ALMR INSIDER

Florida Interoperability Network Trains Alaska Dispatchers

Inside this issue:

As announced in the April Insider, the State of Alaska (SOA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) are funding the installation of MotoBridge™ gateway technology in thirty locations around the state to address ALMR interoperability with disparate radio systems.

In preparation for the technology being installed later this year, Operations Management Office (OMO) staff, 5 Star team staff, Sheila Squires, (Seward PD), Stephanie Johnson, (Fairbanks PD), Sue Rogers, (AST Fairbanks), Tammy Goggia, (Soldotna AST), Daniel Stearns, (MatCom), Al Tamagni, (Anchorage FD), Sgt. Frank Loomis, (Department of the Army Police, Ft. Richardson), Janie Stewart, (Homer PD), Jeff Hauck, (59 SIG, USARAK), Lt. Barry Wilson, (AST HQ) and Gina Wheeler, (President, AK Chapter of NENA/APCO) traveled to Orlando, Florida from June 2 - 6, 2008 to meet with Florida Interoperability Network (FIN) staff to learn about the MotoBridge™ application and operational use of the system. System familiarization and processes, procedures, and protocols were presented.

Florida chose to install over 240 MotoBridge™ gateways to provide interoperabil-

ity between the many disparate radio systems in the state, as opposed to developing a shared infrastructure like ALMR. The FIN system is the premier source for learning about the technology and its application as a result of the size of their MotoBridge™ system and the length of time it has been in service.

On the first day the group was briefed by staff and observed dispatch activities during visits to the Orange County Sheriffs Office Communications Center, Florida Highway Patrol Orlando Regional Communications Center, and the Orlando Police Department Communications Center. The group had the opportunity to meet with dispatch personnel at each of the locations and discuss MotoBridge™ and various dispatch issues.

On the second day, the Alaska contingent were provided briefings, demonstrations of the system and training materials by Patti Broderick - Statewide FIN trainer, Carlton Wells - Florida Communications and Information Technology Services, Nancy Dzoba - Broward County Sheriff's Office, and Kevin Gootee - Motorola FIN System Manager.

On the final day, the group visited the Putnam County Sheriff's Office dispatch center where they were provided with a live demonstration of FIN capabilities and briefed by Major Larry Beaton and dispatch center staff.

A follow-up summit with all of the FIN trip participants will be held on July 22, and facilitated by the OMO and 5Starteam, to develop the protocols, policies and procedures necessary to ensure successful implementation and use of the MotoBridge™ gateways.

Please contact the Operations Management Office if you are interested in participating in the summit, or if you have any questions regarding the MotoBridge™ project.

Emergency Button - What's It Do?

EMERGENCY
BUTTON

ALMR radios are software defined and can be programmed to operate in many different ways. The information below only addresses configuration. Consult your radio programmer about specific help on your radio features and capabilities.

1. Activation: Press the EMERGENCY button for approximately one half a second.
2. What does it do to the radio?
   a. The radio will chirp three times and / or display EMERGENCY.
   b. When activated, the radio may announce the emergency on the selected talkgroup, or it may change to another talkgroup before announcing the alarm.
   c. On the IC and REG A-F Zones, the transmission is redirected to the HAIL channels on those zones.

3. What happens to the System?
   a. The ALMR site that the radio is affiliated with will lock a channel for the EMERGENCY talk group.
   b. The System will assign the highest priority to the radio. The System will not allow the radio to talk over another user.
   c. All consoles that have the talk group assigned will display a red window that flashes EMERGENCY and the operator must acknowledge the alarm to silence it.
   d. Every time the PTT button is pressed, the EMERGENCY indicator will flash in the display of all radios on the same talk group.
4. How is the alarm silenced?
   a. Press and hold the EMERGENCY button.
   b. Depending on the programming of the radio, a console operator may be required to acknowledge the alarm prior to it being disabled by the radio user.
5. What happens if the emergency button is activated by mistake?
   a. Clear the alarm as soon as possible.
   b. Inform users on the channel about the mistake.

