



**Nebraska Wireless Interoperable
Network (N-WIN) Council
2009 Annual Report
February, 2010**

**2009
N-WIN Council Members**

Owen Yardley, Chair
Al Berndt, NEMA
Ted Blume, Game & Parks
Mark Conrey, NCOR
Jim Gerweck, NCOR
Adam Matzner, Fire Marshal
Thomas Schwarten, NSP
Jayne Scofield, OCIO
Dave Webb, NPPD

Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network Council 2009 Annual Report

Executive Order No. 08-03 (December 17, 2008) established the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network (N-WIN), membership of the N-WIN Council, and its leadership responsibilities for interoperable public safety communications. The Executive Order charged the N-WIN Council with providing an annual report containing a current assessment of the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network that included recommendations for operation of and enhancements to the system. This report fulfills that requirement.

Background

The nine-member N-WIN Council consists of one appointee each from the following entities: A chairman appointed by the Governor; representatives designated by the Nebraska State Patrol; Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Nebraska Fire Marshal's Office; Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer; Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; Nebraska Public Power District; and two people appointed by the Nebraska Council of Regions. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the Office of the Chief Information Officer are also charged with providing administrative and technical support to the N-WIN Council.

The primary purpose of N-WIN Council is to complete the charges listed in Executive Order No. 08-03. Accordingly, the Council will:

- Provide for the governance and policy level direction related to the planning and decisions regarding development and operation of the N-WIN;
- Provide leadership regarding the development of public safety communications within Nebraska;
- Adopt bylaws for the operation of the Council;
- Develop strategies and recommendations to improve operations of the N-WIN, including consultation with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) regarding the use of new technology as it becomes available;
- Promote interoperability for public safety communications within Nebraska, and with border states;
- Provide oversight for the development of protocols, standard operating procedures and guidelines for use of the N-WIN;
- Coordinate and provide planning, training and exercise opportunities related to communications interoperability for all necessary and authorized public safety practitioners;
- Establish the terms of agreements and enter into agreements for public safety entities to operate on the N-WIN, in conjunction with the Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO), when such arrangements are practical and in the best interests of the State and the regions; and

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

The N-WIN Council identified **four key goals for their work in 2009**:

1. Monitor timelines and progress for the statewide radio network.
2. Ensure transparency in development of the interoperability network that facilitates regional network development.
3. Create consistency in procedures governing use of state and regional interoperable public safety communication networks.
4. Provide leadership for development of administrative systems for subscribers of N-WIN and its interface with bordering states. In addition, NCOR is leading the revision of the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP).

Cooperation with the Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR) was instrumental in the first year of the N-WIN Council. In addition to strong NCOR support and participation, three state groups provided support to N-WIN in 2009, including the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (PPC).

NEMA assisted with N-WIN Council activities by: 1) providing administrative support for Council meetings including arranging for meeting space, providing copies of meeting materials, and creating sign-in sheets to record attendance of meeting participants and 2) providing resources for and coordination of environmental assessments for all installation of communication equipment purchased with federal funds. NEMA also agreed to take responsibility for coordinating exercise opportunities related to interoperable communications for Nebraska public safety practitioners.

The OCIO provided technical support to the N-WIN Council. The OCIO gave regular reports to the N-WIN Council about the development of interoperable communication infrastructure and implementation of the statewide radio network in coordination with NPPD. The OCIO is also responsible for coordinating the statewide interoperability strategy with NEMA, NOCR and regional leadership groups.

The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (PPC) provided planning assistance for the N-WIN Council over the past year through agenda development, meeting facilitation, note taking, and establishing a website to centralize communication related to N-WIN and related statewide activities (<http://www.homelandplanning.nebraska.edu>). The PPC also assisted the two work groups established by the N-WIN Council by providing meeting support and migrating work group products to fit recommended federal templates for shared network/shared channel usage.

2009 status of the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network

A committee chairperson (Owen Yardley) was appointed by the Governor, and the N-WIN Council began meeting in May 2009. Bylaws were adopted at the June 2009 meeting. Also in June 2009, two working groups were established each with a specific charge.

