

PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (PSRSPC)

MEETING NOTES *Final Approved*

**Thursday, September 29th, 2005
1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.**

**Held at the Governor's Office of Emergency Services,
3650 Schriever Avenue, Mather, CA 95655**

Attendees

- Committee members (or designated reps)
- Staff, Department of General Services
- Public observers (see attendee list)
- Local and State agency interested parties

Documents Available

- √ Today's agenda
- √ CA Code, Government Code Section 8592-8592.6 (as of January 1, 2005)
- √ Meeting Summary from July 28th PSRSPC Meeting

Welcome and Call to Order

Adam Sutkus, meeting facilitator from the Center for Collaborative Policy, California State University Sacramento, called the meeting to order. Mr. Sutkus briefly went over the ground rules and introduced the acting Committee Chair, Frank McCarton. The Committee had elected the representative of Governor's Office of Emergency Services as Committee Chair at the previous meeting on July 28.

Chairman's Greeting & Comments

Mr. Frank McCarton, Chief Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, welcomed all participants and observers and offered opening comments. Mr. McCarton was acting as Committee Chairman in place of OES Director Henry Renteria, who was away on travel status.

Chairman McCarton pressed upon the critical need to learn from past experiences since 2001, particularly the recent disaster of Hurricane Katrina. He described the issue of interoperability as both simple to visualize but difficult to achieve, and that speed and aggressiveness would be discussed by the Committee.

Chairman McCarton noted that California had just become a member of EMAC (the Emergency Management Assistance Compact). EMAC membership will facilitate California's assistance to other states who request assistance.

PART I: STAFF BRIEFINGS AND UPDATES

All agency representatives introduced themselves. The meeting was turned over to staff for presentations by PSRSPC Technical Working Group members. The first presentation was by Don Root, Chairman of the Technical Working Group and a member of OES Telecommunications staff.

Hurricane Katrina: Preliminary Lessons Learned for Communications & Interoperability

Don Root, OES, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on preliminary lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina, a Category Four hurricane, struck the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, making landfall in Biloxi, Mississippi. The hurricane caused major disruptions to communications infrastructure in the Gulf Coast region. Each of the Executive Committee members received a copy of the Federal Communication Commission Chairman's written testimony, which gave a grim assessment. More than three million telephones were knocked down in the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama area. Local wireless networks were disrupted, with more than one thousand cellular sites out of service. Thirty-eight 9-1-1 call centers went down. Over 20 million telephone calls did not go through the day after the hurricane. Approximately 100 broadcast stations were knocked off the air. There was a lack of interoperable channels, and some common channels were being called different names by different agencies.

Some volunteer Ham radio operators were used, but radios were only as effective as the viability of their supporting infrastructure or the batteries in the handheld units, whichever died first. Officers on the street often did not have the ability to recharge their batteries. In New Orleans, when batteries and emergency generators failed, the communications systems went off the air because controllers lacked backup power sources. At one point, all of New Orleans public safety had been operating on a single repeater channel.

Mr. Root said that the Technical Working Group would continue to monitor reports from the Gulf Regions to review lessons for California.

Report on Activities of Technical Working Group (TWG)

Adam Sutkus, meeting facilitator, reported on the activities of the Technical Working Group. At the last meeting on July 28th, the PSRSPC Executive Committee reinstated the Technical Working Group to provide staff level support for the work required to fulfill the mandate of the Committee. Since then, the Technical Working Group met three times to address organizational matters, initial projects, and a comprehensive work plan. Several products came out of the group's dialogue. The primary product was a guiding principle document—the TWG "Collaboration Guidelines."

Mr. Sutkus gave an overview of the Collaboration Guidelines document. The Collaboration Guidelines had several components, including a mission and vision statement, background/history of the PSRSPC process, lists of sponsoring agencies and Technical Working Group members, a general operating structure, and a work plan. Participating agencies that were not part of the executive sponsorship but were identified in legislation were listed as well. The Collaboration Guidelines also documented dependencies and expectations from Technical Working Group members, specifically the issue of consistency in executive sponsorship for decision making and feedback to assist the Working Group.

Chairman McCarton reiterated OES' executive support of the process and said that OES Director Henry Renteria was committed to keep the Governor's Cabinet apprised of the Committee's activities.

