Interoperability Coordination Workshop II

Synopsis

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Interoperability Capability Status Forum

Washington County, Maryland   Speaker: Pete Loewenheim

- Various low band systems have been utilized in the past 32 years. Utilized one UHF system and one VHF system for other government systems.
- New 450 trunk system
- 95% had to be build in with TAC site
- Ten tower sites
- Portable coverage was one of the goals achieved with the new system
- Built in TAC-Stack system*
- Working with surrounding jurisdictions specific to system key issues as they relate to interoperability

* Note: TAC-Stack is a concept and methodology to provide basic radio interoperability to all first responders that may normally operate in the 800 MHz, UHF, VHF or other designated frequencies assigned for public safety activities. The use of nationally dedicated interoperability channels in each of the primary frequency bands provides additional radio channel capacity during mutual aid operations. Utilizing these Nationwide Interoperability Channels, the original repeater stack concept has evolved into a device referred to as the "TAC-Stack" or "Band Bridge." This device would be capable of linking together multiple frequency bands independent of the subscriber equipment manufacturer's protocol. As 700 MHz systems and hardware begin deployment, the 7TAC interoperability channels could also be incorporated into any TAC-Stacks already in service.

Allegany County, Maryland   Speaker: Roger Bennett

- Joint 9-1-1 center dispatches all Fire/EMS in County as well as Cumberland Police, County Police and Sheriff
- Fire/EMS on low band
- Law Enforcement – 450 trunk system and 800 for some County agencies
- New system transferring over to 450 trunk system on a passport. This will bring all law enforcement, road department, school buses, Fire/EMS onto the system.
- Currently there are 6 tower sites in the County. Upgrading 3 additional tower sites at Mt. Savage, Barton, and Westernport that must be completed by spring.
- In the process of moving equipment from Cumberland site to Bishop Walsh water tower site
- Planning to place equipment on Martins Mountain soon
- Several companies run to Somerset, Bedford, Garrett and Washington Counties. Most of these units have radios inside the apparatus. Through WAGIN, patching with IPICS systems can be achieved.

Garrett County, Maryland   Speaker: Bill Ham

- Primarily VHF high band system that generally works well with the mountainous terrain.
- Sheriff – Low Band – 3986 UHF link back to dispatch center
- Fire/EMS – VHF 155 range
- Purchasing P25 VHF capable radios but lack of a tower site that allows for P25 at this time. No plans for this in the future.
- Sheriff Office needs a grant to get off low band which may be possible within the next 2-3 years. They would need at least 30 tower sites for 700 megahertz system
- Sheriff and Law/EMS/Fire are not on the same band
- Sheriff has the capacity to speak with State Police

Frederick County, Maryland   Speaker: Chip Jewell

- Surrounded by 800 megahertz counties with exception of counties to the west
- Hopeful TAC-Stack will be the solution
- Currently on an analog trunk system
- In the process of converting to P-25 system
- May utilize vehicle repeaters and BDA's to receive good coverage
- 3,000 unit subscribers
- State Police/Frederick Police are on CAD system. Each trooper has portable
- Issues with Franklin County and their 400 system
- Challenge to keep up with other high population areas downstate such as Baltimore
- October 1st is the target date for utilizing the P25 system

Somerset County, Pennsylvania   Speaker: Joel Landis

- Six towers in County
- Recently acquired two new towers – One in central western part of County and other in northeast part of County.
- Fire - Low band VHF 33 mhz. Seven operational channels and one dispatch. Recently PLed channels to get away from interference.
- EMS – VHF high band – 155 Megahertz with three channels
- Police on five channels on 800 Megahertz.
- Towers are independently microwave linked from 9-1-1 center located in Somerset, PA.
- Independent radios at each tower
- Use interact CAD
- Use an online system called Knowledge Center. This links 31 counties in the western part of the State to see large scale incidents occurring across those counties.
- Challenges are 50/50% landline to cell phone calls to 9-1-1 center. County has sporadic cell phone service. There is no countywide broadband internet access.
- State is 800 Megahertz and the 9-1-1 center has this capability
- 9-1-1 center uses EMnet system to activate the Emergency broadcast system to alert the media
- Salisbury, PA on Garrett County border and Wellersburg, PA on Allegany County border are not able to communicate with each of the counties. Garrett County and Allegany County can activate PA firefighters.
- Responders carry mobile and handheld radios that can be programmed for UTAC.

