable gateways

and repeaters to connect disparate radio systems. The HSGP award also included funding for support supplies, a trailer and tow vehicles to transport the equipment, as well as personnel and administrative costs for equipment build-out and staff training.

A team of three from the Fairfax Cache rapidly deployed the radios to the tornado-damaged neighborhood, including UHF radios preprogrammed with the Stafford FRD frequencies. The use of the cache enabled Fairfax FRD and other non-Stafford agencies to directly communicate with the Stafford Incident Command and operational units. The Fairfax Cache personnel also assisted the Incident Commander in developing a communications plan for the incident (Incident Command System Form 205).

Using radios from the Fairfax Cache, outside agencies’ emergency responders were able to work together with Stafford FRD to complete a damage assessment, search for potential victims, and communicate seamlessly throughout the response.

For more information, please contact Lieutenant Wes Rogers at John.Rogers@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Communications Unit Leader (COML) Training Courses

In the coming months, the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications is offering several All-Hazards Type III COML training courses (see below for upcoming dates). The course trains emergency responders on how to be radio communications unit leaders during all-hazards emergency operations—significantly improving communications across the multiple disciplines and jurisdictions responding to an incident. This COML training will qualify emergency responders as lead radio communications coordinators if they possess the necessary prerequisites,

including knowledge of the following: local communications; communications systems; and State, regional, and local communications plans. COML responsibilities include developing plans for the effective use of incident communications equipment and facilities, managing the distribution of communications equipment to incident personnel, and coordinating the installation and testing of communications equipment.

For more information on COML training, please contact comltraining@hq.dhs.gov.



A COML training course in Seattle, Washington.

Required Prerequisites

1. A public safety communications background with exposure to field operations; this experience should be validated by the authority who supervised the applicant.
2. Fundamental public safety communications technology, supervisory, and personnel management skills. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Knowledge of local communications and communications system
 - Frequencies and spectrum
 - Technologies
 - Knowledge of local topography
 - Knowledge of system site locations including knowledge of State, regional, local communications plans, and knowledge of regional and local Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans, if available
 - Communications and resource contacts
3. Completion of the following training courses:
 - **IS-700.** IS-700 explains the purpose, principles, key components, and benefits of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The course also contains Planning Activity screens, allowing participants to complete planning tasks during this course.
 - **IS-800b.** IS-800b introduces participants to concepts and principles of the National Response Framework.
 - **ICS-100.** ICS-100 introduces the Incident Command System (ICS), provides the foundation for higher-level ICS training, describes ICS history, features, principles, and organizational structure, and the relationship between the ICS and NIMS.
 - **ICS-200.** ICS-200 provides training on, and resources for, personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within ICS.
 - **ICS-300.** ICS-300 provides training on, and resources for, personnel who are required to implement advanced application of the ICS.

UPCOMING TRAINING DATES AND LOCATIONS

September 30-October 2
St. Louis, MO

October 14-16
Chicago, IL

October 14-16
Denver, CO

October 20-22
Albany, NY

October 28-30
Hartford, CT

SAFECOM

Practitioner Groups Convene to Discuss Emergency Communications Progress and Initiatives

The SAFECOM Executive Committee (EC) and Emergency Response Council (ERC) convened this summer in Arlington, Virginia to discuss future program activities and interoperability planning. Held June 3-4, 2008, the series of meetings provided EC and ERC members with a forum to discuss a wide spectrum of interoperability initiatives, the National Emergency Communications Plan; the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program, the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans, and plain language. Comprised of emergency response leaders, local elected officials, and public safety association representatives, the SAFECOM EC and ERC provide the Department of Homeland Security's interoperability offices—the Office of Emergency Communications and the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility—with end user requirements and field expertise. The next joint EC and ERC meeting will be held December 3-4, 2008 in Orlando, Florida.

For more information regarding SAFECOM and the EC and ERC, go to www.safecomprogram.gov.