He stressed to all Executive Committee representatives that all agencies would need to remain active in the process. To be successful, the process would need full buy-in of all agencies and the focus of everyone involved—both immediately and in the coming months/years.

Best Practices & “Success Stories” – Report on TWG Research

The Technical Working Group staff made a series of short presentations on success stories to report on progress that is being made and best practices that might be applicable to state agency system modernization and interoperability. These case studies may be included in the Legislative Report due in January, 2006.

Los Angeles County

Don Root, OES, presented on interoperability successes in Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County is a complicated system, with 88 incorporated cities, 45 law enforcement agencies, and 30 fire departments. Following the events of September 11, 2001, groups of public safety communications officials in Los Angeles County brainstormed and came up with a plan for basic interoperability. Since then, they have established an MOU, a governance structure, and training materials. Ninety-five state and federal agencies signed the MOU. Los Angeles County is doing outreach with its neighbors in Ventura, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties. Day-to-day command level operability has been achieved so incident commanders can communicate with each other at the scene. There is also a mobile interoperability platform for tactical communications assistance.

San Diego County - Imperial County Regional Communications System

Bill De Camp, CA Department of General Services, gave a presentation on the San Diego County – Imperial County Regional Communication System (RCS). The system’s geographic areas currently cover more than 9000 square miles, with 217 subscribers and 18,000 users. The vision is: 1) to provide seamless, wireless, and interoperable communication for public safety/service agencies serving about 3,000,000 people in San Diego County, and 2) to provide RCS users with wireless interoperability with other local systems. After it was built, it attained a 97% rating on voice and data coverage acceptance tests – exceeding its goal of 95%. Under a shared governance partnership agreement, the San Diego Board of Supervisors authorized the 13-member RCS Board of Directors. All directors have a rank of a chief or department head. The Board of Directors provides administrative direction and oversight. RCS has local, county, state, and federal participants and 14 dispatch centers. Members share the operating costs, at about \$26.50 per radio per month. The program has achieved national recognition and attracts federal assistance dollars. It received a \$4.5 million FEMA grant and a \$6 million COP grant.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Glen Savage, CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), presented on the CDF communications system. The CDF communication system is the back bone of daily mutual aid operations. CDF command centers provide dispatch services to county fire districts and ambulance services. 36 of the 58 counties have contracts with CDF. For wildland files, there is an average of 5700 average dispatches per year. There are 300,000 calls per year for nonwildland fire incidents, such as hazard spills and traffic accidents. During a 2003 firestorm in Southern California, the Riverside Communication System had no failures, as reported in the Blue Ribbon Commission report.

PSRSPC Website Project

The Technical Working Group will develop a website to the PSRSPC effort a unique identity. OES is setting up the domain name <http://www.psrspc.ca.gov>. The PSRSPC website will not be branded with OES or any other state agency site. Instead it will be a standalone website to reflect the multi-agency collaboration of the Committee. A draft home page was presented to the Committee. Additional web pages will be developed for organizational history, reports, meeting notes, and notices of public meetings. It will also include the current version of the Public Safety Communications Act of 2002. Eventually, the website may establish password-protected areas for Technical Working Group and Executive Committee Members to monitor work in progress. The website will provide more opportunities for public awareness of the PSRSPC process. When vendors submit their presentations, they can be made accessible on the website as well.

Executive Committee Roundtable Discussion

Best Practices and Success Stories. The Committee thanked the Technical Working Group for their presentations and asked them to work on how the State might best leverage the Best Practices and Success Stories and perhaps build from the infrastructure of the regional systems. Sacramento was identified as another Success Story that might be investigated. It was suggested that the State could offer to share its frequencies as a good faith effort with other entities.

Operability. A concern was raised that the Committee should not focus exclusively on regional *interoperability* but should also address basic *operability* for state agencies. Different regional communications systems, while internally integrated, may be incompatible or inconsistent with each other. The reality is that the state must work with all regions and counties and their separate systems, even while many state agencies are currently lacking in basic operability.

