



First Responder Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Tuesday, August 2, 2016 Meeting Notes

Attendance		
AGENCY	TITLE	NAME
State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas	Executive Director	Chris Barron
City of San Marcos	Emergency Management Coordinator	Ken Bell
Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG)	Homeland Security Director	Eric Carter
Office of the Governor	Policy Analyst	Seth Christensen
City of Dallas	Fire Chief	David Coatney
State Fire Marshal's Office	State Fire Marshal	Chris Connealy
Texas Department of Public Safety	Deputy Assistant Director	Todd Early
Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council for Trauma (STRAC)	Director	Eric Epley
City of El Paso	Logistics Fire Captain	Ricardo Gonzalez
Texas Division of Emergency Management	Emergency Management Liaison	Tim Loveland
Texas Division of Emergency Management	TEMAT Coordinator	Russell Marshall
City of Beaumont	Emergency Management Coordinator	Tim Ocnaschek
Texas Division of Emergency Management	Program Supervisor	Lisa Resendez
City of Houston	Mayor's Office of Public Safety & Homeland Security	Richard Retz
Lower Colorado River Authority	Resiliency Program Manager	Susana Thorne
San Antonio Office of Emergency Management	Emergency Management Coordinator	Lawrence Trevino
Texas Division of Emergency Management	Section Administrator	Susan Vessell
WELCOME		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductions ▪ Agenda Review 		

TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (TEMAT) (BELL)

- Ken Bell reported to the FRAC regarding the Post Incident Response Team (PIRT) working group meeting on August 1. During the meeting, the working group supported changing the name from PIRT to TEMAT.
- Information about the ongoing development of TEMAT can be found at www.txpirt.com.
- Ken Bell introduced Russell Marshall to the council. Russell was hired by TDEM to coordinate TEMAT program for the state.
- An experienced short notice team has been identified and could deploy if needed. Long term goal would have four different groups of individuals across the state to deploy if needed. Elected officials are needed with disaster experience who could assist jurisdictions during an incident.
- Individuals would deploy for 7 to 11 days and would fill the gap in recovery area functions during the back end of an incident.
- TEMAT working group is currently developing a better process for TEMAT selections.
- Main objectives of the TEMAT are to assist with management of the an incident for the first 48 - 72 hours, train local officials and then turn back over to the local officials with a written document plan for 4-7 months post incident.
- Q&A
 - **Are there any plans to have lessons learned to capture the knowledge base available?**
*As of right now, everything would be captured on www.txpirt.com until TDEM develops its own state page.
Suggestion made, for long term, searchable, real time informational documents and templates to be saved to an area for historical purposes. These documents and templates will allow a team member to easily step in during an incident.*
 - **Is there a specific timeline for implementation?**
We can implement tomorrow. Currently, we have enough people right now for one group. We need to build more groups. We are in particular need of experienced elected officials.
 - **What do you need from the FRAC?**
Recruitment of experienced and qualified members.
 - **How are you vetting potential candidates?**
*We are doing so by way of the job description. Currently members are put into consideration by reference. We are grouping individuals into two tiers, leadership and support.
Suggestion made for nomination only, either by a peer or district coordinator.*

RADIO INTEROPERABILITY PROJECT (EARLY)

- In 2007 there were no statewide communication plans when grant plans came out. Department of Homeland Security formulated the national emergency communication plan and required states to formalize a statewide interoperability coordinator (SWIC) as appointed by the governor.
- The Texas Interoperable Communications Coalition (TxICC) was formed in 2007 originally as a part of the Texas Radio Coalition. After identifying the need for a state plan, operational and technical experts across the state assisted with the development of the plan. They chartered the original Statewide Interoperable Communications Plan (SCIP) and much of the state plan that has been developed since.
- TxICC is the governing body of anyone who wants to participate in radio interoperability and communications. It has an executive committee that has two members from each council of governments and one position from each of the tribes.
- TxICC will have the 10th annual statewide conference on September 20, 2016 in Austin.

Discussions regarding the updated state plan and initiatives across the regions will be the focus of the conference.