Greg Garcia
Assistant Secretary of Cyber Security
and Communications



Fire Chief Charles Werner,
EC Chair



Left: Gerry Reardon, Massachusetts;
Right: Tom Cornelius, Colorado



Sonja Reece,
National League of Cities

OEC 2008 Summer Interns

San Diego State University and University of California San Diego Students Support the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program

This summer, the U.S. Department of the Navy's SPAWAR Systems Center, a partner of the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), joined the San Diego State University (SDSU) Foundation in sponsoring an internship program for four undergraduate students and one graduate student from SDSU and the University of California San Diego. These students represented a wide variety of majors, including Homeland Security, Psychology, Electrical Engineering, and International Security and Conflict Resolution; and brought a diverse set of experience, including aerospace engineering, military combat, computer programming, handling hazardous materials, and foreign languages.

The interns were primarily tasked with supporting OEC's Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program's (ICTAP) participation in Golden Phoenix

2008, a large multi-agency collaborative training event designed to help Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies prepare for large and often complex incident response scenarios. The students participated in several pre-event training opportunities on topics such as the National Incident Management System, Incident Command System, public safety operations, and land mobile radio communications. In addition, they served as real-time evaluators and observers during Golden Phoenix and helped ICTAP compile data results into the program's final After Action Report. Intern support for the event provided ICTAP with valuable services and presented a unique training experience to the interns as they move forward with their careers.

For more information, please contact oec@hq.dhs.gov.



2008 summer interns

Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program

The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate (GPD), developed the new Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP). Authorized by Congress through the Implementing the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act to provide up to \$1.6 billion from Fiscal Year (FY) 2008—2012, the IECGP supports projects focused on improving operable and interoperable emergency communications among Federal, State, local, tribal, and international border communities. In FY 2008, Congress appropriated \$50 million to the program, which was awarded this month.

The grant program offers a unique opportunity to combine the grant management capabilities of FEMA GPD with the interoperable communications expertise of OEC to advance interoperable emergency communications priorities nationwide. In addition, IECGP offers an opportunity to build upon the success of the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) development process, as OEC's responsibilities include confirming activities funded under the program comply with the SCIPs. The IECGP provides a mechanism to ensure that grantees pursue projects that align with common national priorities and objectives. Grantees will be expected to propose projects that align with not only their respective SCIPs, but also the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) which has been submitted to Congress.

OEC and FEMA GPD released the guidance and application kit on June 20, 2008. The kit outlined four allowable cost categories for FY 2008: planning, training, exercise, and personnel. Each category also included management and administrative costs. The priorities for the 2008 funding are the establishment of formal interoperable emergency communications governance structures and common planning and operational protocols, as well as the enhancement of emergency responder skills and capabilities through training and exercises. Each State Administrative Agency is responsible for applying for and administering IECGP funds.

For more information on the IECGP, please visit www.fema.gov/grants.

The IECGP provides a mechanism to ensure that grantees pursue projects that align with common national priorities and objectives.

Improving Interoperability through Shared Channels – Version 2

The *Improving Interoperability through Shared Channels – Version 2 (V2)* guide, released June 2008, assists emergency response officials in understanding the level of effort, resources, and key actions necessary to implement a shared channel solution. The first shared channels guide gave practitioners an overview of the process, obstacles, and challenges faced in implementing a shared channel solution. Developed with practitioner input, V2 builds on this knowledge by presenting best practices and lessons learned from three case studies of actual regions that have used shared channels as a primary method for addressing their interoperability problem.

The *Improving Interoperability through Shared Channels – V2* is available at www.safecomprogram.gov. Also, look for additional SAFECOM guidance documents to be released in the near future.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

October 4 - 7

Forestry Conservation Communication Association (FCCA)
59th Annual Meeting
Orlando, FL
www.fcca-usa.org

October 5 - 8

American Public Transportation Association (APTA)
Annual Conference & EXPO
San Diego, CA
www.apta.com

October 7 - 9

National Native American Law Enforcement Association (NNALEA)
16th Annual Conference
Las Vegas, NV
www.nnalea.org

