



## **Nebraska Public Safety Communications Council (NPSCC)**

### **2015 Annual Report**

December 2015

#### **NPSCC Council Members**

Lt. Governor Mike Foley, Homeland Security  
Director

Jayne Scofield, Office of the Chief Information  
Officer, Statewide Interoperability  
Coordinator

Mark Conrey, Tri-County PET Region

Roger Foster, League of Nebraska  
Municipalities

Kevin Garvin, Northeast PET Region

Pat Gerdes, Southwest PET Region

Tim Hofbauer, East Central PET Region

Adam Matzner, State Fire Marshal

Tom Nutt, Nebraska Association of County  
Officials

Pete Peterson, North Central PET Region

Ray Richards, Panhandle PET Region

Jon Rosenlund, South Central PET Region

Ray Ryan, Southeast PET Region

Thomas Schwarten, Nebraska State Patrol

Craig Stover, Nebraska Game & Parks  
Commission

Bryan Tuma, Nebraska Emergency  
Management Agency

Dave Webb, Nebraska Public Power District

## **Nebraska Public Safety Communications Council 2015 Annual Report**

Executive Order (No. 12-01) established the Nebraska Public Safety Communications Council (NPSCC) on October 18, 2012. The Executive Order created the membership of the Council, and identified the responsibilities of the Council related to public safety communications in Nebraska. The Executive Order charged the NPSCC with providing an annual report containing a current assessment of the status of interoperability of public safety in Nebraska that included recommendations for improvements and enhancements to the system.

### **Background**

The NPSCC combines responsibilities and membership of the two groups established in 2008 by Executive Order – the Nebraska Wireless Interoperability Council (NWIN) and the Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR). The NPSCC expanded membership to include representatives from the League of Nebraska Municipalities and Nebraska Association of County Officials along with representatives from the Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska State Fire Marshal, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska Public Power District, and one representative of each Nebraska Planning, Exercise and Training (PET) Communication Region.

The NPSCC was made an official subcommittee of the Nebraska Homeland Security Policy Group on January 27, 2014. The NPSCC operates under the direction of the State Homeland Security Director and Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) and is charged with the following:

1. Provide for the policy level direction related to the planning and decisions regarding development, operation and sustainability of interoperability in the State of Nebraska
2. Provide leadership regarding the development of public safety communications within Nebraska
3. Adopt bylaws for the operation of the Council
4. Promote interoperability for public safety communications within Nebraska, and with border states
5. Provide recommendations for the development of protocols, standard operating procedures and guidelines for use of public safety communications systems in Nebraska
6. Coordinate and provide planning, training and exercise opportunities related to communications interoperability for all necessary and authorized public safety practitioners
7. Establish working groups, as required, to meet the needs of providing interoperability within Nebraska. NPSCC will provide guidance on recommendations that come from these working groups.

8. Develop recommendations and strategies for best utilization of public funds, including grants, to improve public safety communications in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is charged in the Executive Order with providing support to the NPSCC. NEMA contracts for planning support with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center to carry out this duty along with provision of general planning support for communications activities across the state, including maintaining a website to centralize communication related to public safety communications and related activities across the state (<http://www.homelandplanning.nebraska.edu>).

### **2014-2015 Milestones**

**Statewide Radio System (SRS).** The SRS is a standards-based VHF P25 digital trunked land mobile radio system. The Office of the Chief Information Officer established a partnership with the Nebraska Public Power District to own, operate and manage the system through an Interlocal agreement. In addition to public power agencies, state, local and federal agencies are using the system. Three SRS groups have responsibility to administer the system and represent the user agencies: the System Administrative Group (SAG), the System Operations Group (SOG), and the System User Group (SUG.) The SAG coordinates with agencies interested in joining the system. The SUG meets monthly to discuss the SRS, topics of interest, ongoing system enhancements and best practices for interoperable protocols. Of Nebraska's 93 counties, nearly all have dispatch interoperability with the SRS by participating in the Regional Operations Common (ROC) plan. Five counties have committed to participating and are waiting for their Consolettes to be ordered or installed. There are six counties that have yet to commit to implementing the ROC plan. OCIO originated and coordinates a weekly statewide test for all three dispatch shifts with the State Patrol and local dispatchers on ROC talk groups; and follows up with any that do not respond to ensure they are aware of any training or equipment issues that may need to be addressed.

