

November 12, 2015

In attendance:

Terry Spring-KWPX
Laura Goudzeau-FEMA Region X
Ted Buehner-NWS Seattle
Roy Benevente-WA EMD
Tom Sharp-Pierce County DEM
Lowell Kiesow-KPLU
Phil Johnson-CPS LECC
Mark Allen-WSAB
Jon Kasprick-SBE
Clay Freinwald-WSU

On the phone:

Dale Clay-Skagit County
Carri Gordon-WSP

Clay Freinwald called the meeting to order. Introductions were made and the minutes for the previous meeting were approved.

Marlin Jackson has changed jobs and resigned as chair in the Inland area. Who will be the new chair?

The chair of the Lewis County and Cowlitz-Wahkiakum local areas has resigned. A replacement needs to be found. One person does not have to do both areas. Any volunteers?

The FCC has an initiative for bi-lingual EAS alerts. This will be handled by a CSRIC group. There are also groups for EAS security and an update for the EAS handbook.

The Cascadia Rising exercise is coming next year. See <http://nws.weather.gov/nthmp//2015annualmeeting/CascadiaRising.pdf> for more information. There is a comprehensive handbook available for download at http://www.washingtonepin.org/external/content/document/5163/2454186/1/Cascadia_Rising_2016_Exercise_Scenario_Document_Low_Res.pdf.

Clay will be going to Nevada for their Emergency Managers Conference in Reno.

A NPT test is supposed to happen here next year. The Feds have been doing these regionally as opposed to having one big one to do the whole country.

TFT has gone out of business. They did not come up with a new box for the transition to CAP. They had an add-on. These units will have to be replaced at some point because no updates will be available.

Tom Beers is retiring from the FCC on November 19th. He is the Chief of Policy.

In old business, the 2016 RMT schedule was approved. It will be put on the WSAB web site after the December RMT is completed. Thanks to Roland!

TAB 10 (EAS Monitoring Assignments) updates need to be done in the local areas, It is too much work for one person to do the whole state. In TAB 2 (Local Area Contacts), note that Matt Green has resigned. A new TAB 8 (Washington EAS Event Codes) was presented and approved. This should help in box programming and help originators decide which code to use. This replaces TABs 17 and 25, as well as the old TAB 8.

The SECC Chair replacement was discussed again. It was agreed that some sort of sharing would help. John Kasprick agreed to be the Database Manager. Ted Buehner and Roy Benevente agreed to help with co-chair duties.

In new business, Clay proposed an Emergency Public Information System (EPIS). This would be a conduit for information from Emergency Management Personnel to the public utilizing any broadcast transmitters that would survive a major disaster. The normal lines of communication will be disrupted in a disaster. The internet, cellular networks, and most any land based system will probably be down. Power will most likely be off. There are very few battery operated TV's around. Most people have a battery operated radio in their cars. So the best bet for reaching the maximum number of people is by AM and FM broadcasting.

At least a few radio stations should survive a major disaster. But, will they have any information to broadcast? Many stations are not even manned and receive their programming via satellite. There is a disconnect between the sources of information and the public. Similar systems have existed in the past but were scrapped when EAS started. Clay has been talking to some of the stations in the area and some have shown enthusiasm for the project. There has been work done in Port Angeles and Port Townsend. While not strictly EAS, this could be part of the EAS organization, possibly as a TAB in the state plan. There would need to be a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) for the stations to broadcast each other's signals.

More detailed information about Clay's EPIS proposal is attached.

The SBE will be conducting a transmitter site survey to determine which sites are likely to survive a disaster.

Public education is lacking. For instance, what stations should you turn to for information, Clay will be pushing this. Possibly there will be a meeting on the subject. Some local plans still have tuning to a local station in them. But the public may not know about it. People still have an obsession with hand-held devices which are not likely to work in a disaster.

Also consider caution tape. You might be unable to access your facilities or reach your transmitter site. Washington State does not have legislation making broadcasters first informers allowing them to cross police lines or go to areas that are closed to the public. Certification is for individuals, not stations. Who would do the credentialing and who would recognize it? It is not a simple process and you would be dealing with both the state and federal government. This is legislation that is needed, but the WSAB has not had time to work on it.

The last Central Puget Sound RMT sounded good. It sounded like the voice was synthesized.

This was the last SECC meeting for Mark Allen, CEO of the Washington State Association of Broadcasters. His replacement is Keith Shipman, a longtime broadcaster. He owns radio stations in Bend.

The question was asked about how AMBER Alerts using the CAE event code are cancelled. Carri Gordon will post the information on the remailer. There also Silver and Blue Alerts, and Endangered Missing Persons Alerts. Only AMBER utilizes EAS.

The October Great Shakeout/Tsunami Warning RMT was a few minutes late. The test is originated by the National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) in Palmer, Alaska, yet that transmission suffered a failure. NWS personnel in Seattle and Portland realized the problem in a timely manner and transmitted the RMT shortly after the targeted time of 1015 AM, initiating the drop, cover and hold earthquake drill and the coastal tsunami warning communications test. Apologies to those who wanted the RMT to arrive on time, yet this is why we do tests.

IT staff at NWS Western Region Headquarters still have security concerns with SAGE Endecs at NWS forecast offices such as Seattle. Ted and Lowell will work to arrange a conference call with the appropriate people to address their security concerns.

In the Central Puget Sound local area, Phil is asking for monitoring information from the broadcast stations. Please submit it by Thanksgiving or he will come looking for you.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 20th, at 9:30 AM at Camp Murray.

Terry Spring
Chief Engineer