October 16 - 20

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
Annual Meeting
Hartford, CT
www.transportation.org

October 19 - 24

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
65th Annual Conference & Tradeshow
Phoenix, AZ
www.ncai.org

October 29 - 31

Technologies for Critical Incident Preparedness (TCIP)
10th Annual Conference
Chicago, IL
www.ctc.org

NOVEMBER

November 8 - 12

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
115th Annual Conference
San Diego, CA
www.theiacp.org

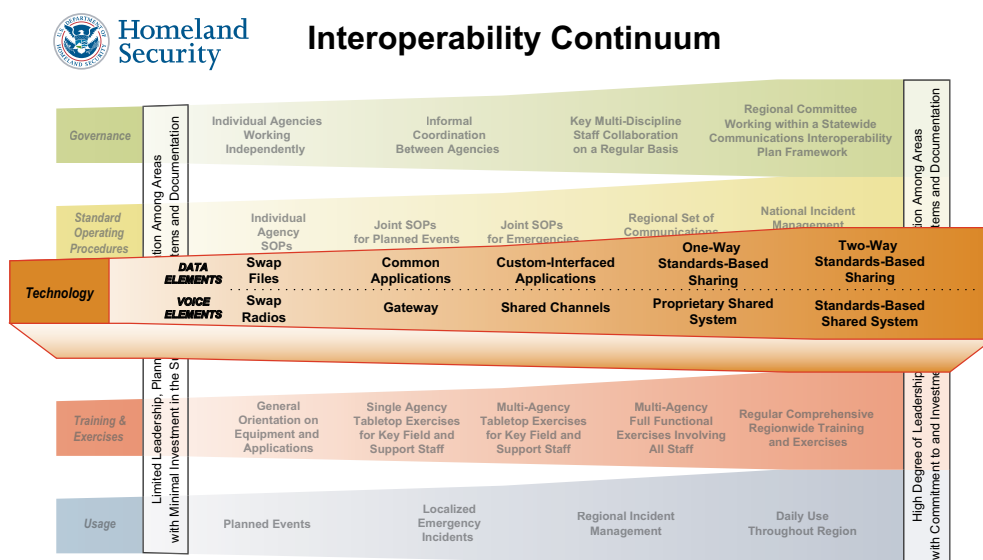
November 11 - 15

National League of Cities (NLC)
Congress & Expo
Orlando, FL
www.nlc.org

November 15 - 20

International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM)
Annual Conference
Kansas City, KS
www.iaem.com

Interoperability Continuum: Data Considerations



Data interoperability is more important than ever as the emergency response community employs new technology in the field. While voice interoperability is vital to effective emergency response, data (e.g., maps, video images, and alerts) is an increasingly relied-upon resource when responding to day-to-day incidents and large-scale disasters. To reflect this growing emphasis on data, the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), in coordination with the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC), has added data considerations to the technology lane of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum graphic. Agencies can use the new Interoperability Continuum to map their data exchange progress—from swapping files to two-way standards-based sharing.

The Interoperability Continuum, which graphically depicts the multiple dimensions of interoperability, is designed to help agencies and policy makers plan and implement interoperability solutions. The Interoperability Continuum identifies five critical success factors for progress: governance, standard operat-

ing procedures, technology, training and exercises, and usage. Today, jurisdictions across the Nation are using the Interoperability Continuum to track their region's progress in strengthening interoperable communications.

In keeping with both offices' practitioner-driven approach, OEC and OIC established a working group of emergency responders, including members from SAFECOM's Emergency Response Council and Executive Committee, the Practitioner Steering Group, and OIC's Emergency Response Technical Council, to help with the Interoperability Continuum upgrade. Now the technology lane is split, emphasizing the importance of both voice and data when addressing interoperability issues. This not only highlights the proliferation of new technology, but also reminds practitioners that data is a part of the interoperability solution.

For more information on the revised Interoperability Continuum, visit www.safecomprogram.gov; keyword: **Continuum**.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY

SUMMER/FALL 2008

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Connecting the Nation

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY

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