The N-WIN/NCOR Joint Operational Issues Workgroup was charged with drafting standard operating procedures. This workgroup drafted procedures for users of the N-WIN that included drafts of mutual aid channel usage procedures. The drafts will be forwarded to the statewide radio network system users group for further consideration. Mutual aid channel usage procedures were forwarded to NCOR for further refinement and consideration.

The N-WIN Administrative Workgroup was charged with establishing the terms of agreements and entering into agreements for public safety entities to operate on the N-WIN.

The N-WIN Council received regular reports from the OCIO and Nebraska State Patrol regarding the progress of development of the state radio network and the regional network that will enable interoperable communication among local public safety officials.

Progress toward interoperability

Two working priorities and related activities were established at the June 2009 N-WIN Council meeting to aid in achieving the key goals for 2009. The roll-out of phase one of the Statewide Radio Network in western Nebraska was scheduled for fall 2009, so the Council identified related activities needed to support rapid implementation and usage of the network by subscriber agencies.

Priority Objective	Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop standard operating procedures for shared network and shared channel usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a joint operational work group of N-WIN and NCOR to propose operational guidelines for shared network and channel usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reports to N-WIN and NCOR b. Membership included representatives of the State Patrol (chair), Fire Marshal's Office, Game and Parks, NPPD, NCOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide leadership for development of interoperable agreements for public safety entities to operate on the N-WIN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an administrative work group to propose strategies related to sustainability, costs, and terms of agreements with public safety entities to interoperate on the N-WIN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reports to N-WIN b. Membership included OCIO (chair), NPPD (co-chair), NEMA, State Patrol

Two additional objectives were identified for priority consideration after standard operating procedures and agreements for operating on N-WIN are established: developing recommendations about training appropriate for subscriber agencies/users

of the N-WIN and recommending strategies for the best utilization of public funds to improve public safety communications and interoperability in Nebraska.

Nebraska State Patrol agency policies for use of equipment and communication on the state radio system were in place at the time of the roll out of Phase 1 of the Statewide Radio Network in western Nebraska (State Patrol Troop E). Training for troopers in the Troop E area took place prior to roll out of the system. These agency documents and NCOR drafts of mutual aid channel usage rules were used as a basis for development of standard operating procedure drafts by the Joint Operational Workgroup. The draft N-WIN standard operating procedures were presented to the N-WIN Council for review in December 2009.

A second priority objective for N-WIN was to address issues of sustainability, cost, and other administrative policies necessary to establish agreements with public safety entities to operate on the interoperable network. The N-WIN Administrative Workgroup was established to work out these issues, with leadership and membership identified in June 2009. At their first meeting, the Administrative Workgroup identified several tasks that needed to be completed prior to issuing any recommendations to the N-WIN Council including: 1) Establish demarcation points where state responsibility ends and regional responsibility begins; 2) Outline Region responsibilities related to the N-WIN; 3) Establish an acceptable use policy for operating on the N-WIN; 4) Conduct a cost analysis to support on-going N-WIN usage by subscriber entities; and 5) Prepare a charter to show the technical aspects of the N-WIN (for example, the IP scheme, the service, quality, etc.). The Inter-local Agreement between NPPD and the OCIO established areas of responsibility between the departments. This document reflects use of a process oriented approach which will be used to develop additional components needed to move toward full interoperability. Completion of this agreement sets the stage for developing operational procedures for users of the systems comprising N-WIN and clear administrative policies outlining responsibilities for coordinating system reporting.

In addition to N-WIN Council's governance responsibility, it is monitoring and providing oversight for development of five system components needed for statewide interoperability:

- a) The **Nebraska Statewide Radio Network** including hardware, software, towers, and resources of the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) and the State of Nebraska.