- TxICC Channel Plan Working Group is a strategic advisory group with significant accomplishments:
 - Developed channel plan programming
 - Added statewide satellite talk groups
 - Produced the Texas Field Operations Guide which is similar to the National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG). Guide is posted on www.publicsafetytools.info. The site serves as the working group's communications portal
 - Channel Plan Working Group is meeting to discuss options about the statewide trunked share group radio systems
 - National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) and federal government has agreed to allow states and local jurisdictions to start programming federal interoperability channels. The working group is developing a MOU agreement which SWIC will sign and execute the agreement with NTIA to program the federal interoperability channels. Texas will most likely modify the current MOU as the current one is out of date.
 - There is no longer a requirement to migrate 6^{1/4} khz channels on the 700 mhz narrow band side. Channel plan working group is looking at the use of the vacant channels for air to ground coordination.
 - Group created a statewide radio training template on the portal: http://www.publicsafetytools.info/training/training_radio_101_info.php
 - Working group created state wide radio ID plan program scheme that may be a best practice across the nation. This plan assigns specific radio IDs to specific region of the state. The plan has been voluntary thus far, but focus groups stated it should be mandated across the state. Future grants may require participation in the radio ID plan.
 - In 2010 and 2011, there was a specific communication grant funding. All of the regions created regional communications plans and those created regional SOPs and migration plans with cost association. Historically by statute, this was used to report to the Texas legislature every year. The challenge is that grant funding and resources from the regions will go away. The current data is stagnant and the regions do not have funding to update their plans. Work is being done to try to get assistance through federal and technical pieces to those regions to update plans. The current state plan is about 300 pages and will be decrease to 24 pages when the new state plan comes out. The new plan eliminates excess "fluff" and contains what is statutorily required.
- Public Safety Communications is reviewing the current statutes to see if there needs to be changes in interoperability communications and working very closely with the Governor's policy office.
- Created Systems of Systems Working Group out of all the committees. A lot of money is currently being invested at the local level in regional radio systems. A System of Systems plan is to tie different regional radio systems across the state together. The working group is made up of technical experts looking to tie in three or four technologies. In the long run, getting the biggest bang for the buck is optimal.
 - Suggestion was made that some sort incentives or matching funds may need to be included, because some areas may not be on board.
- David Coatney added, tying in the technologies is one challenge, but breaking down some communication barriers between law enforcement and fire is another challenge.

- Attempting to tie in interoperable communications with different systems is extremely expensive. Cloud based software solutions may come out soon for situational awareness capability. Most of the time for EOCs and DDCs, they just need tactical situational capability to hear what is going on, not necessarily communication.
- In 2010, Texas scored 3.2 on the scale SAFECOM created when it comes to interoperability. Score has grown to 3.85 over the years, but the last couple of years have been slow to rise because of the lack of funding.
- There is a statewide satellite bandwidth program that is homeland security grant funded. There are 40-50 different platforms across the state in local jurisdictions to assist during incidents. New contract will save over \$1 million dollars over four or five years. Capabilities will boost up to 20 megabytes
- Communications unit training. TxICC has trained over 800 individuals across the state. Currently there is 10 percent state certification rate.
- Regional Communication Exercises:
 - Abilene-September 12-15, 2016
 - San Antonio-November 7-10, 2016
- Q&A
 - **Are you looking at cloud based systems to solve internal or statewide issue?**
This will solve statewide issue of situational awareness.