Fayette County, Pennsylvania   Speaker: Guy Napolillo

- Located in the western corner of the State bordering Garrett County.
- Mutual aid that comes to support Fayette and Garrett Counties.
- State interaction with County is similar to Somerset County's.
- In 1996 the County integrated an 800 trunked radio system.
- This system has 3,300 subscribers on a seven channel Motorola Smartnet Type II System.
- In the process of updating to a 25 digital system but too expensive at this time.
- EMS – on 800 trunk system
- Police/Fire/EMS can communicate with each other on this system
- Inter-county communications with consol cross patch
- 800 TAC-Stack needed in northern corner of Garrett County in order to communicate with Garrett
- Ability to integrate with State.
- Four tower sites on trunk system – two main sites. Share tower with repeater at Mt. Davis with Somerset County.
- Good coverage with State system
- Coverage not as good with County system
- Have a mobile command post that can cross patch and has programming capabilities
- Southwest Pennsylvania uses Knowledge Center to communicate between counties
- Interoperability between County agencies not complete
- Working with Somerset and Green Counties to create a three county microwave system

Bedford County, Pennsylvania   Speaker: David Cubbison

- Three tower sites. A newly added forth site is not currently utilized and construction of an additional tower is to begin soon.
- Plan for the County is to have eight towers.
- A $47 million project will include a P25 digital system.
- Fire – low band 3374/3372
- Police – 161/162 translate to 4510-4515 range
- Translators located on mountain tops.
- Working with Fire/Police/EMS to have a mobile to mobile system
- Portable radios are on scene; however, do not work well with the topography of the County.
- Eight RF transmitting tower sites with one pass through microwave site.
- 800 Megahertz in County which the State Police also use.
- Lots of "dead spots" in County due to topography
- Equipment is 32 years old
- Trying to eliminate services from carrying multiple pagers
- New system will cut down on the number of pagers and carried radios
- Southern Regional Task Force is trying to move forward to connect surrounding counties
- Because of certain rules/policies – the County cannot allow Hazmat from Allegany County to come in
- New system – Motorola based UHF – T-band channel
- Three County towers connected by microwave are not shared with the State.
- No national TAC channels utilized
- MOU's with Allegany County are needed

Fulton County, Pennsylvania   Speaker: Vincent Joyce

- In need of a new radio communications system
- Smallest of the Counties in conference with 15,000 residents
- Does not have their own primary dispatch center. It is contracted out to Cumberland County.
- Do maintain a small back-up center
- Low band
- MOU with Franklin and Washington Counties
- Communications study conducted two years ago. The main problem the County faces is funding.
- The hope is to go to a P25 digital system but not enough funds at this time to do so
- No County law enforcement, only State police
- One private EMS station
- Interoperability between the three fire companies and the County happens between agencies.
- Hancock has primary control; however their P25 system does not have sufficient coverage.

Franklin County, Pennsylvania   Speaker: Ben Rice

- Going from low band radio to a new Motorola UHF P25 trunk system. Recently completed testing and received 97% coverage.
- Field operators will need multiple band radios due to different systems and the 800 megahertz will be an issue
- Working with Washington and Frederick on an MOU

State CHART System   Speaker: Craig Fetzer

- SHA – low band – TAC channel – 47.10. Units also equipped with 47.26
- Designated 47.26 as interoperability channel to patch in with WAGIN/IPICS
- State Police – 39.26 to patch in with WAGIN/IPICS
- 800 megahertz handheld for responders in Frederick County
- Washington County uses IPICS
- Hope is for Allegany and Garrett Counties to use this patch system in the future
- DOT interoperates using the statewide operations center and CHART program. 39 improvements have been made to the system since 2010 winter storm season
- SHA uses FITM (Freeway Incident Traffic Management) Detours system for local incidents
- Cameras at some tower sites for transportation

