Alaska Land Mobile Radio

ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes

Date: May 7, 2008

I. Attendance Roster

User Council Members and Alternates

P = Present	T = Via Telephone	A = Absent

Primary

P	Adams	Ocie	Mr.	SOA – DOT&PF
	Fisher	Bryan	Mr.	SOA Other– DMVA (representing all other AK Agencies)
T	Fronterhouse	Bev	Ms	Fed Non-DOD – DOI
	VACANT			Fed Non-DOD – TSA
	VACANT			Municipalities - Southeast Rep
T	Johnson	Brad	Chief	Municipalities - Northern Rep - Fairbanks PD, **Vice Chair**
P	Leveque	Matt	MAJ	SOA – DPS, **Chair**
	VACANT			Municipalities - Central Rep
T	Mitchell	William	Mr.	DOD - Eielson
	Murphy	Peter	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD - FBI
	Newman	Natalie	Ms.	DOD – US Army Alaska
	Taylor	Marlon	MSgt	DOD – Elmendorf

Alternate

	Blaine	Scott	TSgt	DOD – Elmendorf
	Borrego	Susan	Ms.	Fed Non-DOD - FBI
	Caldwell	Jim	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD - TSA
	Fenimore	Kyle	SSgt	DOD - Eielson
p	Hansen	Glenn	Mr.	SOA Other - DMVA
P	Henderson	Randy	Mr.	Municipalities - Central Rep - MOA
	Lewis	Mike	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD - DOI
	Patz	Greg	Mr.	SOA - DOT
T	Poindexter	Corey	Mr.	DOD - US Army Alaska
	Schmitt	Sheldon	Chief	Municipalities - Southeast Rep – Sitka PD
	VACANT			Municipalities - Northern Rep
	Wilson	Barry	LT	SOA – DPS

Other Attendees

T	Black	Kenneth	SrA	DOD – Elmendorf
P	Borg	Casey	Mr.	System Manager
T	Leber	Rich	Mr.	OMO Technical Advisor
T	Pyne	Kathryn	Ms.	DNR - Forestry
P	Shafer	Sherry	Ms.	OMO Document Specialist
P	Smith	Del	Mr.	Operations Manager
P	Woodall	Tim	Mr.	DOD ALMR Project Manager

II. Meeting Minutes and Action Items

Agenda Item / Topic	Discussion	Action Items
Called to Order	Major Matt Leveque called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.	
Roll Call	Roll call was taken and quorum was achieved.	
Minutes Approval	Minutes from April 2 were reviewed and approved. **Motion: Accept and approve the April 2, 2008, meeting minutes as written and presented.** Motion made: Deputy Chief Brad Johnson Seconded: Mr. Ocie Adams **The motion carried.**	
Review of I&R Log	**Active Issues**	
#56 – Busies	Mr. Del Smith stated this item would be addressed during the Operations Manager update.	
	Pending Issues	
	There were no pending issues	
Review of Action Items from Previous Meeting	Del stated the two open action items referencing Decision Papers for an acceptable standard for System busies, and on System upgrades/modifications will be discussed during the Operations Manager update.	
Operations Management Office Status Update	**Mr. Del Smith, Operations Manager**	
Vacant UC Seats **Harding Lake** **Gold Elite Decision Paper**	1. Del requested the issue of the vacant User Council seats be added to the Issues & Risks Log due to the amount of time that has passed without appointments – Wilbur Hooks departed in Oct 07, Dave Hull departed in Dec 07, and Tod McGillivray departed in Feb 08. 2. Harding Lake was previously listed as a conflicted site for quite some time. The site is a three channel site and was designed that way. The confliction at the site has been mitigated at this time. Del stated he sent a memo to the State ETS stating that it could be removed from the conflicted site plan to be addressed by June 30. 3. Gold Elite upgrades which affect other System users need to be addressed. The current issue deals with Gold Elite upgrades that have affected the intercom functionality for agencies in the same zone. OMO prepared a decision paper which offered three courses of action: take no action and let agencies determine their own mitigation action, publish a policy that any agency installing or upgrading a CEB must advise the SMO and other dispatch centers in their respective zones, and the	1. OMO to add item to Issues & Risk Log on UC vacancies.

