

Talking Points

Alaska Interoperable Communications

Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR)



Girdwood



Portage



Saddle Mountain

From The Commissioner, Dept. of Military & Veterans Affairs

A Major Step in Achieving State-Wide Interoperable Communications

Fast breaking, dynamic threats, both natural and man-made, are part of the world in which we live. In this environment the ability for many different agencies to communicate and coordinate quickly is critical.

In the past, the ability to communicate effectively among different agencies responding to an emergency has been a problem. This was true during the events of 9/11. It was true of the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. It was true of the Miller's Reach Fire.

The implementation of a state-wide emergency communications system will provide a solution for agencies to communicate quickly and effectively with each other. The first part of this state-wide system is the Alaska Land Mobile Ra-

dio network – ALMR. It was chosen as the initial segment because it is essential to serve “first responders first.”

Senator Ted Stevens is an active proponent of ALMR providing both funding and coordination with a number of different federal agencies in Washington, D.C. Within the state, Governor Frank H. Murkowski has provided the leadership necessary to implement the state-wide emergency communications system. The state legislature has also been actively involved with ALMR by providing more than twelve million dollars for construction of the ALMR infrastructure. The system is being widely deployed by the Alaska State Troopers and the Department of Transportation as well as by the military in Alaska.



Major General
Craig E. Campbell

This level of leadership has resulted in a unified Alaska approach to provide emergency communications. A collaborative partnership comprised of the State of Alaska, local government, the Department of Defense, and non-DoD federal agencies was formed. The governing body for the Alaska Land Mobile Radio system is the ALMR Executive Council (see contact information inside).

The ALMR Executive Council has worked diligently to create the structure and policy necessary for the deployment of the actual system. The Department of Military & Veterans Affairs is re-

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From Commissioner, Dept. of Military & Veterans Affairs (Continued)

sponsible for implementation of the ALMR system. Once the system is fully operational the Alaska Department of Administration will take over the responsibility for operations and maintenance.

The ALMR system will be fully deployed across the state during 2007. During 2005 the infrastructure will be completed along the highway systems from Valdez to Homer. Tests of the ALMR network so far have demonstrated exceptional capabilities.

During June an exercise simulating an airborne hijacking took place. In this type of situation, as in many others, no single agency is in charge of managing the overall

response. A successful response requires the fast, accurate exchange of information among agencies at the federal, state and local levels. The exercise in June required coordination among the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), FBI, the military Joint Task Force Alaska, and the State Emergency Coordination Center.

Two F-15 fighters were launched from Elmendorf Air Force Base to intercept the exercise target aircraft. The F-15 pilots provided an initial assessment of the situation aboard the target aircraft. TSA was able to communicate with the F-15 pilots through the Joint Operations Center at Elmendorf. During the initial intercept

phase, the FBI and state emergency operations center were in direct communications with TSA and the military. Rapid interagency communications and coordination across multiple jurisdictions resulted in the first air-to-ground and military to civilian handoffs ever completed in Alaska. The communications capability was provided by the ALMR system.



Yanert



Moose Pass



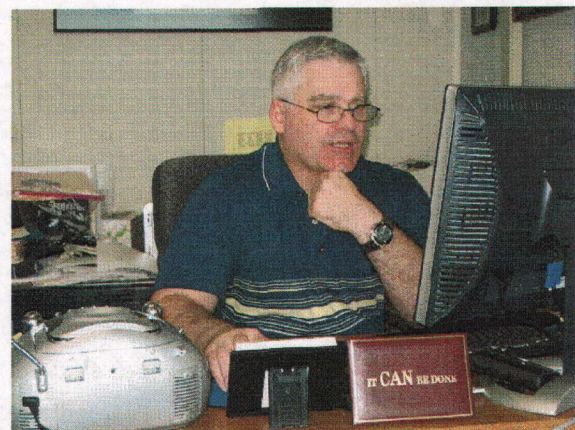
Cooper Mountain

From The ALMR Program Office-Mike Callahan

The 2005 building season has been exceptionally busy. The accompanying coverage maps illustrate the success achieved by all those involved in this extraordinary effort.