Phase One, activation of the Nebraska Statewide Radio Network, was launched September 23, 2009 in the Nebraska Panhandle. This connects the State Patrol, Fire Marshal, Game and Parks and Nebraska Public Power District in the covered area. The Phase One launch required towers to be operational and connected, installation of trunked radios in State Patrol cars, training on car and portable radios, and dispatch console training. The build out of the Statewide Radio Network continues and is scheduled for completion at the end of 2010.

- b) The **Motorola based radio system**
The Motorola based radio system is managed by the OCIO and NPPD. The N-WIN Council monitors the development of policies and procedures to make its use consistent with overall network usage.
- c) The **Regional Wireless Interoperable Network** consisting of eight regions coordinated by the Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR)
Communication between N-WIN and NCOR has been good and is fostered by the attendance of representatives from each entity at all meetings. Each Council's ability to be most efficient has been complicated by a perceived overlap of responsibilities with NCOR and with individual agency charges. This was clarified in the last N-WIN meeting of 2009.
- d) The **State's role as a peer entity** to the eight regions¹
As progress developing the Network proceeded, policies and procedures for beginning interoperable use were lacking. N-WIN Council determined the priority at this stage was development of procedures that state agencies could use within their region. It was also critical that the procedures used by state agencies were compatible with those used by the other regions. Draft procedures developed but not formally adopted were used as templates to ensure compatibility. These included complementary procedures that extended beyond the operational scope. The additional procedures will be used to assist in the development of administrative operational and governance procedures in 2010 as the Network continues toward completion.
- e) The **Mutual Aid Network** that allows local responders to communicate through the use of shared radio frequencies and integration of communications systems. Regional interoperability will be the focus in 2010 with the addition of a contracted vendor to complete the technical build out of the point-to-point regional network as well as the statewide mutual aid base station network. The Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR) will oversee development of this network in conjunction with oversight from the N-WIN Council.

Challenges

N-WIN project involved a significant amount of activity and information being developed in each of the five components of the Network. Communicating this information effectively to all stakeholders involved in the N-WIN project has been challenging. Persons involved in the N-WIN development varied in their levels of experience, technical knowledge and operations expertise. Given these diverse backgrounds and differing communications cultures and procedures among state and local system users, this challenge is not unexpected. However, effective communication with all stakeholders is vital for this project to make its expected progress. For this reason, effective, clear communication pathways and practices will be the highest priority for the N-WIN Council in 2010 as this project moves toward all-phase completion.

¹ The State in this case refers to Nebraska State Patrol, Game and Parks, State Fire Marshal's Office, and Department of Agriculture. The eight regions include East Central, North Central, Northeast, Panhandle, South Central, Southeast, Southwest, and the Tri-county areas.

Another significant challenge this year has been defining N-WIN and specifying the role of N-WIN Council and its relationship with other councils (NCOR), state agencies, and the overall interoperability plan. Clarification of roles and relationships were defined at the December meeting, which will allow for enhanced performance of the N-WIN Council and keep the N-WIN project going forward.

Recommendations

In 2010 the N-WIN Council plans to further clarify and implement its oversight role to strengthen the coordination and collaboration needed to implement statewide interoperability. Five recommendations are offered to move the state toward full interoperability:

1. A simplified visual depiction of the roles and responsibilities of NCOR, the N-WIN Council, and member agencies should be constructed by entities charged with providing support to the N-WIN Council to foster communication among all collaborators.
2. Develop non-technical shared definitions using plain language to be agreed upon by NCOR and the N-WIN Council, then widely distributed.
3. Develop an integrated project schedule incorporating work tasks for each of the elements of the N-WIN project to ensure all required procedures are completed.
4. Oversee the development of administrative procedures and processes for use of N-WIN and for potential expansion of the User base. This would include development of a business plan for the overall network development and sustainment. Conditions and parameters of terms of agreements with public safety entities to use the network can then be established which include verifiable costs for connectivity with the state network. A similar model will need to be established for the regional point-to-point network and its implementation across Nebraska rounding out statewide interoperability. This will increase accountability among collaborators by creating objective measures of progress that are subject to audit and reporting. This will be a dynamic document due to the changing business needs of interoperability.
5. Delegation of responsibility to the State User Group for developing operational procedures relevant to use of the system with criteria to ensure compatibility with other N-WIN components where necessary.