103rd Civil Support Team Communications Rodeo - Soldotna

The National Guard 103rd Civil Support Team (CST) hosted their annual "Communications Rodeo" conference in Soldotna at the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The conference brought CST members in from across the nation. It was opened to local KPB and State of Alaska agencies on June 25 to demonstrate CST and Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) assets.

Objectives of the conference were:
- Promote interoperability between local, state, federal, and Department of Defense agencies
- Promote deliberative communications planning and preparation
- Provide CST/ALMR asset awareness to KPB agencies
- Ensure agencies knew the process for accessing CST and ALMR emergency communications resources

Assets available for exercise and demonstration were:
- ALMR Transportable South (TAS)
- KPB Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV)
- 103 CST Unified Command Suite (UCS)
- 103 CST Advance Mobility Vehicle (ADVON)
- Air National Guard Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC)

- Joint Task Force Alaska/Alaskan Command ERV

Agencies participated in a table top communications exercise with an earthquake scenario. Virtual Incident Command Posts (ICPs) were established in Cooper Landing, Nikiski, and Kenai near the sites of the incidents. The ICP reported to the Area Command at Soldotna Central Emergency Services. The Area Command funneled requests/information to the EOC. The EOC compiled requests for emergency resources and coordinated them with the State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC).

Attendees split into two groups to determine which CST/ALMR assets would best meet communications needs of each incident. They identified agencies likely to be at each incident location, then completed ICS 205 forms to facilitate incident interoperability. Each group's efforts were presented/critiqued after the exercise.

In a real incident, the ICP would list communications needs and SECC would determine which asset to deploy.

Attendees came away with a better understanding of how the process works and what is available if/when the unthinkable happens.

Tragic Accident Claims Pilot & Enterprise Technology Services Employees

Gone but not forgotten…..
It's been three months since the tragic helicopter crash that claimed the lives of Pilot Benoit Pin and SOA Enterprise Technology (ETS) Technicians Michael Seward, Tom Middleton and Joe O'Donnell while in route to an ALMR site. Not a day goes by that the loss of these men and the exemplary work they did doesn't go unnoticed.

There are still memorial accounts open to assist the family members left behind.

- Wells Fargo, Suzanne V. Pin, Account #2211754367
- True North FCU for ETS Technicians (when making donations to the memorial fund accounts, let the teller know that the account is a *memorial* account)

You may also use the following Memorial accounts:
 - Mat Valley FCU, Michael D. Seward, Account #124105
 - Alaska USA FCU, Joe O'Donnell, Account #1384040 (under the name of Lambertsen)

Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey To Be Distributed in August

The Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) Communications System Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey will be distributed starting on August 1, 2008.

The survey will be emailed to all agencies operating on ALMR who have provided the Operations Management Office (OMO) with a valid email., as well as those agencies who regularly receive the *Insider* newsletter.

Although your agency may not currently be operating on the ALMR System, you may be considering joining in the future.

The survey offers agencies the opportunity to discuss specific concerns with service from the OMO, the System Management Office, the Help Desk, and also to discuss coverage issues and request training support.

We encourage and appreciate all comments. Please provide as much detail as possible when filling out the survey. Details will assist us with updating our process and procedures so we can better serve the user community.

The survey should be distributed out to all personnel who access ALMR with any type of subscriber or console.

State of Alaska: Frequency De-confliction Update

As discussed in the last newsletter, critical to the transition of the build out of ALMR sites across the past several years has been the task of eliminating the frequency conflicts generated in several areas with the pre-existing State of Alaska (SOA) legacy radio system operated and still used by various State of Alaska users.

Across the past month, the most dominant of these frequency conflicts, in the Fairbanks area, have been resolved. As of this writing, frequency conflicts associated with the Birch Hill, Ester Dome, and Harding Lake sites have been corrected. Resolution of frequency conflicts at remaining ALMR sites is scheduled for completion across July and August.