FIRSTNET (EARLY)

- FirstNet sent Request for Proposal (RFP) in January 2016, responses were due on May 31 and are currently in the review phase. Contract may be awarded by November 2016.
- Each state has Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and is appointed by the Governor's office. Todd Early was appointed by the governor for Texas.
- In statewide planning, outreach and education is primary focus. There are ongoing meetings with executive staff, command staff and front line staff to brief them on what to expect. Challenges consist of getting out in front of 5,300 jurisdictions across the state. Information on FirstNet can be found on <http://txlte.com/the-network/#FirstNet>. There is an online learning portal and currently used nationwide.
- Help is needed to spread the word about FirstNet. SPOC is willing to give executive or technical briefings.
- Once the FirstNet contract is awarded, the state plan will be delivered to the governor's office.
 - Governor's office requested priorities. After meeting with several jurisdictions, the governor was provided 12 priorities to consider.
 - Once the plan arrives to the governor's office, he has 90 days to make a decision for the state to opt in or opt out. If the governor opts in, FirstNet will build the network. If the governor opts out, the state will deploy the radio access network which will need two federal approvals and a plan. He has 180 days to put out an RFP and get all the information back.
- Q&A
 - **Will the new system leverage the fiber with the inter sub-system interface radios or will new fiber need to be installed?**
On the Land Mobile Radios (LMR) side will it use anything that is currently available. There are many networks, the teams will have to look at current fiber infrastructure and not reinvent the wheel if possible and weigh all the costs associated.

AFTER ACTION REPORT (AAR) CONFIDENTIALITY (OCNASCHEK)

- Recently the city of Beaumont had an issue with AAR confidentiality concerning.
- Under Texas Government Code 418, there is a limited confidentiality in planning but the same protection is not given in AARs.
- AARs are public documents and at times the AARs are generic in nature.
- Informed AARs should be detailed, because other sources of records like training records, statements or Standard Operating Guides (SOG) are all the public records.
- Law Enforcement can redact or sequester information during investigations.
- David Coatney recommended further analysis of how to improve AAR confidentiality; however, regardless of the confidentiality component, agencies need to continue to improve the culture of openness during AARs' to ensure that appropriate lessons learned can be shared throughout the organization impacted and other outside organizations, without fear of organizational or legal retribution.

DEPLOYABLE IMTS COMPENSATION (OCNASCHEK)

- Tim Ocnaschek addressed the council about the recent Incident Management Team Steering Committee issue about some IMT members not covered by workers' compensation during deployments.
 - Concerns are the non-employed members, such as volunteer fire fighters, are not covered as a contract employee. Retirees who are experienced could also fall under this category of non-coverage.
- State uses the Texas Forest Service (TFS) to process the IMT program. TFS has a program for seasonal employees where they are covered, but does not apply for IMTs.
- Chris Kehl (Brazos Valley IMT) is working with Representative Kyle Kacal and his staff regarding workers compensation and liability coverage for each of the rostered regional IMTs.
- Problem is not necessarily the medical coverage, but the worker compensation where a member is tied to a MOA/MOU. An example would be an auto mechanic deployed is injured. His medical costs are covered, but pay benefits will not be awarded because his current employer does not cover workers' compensation for a deployment. There are number of volunteer fire departments, who buy gap and workers compensation insurance to cover incidents such as these, but not all of them buy in because of the affordability. There are some stated grant funds available for \$100 a year.

OPEN FORUM

- During the recent Dallas police officer shootings, state situational reports were not sent out.
 - David Coatney requested that a member of the SOC attends the next meeting and discuss general situational awareness reports.
 - Richard Retz will bring more information about release of sensitive information during the next meeting.
- David Coatney will bring active shooter white paper to the next meeting; working on best practices how first responder train together.
- David Coatney wants to re-explore the statewide credentialing program. Todd Early will reengage on the program.
- Seth Christensen addressed the issue of state employees being part of the FRAC. There is no concern at this point, as long there are local first responders represented.

ACTION ITEMS

- Tim Loveland to request Magdalena Blanco to attend and provide brief on recovery activities.
- Chris Barron or Tim Ocnasheck to request Chris Kahel from the Brazos Valley IMT to discuss research and efforts for worker compensation for IMT members.
- Tim Loveland to request Gisela Ryan-Bunger to attend and provide brief on situational awareness reports concerning first responders.
- David Coatney will request approval from Chief Kidd to add Eric Carter to the FRAC.
- Ken Bell and Russell Marshall to provide a further update on TEMAT for next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

- November 2016
- 2016 EMS Conference-Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
- Dallas, Texas