Opportunities and Challenges Round Table

Washington County & MD/PA Regional Partners (Fulton, Franklin, & Frederick Counties)
Challenges
✦ Disappearing systems
✦ Jurisdictions inability to interact
✦ Stability outside of jurisdictions
✦ Integrated WEB EOC
✦ Technology exceeding operations
✦ Creation of realistic scenarios that deal with daily operations
✦ Sharing resources
✦ Education of national interoperability
✦ Funding
✦ Common terminology
✦ Coordination of Talk groups which includes training the end-users
✦ Notification of transportation incidents/accidents beyond the jurisdictions they occurred in
✦ Cannot provide medical information outside of Maryland
✦ How to connect to other jurisdictions' systems
Opportunities
✦ Better understanding of interoperability and possible training in interoperability
✦ Being able to communicate with more than just radio PSAPS
✦ First due response area in the two States
✦ Notification built out beyond Maryland Jurisdictions
✦ Need for common terminology among the different jurisdictions
✦ Build-out of TAC-Stack sites
✦ Create mobile potential in TAX-Stack sites
✦ IPICS being available in PA counties
✦ Unite South Task Force in order to connect PSAPS
✦ Pennsylvania donor 800 in WAGIN sites
✦ Share future tower sites information and capabilities between Maryland and Pennsylvania

Allegany County & PA Regional Partners (Fayette, Somerset, & Bedford Counties)
Challenges
✦ No county-county interoperability or State-State interoperability
✦ Lack of IP connectivity with some counties
✦ Funding
✦ Lack of MOU's
✦ Operational protocols
✦ Lack of vision or mission for interoperability
✦ Lack of direction or leadership to keep interoperability efforts continuing in the future
✦ Participation of first responders and their input on what/how things are accomplished
✦ Lack of management
Opportunities
✦ Technology is there, but management is needed
✦ Microwave quickest way to connect jurisdictions together
✦ Long term goal would be to connect using fiber optic cable
✦ Programming of universal channels with IPICS solutions
✦ Semi-annual meetings
✦ Organizational structure of meetings

Overall Comments:

- The majority of counties in attendance at ICW have not programmed National Tactical Channels. Is there a need to identified one Conventional Tactical Channel?

- Pennsylvania has multiple mobile towers within the State. Is there a need for a mobile tower in Western Maryland?

- Pennsylvania utilizes cell sites-single poles in areas where topography is an issue. Should Garrett research the possibility of utilizing cell sites-single poles?

Next Steps:

- Coordination and organization of future meetings. Establish who is to be included in future meetings.

- Establish meeting with all Regions: Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

- Continue to build relationships with identified jurisdictions and agencies.

- Each County should continue reaching out to neighboring jurisdictions to ensure interoperability is achieved.

- Obtain a secure VPN in each County for temporary connection to the IPICS system utilizing grant funding.

- Develop technical procedures and protocol for IPICS usage.

- Continue WAGIN Sub-Committee meetings with both technical and operational sides to ensure that both committees continue to evolve at the same pace.

Attendee Listing	
Fayette County, Pennsylvania	Roy A. Shipley
	L. Guy Napolillo
Somerset County, Pennsylvania	David L. Fox
	Joel Landis
Bedford County, Pennsylvania	Dave Cubbison
Fulton County, Pennsylvania	Vincent W. Joyce
	Sid McConahy
Franklin County, Pennsylvania	David Donohue
	Ben Rice
Frederick County, Maryland	Chip Jewell
Allegany County, Maryland	Susan Lee
Washington County, Maryland	Douglas W. Mullendore
	Pete Lazich
Garrett County, Maryland	Steve Smith
	Bill Ham
State Highway Administration	Craig Fetzer
	Philip Lazarus
	Paul Frushour
WAGIN WORKGROUP	Dave Chapman
	Dick Devore
	Erica Mowbray
	Kevin Lewis
	Pete Loewenheim
	Ray Lehr
	Richard Berg
	Roger Bennett
	Virginia Smith
	Michele King
Pennsylvania Office of Public Safety Administration	Bob Barnham
PA Office of Administration Public Safety Radio	Keith Leto
ICW Facilitator	Clay Stamp
ARINC	Amanda Aronson
RCC Consultants	Charles Bryson
Maryland Statewide Interoperability Program Management Office	Lori Stone
Skyline	Tom Miller
South Central Task Force	Dennis Ward