Bylaws of the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network Council

Article I. Name

The name of the Council is the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network (hereinafter "N-WIN"). N-WIN shall report to the Lt. Governor as Nebraska Homeland Security Director and to the Governor's Homeland Security Policy Group as established by Executive Order No. 08-03.

Article II. Purpose

NWIN is created to provide leadership regarding the development of public safety communications within Nebraska. N-WIN shall:

1. Provide for governance and policy level direction related to the planning and decisions regarding development and operation of the N-WIN.
2. Adopt bylaws for the operation of N-WIN.
3. Develop strategies and recommendations to improve operations of the N-WIN, including consultation with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) regarding the use of new technology as it becomes available.
4. Promote interoperability for public safety communications within Nebraska, and with Border States.
5. Provide oversight for the development of protocols, standard operating procedures and guidelines for use of the N-WIN.
6. Coordinate and provide planning, training and exercise opportunities related to communications interoperability for all necessary and authorized public safety practitioners.
7. Establish the terms of agreements and enter into agreements for public safety entities to operate on the N-WIN, in conjunction with the Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO), when such arrangements are practical and in the best interests of the State and the regions.
8. Develop recommendations and strategies for best utilization of public funds, including grants, to improve public safety communications in Nebraska.

N-WIN shall prepare an annual report for the Governor and the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. Such report shall contain a current assessment of the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network, including recommendations regarding the operation of and enhancements to the system.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. Voting membership of N-WIN Council shall be comprised of a Chair appointed by the Governor and a representative who has been vested by the appointing authority of the following agencies: Nebraska State Patrol; Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Nebraska Fire Marshal; Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer; Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; and Nebraska Public Power District.

Section 2. Two non-voting, ex-officio members shall be appointed by the Chair of the Nebraska Council of Regions.

Article IV. Officers

Section 1. The chairperson of N-WIN is appointed and serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

Section 2. The vice-chairperson is appointed by the Lt. Governor and serves as an ad-hoc non-voting member of the N-WIN Council and performs governance duties of the chairperson in his/her absence.

Section 3. N-WIN will be administratively and technically supported by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

Article V. Voting

Section 1. Only appointed members of N-WIN present in meetings either in-person or, as authorized, by videoconference have the right to participate in forming final decisions of the N-WIN Council.

Section 2. Decision will be made by consensus whenever possible.

Section 3. When the chair or vice-chair determines that consensus is not possible, he/she may call for a motion and second to frame a vote. Members may abstain from voting or vote aye or nay. All votes for action items will be recorded by roll call vote. Five of the seven voting members (5 of 7) is required for a motion to be pass.

Article VI. Meetings

Section 1. N-WIN meetings will be conducted in accordance with provisions in the Nebraska "Open Meetings Law", § 84-1408 through 84-1414.

Section 2. Agendas will be established 15 days prior to the meeting date when possible to allow representatives ample time to circulate action items among their stakeholders. Publication of agendas will follow guidelines set forth in the Open Meetings Law as referenced in Article VI, Section 1.

Section 3. N-WIN will meet as often as needed to accomplish the goals set forth in Executive Order No. 08-04.

Section 4. A quorum for conducting business shall be five of the seven voting members (5 of 7).

Section 5. Public participants at N-WIN meetings may speak on agenda items outside the public comment period when determined appropriate to assist in resolving the agenda item or when properly identified and recognized by the chairperson.

Section 6. Meeting notes will be provided to all N-WIN members and posted according to the Open Meetings Law.

Article VII. Committees

N-WIN may establish sub-committees and temporary working groups to address operating procedures and special projects.

Article VIII. Amendments of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at any meeting of N-WIN by an affirmative roll call vote of 5 of 7 voting members, provided the amendment has been placed on the agenda as an action item.

Article IX. Adoption of Bylaws

Adopted by the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network Council this 26 day of June, 2009:

By: Owen Yardley, Chairperson