The Bottom Line: Legislative Report. The Committee held a vigorous discussion about its bottom line. It was recognized that the Committee agencies had a common agenda to modernize the state's systems to enhance interoperability among themselves and local entities. It was suggested that Committee needs: 1) a plan, and 2) a funding mechanism. Without a plan, the Committee could not make tangible gains. If there is a cooperative plan, then the State can justifiably ask the public to invest in an important endeavor. There have been many lessons learned by state agencies from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as the South Delta levee break at Jones Tract last year. Owing to recent events, there is significant media interest and public support for a plan to move forward before the "proverbial 'Big One.'" The report due to the Legislature in January 2006 would serve as both as an update document and the beginnings of the Committee's plan.

PART II: LOOKING FORWARD

Ground-Level, Current Challenges to Address

Technical Working Group members Ferdinand Milanese, CalTrans, and Victor Garcia, DWR, gave presentations to the Committee on ground-level challenges that are facing state agencies right now. The Technical Working Group felt that it was important that the Committee be made aware of these challenges and looked to the Committee for executive guidance and support in addressing them.

Challenge #1: Radio Ease of Use

A critical challenge for state agencies is to make their radio systems as simple as possible for personnel to operate. Currently, radio systems can be complicated and confusing. Some areas use 800 MHz trunking systems, other areas use 800 MHz conventional system, still others use low band systems. Each technology has a different user interface. It is unrealistic to expect that first responders in the heat of action, such as a bulldozer operator clearing a mudslide or a police officer pursuing a suspect at 100 mph, will remember how to operate a complicated radio system at full effectiveness. The take-home message to the Committee and vendors: no matter how good a system is, if it is not easy and simple to operate, people will not use it.

Challenge #2: Cellular Phones

When radios are perceived as being complicated or inconvenient, cell phones will fill the void. There is an alarming trend for personnel who do not use radios on a day-to-day basis to rely on their cell phones as their sole communications device. The problem is that cell phones fail during emergencies. During the Jones Tract levee break incident in 2004, personnel grabbed cell phones and then complained when the cell phone signals did not have coverage in that area. Verizon arrived with repeaters, but until then only their radios worked. And yet, personnel continue to migrate toward cell phones and away from radios. The lesson to be learned is that radios are better equipment than cell phones for emergency response. DWR has programmed its radios to be easy to use, but convincing staff to use them is an entirely separate issue. The take home message: cellular equipment is not emergency equipment. They may be useful for business application, but they are not appropriate for emergencies.

Work Plan Review

The Committee reviewed a draft outline for the PSRSPC State Agency Strategic Action Plan that would be due to the Legislature on January 1, 2006. The Technical Working Group is tasked with writing the Legislative Report. Most of the content would have to be written in October, to be reviewed by the Committee in November. In December, the report would be given to the Executive Committee for final endorsement—with ultimate transmittal to the Governor's staff for approval.

Interim Meeting on straw Legislative Report

The Committee members discussed whether or not to convene again before the next scheduled Committee meeting on November 30th in order to have a status update on the Technical Working Group's progress. Concerns were raised by Committee members that they did not want to divert the Technical Working Group's time and attention away from writing the report in order to prepare additional briefings for the Committee. It was agreed that the Committee would meet again in early November for the sole purpose of reviewing and commenting upon a straw draft of the Legislative Report. The Committee decided on November 2nd as its next meeting date.

Content of Legislative Report

Concerns were raised about being too aggressive in laying out too much of the strategic plan too soon without public input. It was suggested that the Legislative Report due in January 2006 may not need

to have a fully developed plan but would emphasize a well-developed framework, guidelines, and methodology of how to approach the plan. There was agreement of the overarching need for a plan, but necessary time and steps should be taken so that the plan is done right the first time. There should be room for adjustment when comments are received from the public and industry.

The Technical Working Group will begin work on the Legislative Report at its next scheduled working meeting on October 6.

Local Government Feedback

The question was raised to the Committee as to how and when local government feedback should be solicited and incorporated into the Technical Working Group's efforts. Two ways of receiving input were offered:

1. Consult local organizations directly. (outreach)
2. Invite an association such as the League of Cities to send a nonvoting representative to Technical Working Group meetings to give immediate feedback and provide truth-testing.