In order to provide this increased coverage 46

sites were constructed. Building this number of sites in a seven-month period is unparalleled anywhere in the deployment of an emergency communications system. The build plan for this season was so demanding that both the production and installation re-



Mike Callahan
ALMR State Program Manager

From The ALMR Program Office (Continued)

sources of our technology partners was pushed to capacity. The ALMR system is made up of two critical parts: The technology and the people who use the technology to respond to Alaskans that need help. Winding down the building season allows the time to reflect on the primary lessons learned during the Alaska Shield 05 (AS 05) exercise. Two principal findings resulted from this exercise: First, the technology works as advertised. With the exception of a few short-term microwave link outages, there were no ALMR system failures. Second, planning to communicate prior to an incident that requires an emergency response is critical. The AS 05 exercise was extremely valuable in pointing out the need to

plan to communicate. During the coming months, the ALMR Program Office will be developing and deploying information and training to clients. ALMR User Groups will be formally chartered across the state.

At this time in 2004 there were many that were convinced the state-wide emergency communications system was only talk. Today more than half of the planned system has been built and is operating. Providing first responders with communications to more effectively protect the lives and property of Alaskans is ALMR's primary mission.

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Whether it's a question, issue, or problem with the ALMR System, Dr. Ken Jones, Deputy Program Manager for ALMR is the single point of contact for local, state and civilian federal agencies.

A Very Special Note of Thanks Goes To

Tim Woodall, Project Manager, Department of Defense
 Steve Eason, Data Processing Manager, Dept. of Administration
 Dean Strid, Communications Engineer, Dept. of Military & Veterans Affairs
 Allen Kirby, Electronic Maintenance Spvr., Dept. of Administration
 John Lynn, Communications Engineer, Dept. of Administration
 The Entire Motorola Team