These sites include:

- Bailey Hill - scheduled for July
- Alcantra - scheduled for July and August
- Cooper Mountain and Hope - scheduled for September

Fire Station 12 (Anchorage) conflict resolution is scheduled for September with the relocation of ALMR equip-

ment to the Chugach Electric Association South Substation on Dimond Boulevard and installation of SOA microwave equipment at the fire station.

Submitted by:
SOA Enterprise Technology Services
ALMR Project Manager
Mr. Jim Kohler

Anchorage Wide Area Radio Network (AWARN): 700 MHz Update

The 700 MHz Anchorage node of ALMR, also known as AWARN, is on the air and in preliminary testing. Ten simulcast repeaters at each of the sites (Anchorage Fire Department Station 12, Rabbit Creek, Atwood Building, Elmore Road & 48th, and ML&P Plant Two) commenced test transmissions in June. Simulcast is a technology that has a repeater transmitting on the same frequency from each site. Normally, two radios at the same time on the same frequency cancel each other out, or the receivers hear unintelligible voice. The transmissions from each simulcast site are precisely timed (within millionths of a second) to avoid this problem. Simulcast is particularly well suited to urban environments be-

cause it requires much less site switching among closely spaced sites and has been in use by Anchorage's older technology trunked radio system for years.

Phase Two of AWARN is under way and includes:
- Site preparation, building, generator, microwave, tower, and 4-channel site at MatSu Borough Fire Station 62
- Console upgrades at Anchorage Fire Department and Emergency Operations Center
- 5 repeaters at each of the six simulcast sites, for a total of 15 per location
- 4-channel site at Blueberry Hill site (off Eagle River Road)
- Building, generator, and 4-channel

site at Hope
- Building, generator, tower, digital microwave upgrade, and 4-channel site at Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department
- 6-channel site at Anchorage Regional Landfill
- 5-channel site at Girdwood

Phase Three is anticipated in early 2009 and will include console upgrade and subscriber equipment for Anchorage Police Department.

Submitted by:
Municipality of Anchorage Project Manager
Mr. Trygve Erickson

Annual User Council Conference

The second Annual User Council (UC) Conference will be held on September 16 - 17, 2008, at the Anchorage Sheraton. For those who attended last year, this is the same location as before.

The format will be similar to last year's conference with the first day open to the general Public Safety audience and covering a variety of subjects. The second day will be dedicated to User Council issues only and will be a closed session to anyone other than primary and alternate UC members and the ALMR support staff.

As details are finalized, notification emails will be distributed. If you receive the Insider electronically , you will receive the meeting notification automatically. If you received the newsletter from someone and would like to be added to distribution, or if you have a subject you'd like to see presented, please email: sherry-shafer@5starteam.net.

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The Grant Process - It Really Does Work

The Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) is pleased to announce that all public safety entities who submitted grant applications for the PSIC (Public Safety Interoperable Communications) grant program will receive full or partial funding. Alaska was recently awarded $7.25 million dollars from Congress for the PSIC program. Public safety agencies throughout the state submitted competitive applications for $5.3 million available for local use. These competitive project applications were required to include multi-agency/multijurisdictional interoperable solutions to enhance emergency communications in their regions. In line with the newly created State Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP), un-served communities received top priority. Applications came from all regions and awards consisted of equipment, planning, training, and exercise projects. Some of the recipients are: Thorne Bay, Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department, the Glenn Rich Fire and Rescue Area, Hoonah, Skagway, Cordova, and the Homer Volunteer Fire Department. DHS & EM would like to thank all of the applicants for their effort and perseverance throughout the federal grants process. For additional information about the PSIC Program or interoperable communications in Alaska, please contact the PSIC Program Manager, Kathy Day, 907-428-7138 or kathy.day@alaska.gov.

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