



**Nebraska Wireless Interoperable  
Network (N-WIN) Council  
2012 Annual Report  
February 2013**

**2012  
N-WIN Council Members**

Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy, Chair  
Al Berndt, NEMA  
Vacant, 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 2012 Annual Report**

Executive Order No. 08-03 (December 17, 2008) established the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network (N-WIN) Council, 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report fulfills that requirement and will be the last report issued by the group because Executive Order No. 08-03 was rescinded October 18, 2012 by Executive Order No. 12-01 which established the Nebraska Public Safety Communications Council. This new council combines responsibilities and membership of the N-WIN Council and Nebraska Council of Regions with new local stakeholder representatives.

### **Background**

The nine-member N-WIN Council consisted of one appointee each from the following entities: A chair 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 (NPPD); and two people appointed by the Nebraska Council of Regions. The Game and Parks Commission did not have a representing member in 2012. The primary purpose of the N-WIN Council was to complete the charges listed in Executive Order No. 08-03:

- 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 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.

Cooperation with the Nebraska Council of Regions (NCOR) was instrumental to the work of the N-WIN Council throughout its existence. In addition to strong NCOR support and participation, three state groups provided support to N-WIN in 2012: the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the 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 took 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 the NPPD. The OCIO is also responsible for coordinating the statewide interoperability strategy with NEMA, NCOR and regional leadership groups.

The PPC provided planning assistance for the N-WIN Council through agenda development, meeting facilitation, document preparation, note taking, and maintaining a website to centralize communication related to the N-WIN Council and related statewide activities (<http://www.homelandplanning.nebraska.edu>).

## **2012 Milestones**

**Implementation of the Statewide Radio System (SRS).** The SRS, a VHF P25 digital trunked land mobile radio system, is a partnership between the State and Nebraska Public Power District and was installed in four phases. The system became operational when state agencies were able to move their daily operational traffic to the new radio system. Coverage testing for the SRS was completed in November 2012 after 29 antennas were replaced in October to achieve better service. State users include: the State Patrol, Fire Marshal, Game and Parks, Corrections, Roads,

Agriculture, Motor Vehicles, and NEMA. Non-state users include: NPPD, Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, Lincoln Electrical System (LES), US Marshals Service, US Fish and Wildlife, and Lincoln County Emergency Management. Burt County is in the process of being integrated into the system. The SRS Users Group (SUG) met monthly throughout the project's development and implementation to discuss SRS status, resolve issues, and develop policies and procedures for SRS use.

### **Coordination with NCOR about Other Components for Interoperable**

**Communications.** The N-WIN Council worked collaboratively with NCOR to monitor the implementation of other components of the Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network and determine how these components interface with the Statewide Radio System. These components include:

- 1) The *Nebraska Regional Interoperability Network (NRIN)* - an Internet Protocol (IP) high-speed microwave network connecting over 200 towers across Nebraska organized in eight regional, ringed networks that will carry wireless data relating to all aspects of emergency communications statewide, including voice, video and data. This project continues to evolve with full build-out of the NRIN system expected by August 2014.
- 2) The *Nebraska Common Usage Channels project* - a planned network of analog radio base stations using common, nationally-accepted frequencies to provide radio coverage across the state controlled by local/regional system operators. A major focus of these efforts has been to achieve interoperability between local first responders and the Nebraska State Patrol.
- 3) *Paraclete*© - a computer software system that enables local, regional, and state emergency responders to communicate with one another using disparate radio systems in the event of a local emergency. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency provides training and technical assistance to local areas implementing the Paraclete system to achieve interoperability.