High Mountain



Notes From The Field

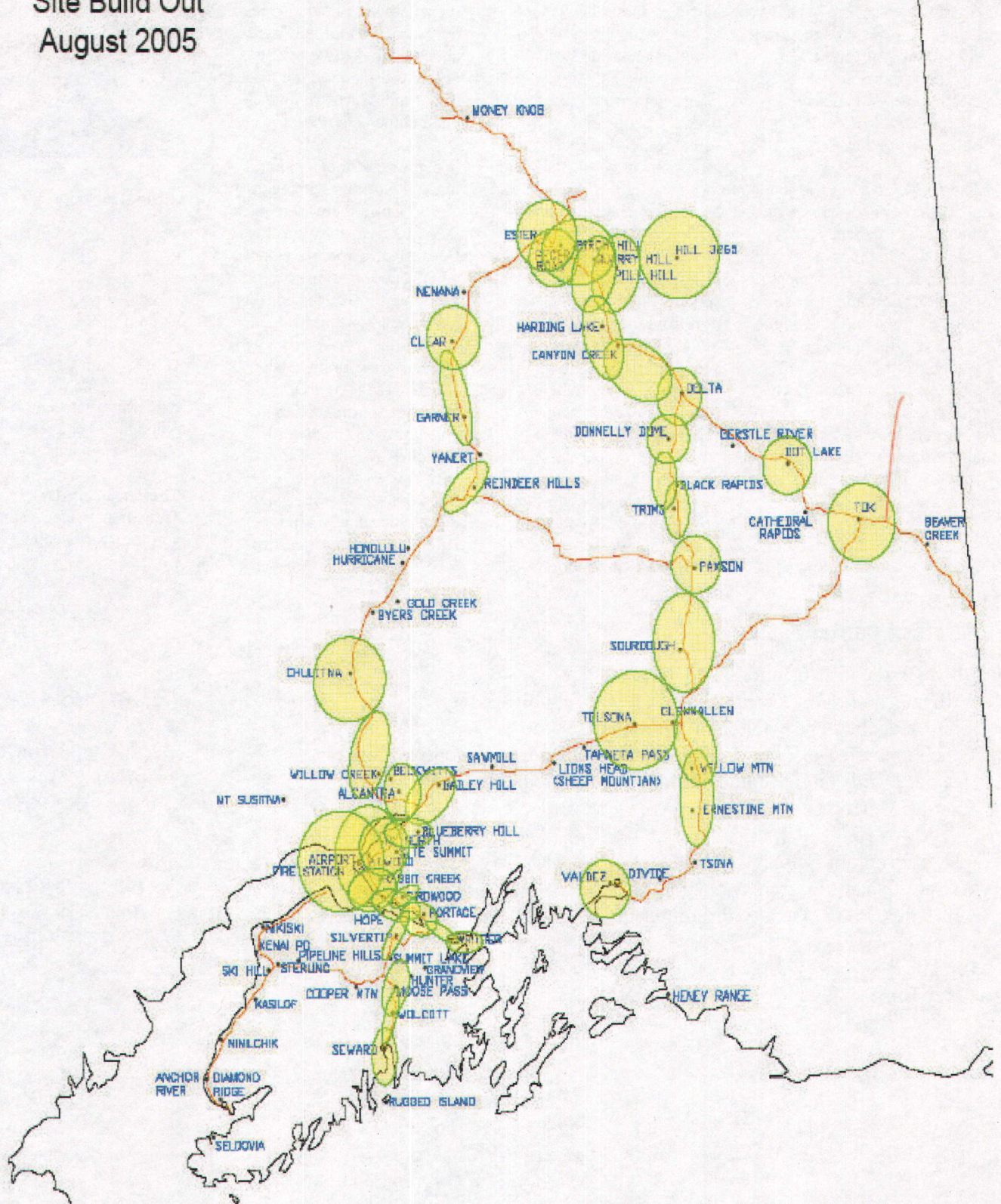
"When you jump start a vehicle be sure to turn off the radio off first. If you don't the radio starts to smoke and it don't work anymore."

Anonymous by Request



Auke Lake Tower

Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) Site Build Out August 2005



Inside ALMR-The People Behind The Scenes—Chester Ince

Chester Ince spends his days listening. Chester is the Transition Manager for ALMR. His job is to assist state agencies find new frequency homes as ALMR comes online across the state.

The ALMR system was made possible, in part, because of the unique frequency sharing plan between the State of Alaska and the Department of Defense. This approach to frequency sharing is so innovative that it required a special waiver by the FCC. The agreement to share frequencies is essential for the ALMR system to provide interoperable communications among first responders anywhere in the state.

As Chester explained, there is a misconception among some

agencies about the meaning of a “state-wide” system. To some a state-wide system means being able to talk anywhere in the state, like a long distance phone call. Since some agencies do not have a requirement to talk state-wide they assume that ALMR is of no consequence to their operations. State-wide in the context used by ALMR means that any local first responder and follow on support from the state and national levels, can quickly communicate among all the agencies coming to help when they arrive at the incident scene.

Currently, Chester is working with six state agencies that are now within the frequency spectrum allocated to ALMR. Listening to their require-

ments now means that Chester can find a mutually agreeable way to resolve conflicts before the agencies are forced out of the ALMR frequency band at the end of 2006.

When Chester began identifying and working with agencies in April, there were more than 200 frequency conflicts. Because of Chester’s work, and the cooperation of various agencies, 50% of the conflicts have already been resolved.

Chester grew up in Alaska. He is a graduate of Dimond High School in Anchorage and earned his bachelor’s degree at Wayland Baptist University – Anchorage. His radio experience was gained during his six years in the United States Marine Corps. Yes, Chester does have a life



Chester Ince
ALMR Transition Manager

outside of ALMR. His wife, three sons and a granddaughter keep him happily engaged.

Chester Ince, ALMR Transition Manager, thank you for your excellent work.

Points of Contact

ALMR Executive Council

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