**Public Safety Broadband Network Working Group.** The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) received a federal grant to begin stakeholder identification, outreach, education and other planning activities for an expanded nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety entities. This national initiative is referred to as FirstNet. The Nebraska Public Safety Broadband Network Working Group was chartered as a working group of the NPSCC on January 17, 2014. The first meeting of this working group was held in May 2014. In March of 2015 Nebraska held its Initial Consultation Meeting with FirstNet and 125 local and state stakeholders in Kearney. Since that time Nebraska public safety agencies have engaged in a data collection effort to provide FirstNet with the information they will need to draft an RFP to design and build the Network along with coverage and business plans for Nebraska. FirstNet hopes to release the RFP by the end of 2015 or early 2016. More information about this project is available at <http://www.cio.nebraska.gov/ps-broadband-network-planning-project.html>.

**Nebraska State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC).** This working group was established under the NPSCC on December 12, 2012. The group had been operating since 2011 as a subcommittee of the Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR) which was subsumed by the NPSCC. The purposes of the SECC are set out by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The SECC includes representatives from state agencies, local emergency management, radio, television, cable systems and the National Weather Service. This group writes and maintains the state Emergency Alert System (EAS) plan.

**Nebraska Regional Interoperability Network (NRIN) Committee.** This working group was chartered on September 3, 2015. The Committee is charged with developing the governance, management, maintenance, and monitoring of NRIN. The NRIN Committee includes representatives of the eight Planning; Exercise and Training Regions; the Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer; the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; and the Nebraska Public Power District. NRIN will allow information to be shared among emergency and communications centers on a real time, on demand, basis to help mitigate an emergency that threatens any location. NRIN will enable multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary interoperability to ensure a competent level of local, regional, and statewide prevention, communication, cooperation, and coordination for an all-hazards incident necessary to execute a wide range of incident management operations.

## **Accomplishments and Recommendations**

The following system accomplishments and recommendations have been discussed at the NPSCC meetings in 2014-2015:

- Western areas of NRIN were completed and tested. Portions of regions are operational and being used for mutual aid base station connections, environmental monitoring and remote security. Equipment has been installed at several sites across the state awaiting connectivity. The NRIN build-out will be completed in 2017. The NRIN Committee is developing a locally-controlled NRIN Governing Board that will manage the Network and create a sustainability plan.
- The NPSCC has approved a recommended change in the Charter for the Public Safety Broadband Network Working Group. The NPSCC has been briefed regarding the FirstNet planning activities and stakeholder interactions and provided guidance and approval to the Working Groups plan to provide FirstNet with the data collection information they have requested from our state.
- 82 of the 93 Nebraska counties (88%) now have interoperability with the SRS users through their dispatch centers' ROC Plan participation.

- The Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office and Emergency Management Agency were the first local entities to become full-time users of the SRS in May 2011. June 1, 2014, the Gage County Sheriff’s Office and Emergency Management Agency joined the SRS. November 2015 Butler County Sheriff’s Office and Emergency Management Agency joined; and several more counties have indicated a desire to join in the coming year.
- The Nebraska National Guard 72<sup>nd</sup> Civil Support Division joined the SRS this year.
- The OCIO performs SRS educational outreach at conferences to increase awareness about the SRS and its availability. They exhibited at the annual Nebraska Association of Emergency Management (NAEM), the Nebraska Sheriffs’ Association and Police Officers Association of Nebraska (NSA/POAN) and the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO.) They were also speakers at the NSA/POAN which generated additional interest in joining the SRS.
- The Nebraska Association of County Officials is developing operational standards for dispatch centers that NPSCC will consider for adoption statewide.
- Recommendations from the L.R. Kimball report related to the SRS will continue to be implemented and reported to the NPSCC.
- An interlocal agreement to form the NRIN governance board has been sent to local and county jurisdictions with an election anticipated in early 2016 to form the first board.

*This report was prepared by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center with assistance from the OCIO and NEMA.  
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