The Committee discussed the issues of outreach and timing. There was agreement that it is desirable to have an open process and to begin dialogues with local entities earlier than later. The Committee was committed to pursuing good-faith efforts to collaborate with local and regional entities. However, concerns were raised about timing. Members of the Committee and Technical Working Group were highly concerned that inviting local inputs in the immediate-term would negatively impact the aggressive timeline for staff to complete the Legislative Report in the remaining months of the calendar year.

- It was agreed that the Technical Working Group should complete its straw draft of the Legislative Report before taking the time needed to locate & involve local input.
- It was agreed that, in the near future, local representatives may attend Technical Working Group meetings in an observational capacity but that the membership of the Technical Working Group membership should remain unchanged.
- It was agreed that a stakeholder input mechanism should be designed in the future so that comments are received in discrete, organized units rather than as an unending, unfocused stream of feedback.

Staff Support

The Committee gave the Technical Working Group its endorsement to put necessary time and energy into completing the straw draft of the Legislative Report for the November 2nd Committee meeting. The Executive Committee understood that significant staff time of TWG members would be required for the effort, likely usurping other assigned duties temporarily.

Legislation Update

A current legislative bill, AB 1559 (Gorden, Cohn), has been put on suspense in the Senate Appropriations Committee. AB 1559 would task the California Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (CALSEIC) and the PSRSPC to form a joint committee to report in early 2006 on a plan to have all "frontline" response agencies fully interoperable.

PART III: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment from Gary Grootveld, CA Department of General Services Telecommunications Division

A state official from the **CA Department of General Services** offered the Committee his observation that it would take a considerable amount of time to obtain a signature from each Committee member on the Legislative Report. There are 11 agencies represented on the Committee.

The Committee discussed the issue. It was generally understood that it would be unrealistic to wait for the report to be individually reviewed and approved by all 11 agency heads. It was suggested that it would be sufficient for the Committee Chair to transmit the document on behalf of the entire Committee. The last time the Committee issued a report in 2004, the Committee endorsed the report with a vote and then it was transmitted via OES to the Governor's Office. Another suggestion was made that each agency representative on the Committee could make a recommendation of approval by signing the document.

Closing Comments

Chairman McCarton thanked everyone in attendance for coming to the meeting. He recognized the Technical Working Group for its hard work.

Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for November 2nd, 1:00 to 2:00 P.M. This would be a special one-hour session to review a straw draft of the Legislative Report. The location will be determined. A notice will be put on the new PSRSPC website and sent via the PSRSPC e-mail distribution list.

The following meeting of the Committee will be on its regular meeting date on November 30th. The time and location will be determined.

The PSRSPC is generally scheduled to meet every other month for the near-term, to ensure that progress and commitment to effort remains strong.

Committee Representatives

Mary Cook – Emergency Medical Safety Authority (EMSA)
Corry Cummings – Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)
Steve Edinger – Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
Sonny Fong – Department of Water Resources (DWR)
Barry Hemphill – Department of General Services (DGS)
Karen Jackson – Department of Justice (DOJ)
Frank McCarton – Office of Emergency Services (OES)
Ferdinand Milanes – Department of Transportation (DOT)
Robert Samaan – Office of Homeland Security (OHS)
Randy Sederquist – Department of Parks and Recreation (P&R)
Sal Segura – California Highway Patrol (CHP)
Jim Wright - Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)

Others Present

Bill Ballowe – Epic Marketing Co., Inc	Balbir Johl – DGS-TD
Samuel F. Bellow – DGS-TD	Pam Katz – San Francisco 911
Manuel Bergado – P&R	Dan Kellehen – Motorola
Marlo Brush, OES	Jake McHatton, OES, T-Comm
Sandra Champion – CHP	Mark Pierce – CA Dept. of Health Services
Ken Chappelle – CHP	Jim Pratt – DGS-TD
Bill DeCamp – Telecom. Div. (DGS-TD)	Don Root, OES, T-Comm
Richard Engelsen – DFG	Glen Savage – CDF
Dennis Elwell – DGS-TD	Charlie Simpson – OES, Law Enforcement
Victor Garcia – DWR	Steve Smith – M/A-COM
Neil Hillel – Motorola	Al Tong – San Francisco PD/OES
Kim Ismail – DOJ	Stephen Virdure – DOJ