	initiating agency pay for the upgrades to the affected agencies in their zone. Brad stated he would be hesitant to make an agency responsible for paying for upgrading other CEBs in the zone, but thought implementing a policy was necessary. Major Leveque agreed but stated, more importantly, the User Council and the System users need to recognize this is an issue and needs to be addressed. What do these changes mean, and how do they affect others on the System in the same zone. Del stated he thought publishing a policy to prevent these types of action things from getting out of sync across the System was necessary. The DIACAP System Modification Memo, dated March 6, 2008, also addressed the need for agencies to contact the SMO prior to making any changes to equipment attached to the System. The group decided to not vote on the paper but wait on a policy. Major Leveque requested we also get this word out to the vendors that if they are performing upgrades that they also take the opportunity to advise the SMO when they have been requested to make upgrades to equipment on the System.	This requirement is covered under the System Change Request (CR) Management Procedure 300-2.
Acceptable Level of Push to Talk Denial Tones (Busies)	4. Del next addressed the Busy Decision paper. Over the past several meetings the issue has been discussed but there is no definition out there about what is an appropriate level of busies. Clearly at some point busies could affect the System, so at what point do we want the SMO to restrict site traffic or take other mitigation actions. The recommendation was to establish busies at three percent for day-to-day operations and four percent for emergency operations. Mr. Corey Poindexter stated he agreed with some of the points but not all because all the Quantars on the System at this time have not been activated due to frequency conflicts. Because we had not completed the initial System configuration, he did not agree with restricting traffic at this time. We don't have a full understanding of the total users we will have on the System yet so we can't make an informed decision. Ocie agreed with Corey especially with reference to restricting traffic.	2. SMO to provide the whole scope of this issue, what are some of the options that are maybe not technical, and what are some of the actions to contemplate that the UC could take.

	Mr. Tim Woodall suggested maybe the better approach would be to have the System Manager better explain what mitigation actions can be taken and the potential effect of those actions. He explained you have to have a threshold where you begin to look at more capacity and increasing your channels. You have to have a loading percentage which is acceptable. If it goes into the unacceptable rate for a period of time, you have to have standards and measures developed to provide statistics to determine whether you need to expand it. The NTIA requires, at a minimum, a constant 70 % saturation of a radio site to increase the channel loading there, so you need to be able to validate that fact when requesting new spectrum to support an expansion. In terms of mitigation, the military uses 'minimize' provide a process for non-essential people to reduce or stop their traffic during an event. During emergencies in a specific area, the OMO/SMO could issue minimize type of messages fed out to all the radios on the System. The User Council needs to determine 'how/when' those triggers are pulled rather than having to call the UC members and asked how to proceed each time the saturation point is received. There is a larger discussion here and all the alternatives need to be examined and weighed and then they can be prioritized for the level in which they are implemented Ocie agreed with having an announcement over all channels; any routine traffic would stand down. Mr. Randy Henderson stated he agreed with some of what everyone said but he would never support minimize to the point of where you are cutting off users because they are not first responders. Minimize to reduce traffic is reasonable. Additional user training will reduce the number of busies. The better the training and the more often they get it will help out. This should be done now as an everyday thing and not as a mitigating step. Randy stated one thing he did need to understand is how the reduction in talk groups affects System busies. Major Leveque stated the User Council doesn't know all the options available that the SMO might consider. He even questioned whether we have people out there that just jabber. As we talk about training for users, he is most concerned about those individuals who normally don't use the radio. He posed the question of how do we establish a training standard to measure that those folks who need the training are getting it. He asked Casey to revisit this and pull together the full range of options, adjusting the priorities to possibly eliminate some users who are not involved at all in an emergency and present it at the June	

	meeting. Brad agreed this was all valuable conversation on mitigating actions need to be discussed. However, he thinks we need to establish a threshold so we know if we are having a problem. He suggested the OMO look at the sites where the highest busies are occurring, and whether these sites are the ones with conflicted channels. He also suggested that the percentage be kept low to start with. The UC establishes policies and as they have the opportunity to evaluate the policy, they can adjust it as necessary. We have to have a baseline to start with for evaluating sites. Major Leveque questioned whether the standard should look at the percentage of busies or the duration. For Troopers, it would be the duration that would be of greater concern. Tim suspected the 32 second delays were the lower priority users who are talking longer on the radio. Major Leveque agreed and reiterated the need to establish a threshold as part of the response so we can monitor, but also that establishing priority levels for users was also important. If the trash collector at Fort Greely can't use the radio in an emergency, then it's not the end of the world. Mr. William Mitchell asked if using Emergency Buttons put calls higher on the list/onto a channel immediately. Casey stated that Emergency Button activation gives that talk group priority, and holds the channel for the talk group for the duration of emergency. 'Mitch' asked if that would be a solution for a Trooper under duress, and Casey stated it would. This would increase busies on other channels, because the one channel would be held for the agency with the emergency for the duration. Everyone else would be diverted to other channels. Del stated that establishing a 'trigger' point (percentage) would assist agencies and ALMR if they had to go to the legislature and justify a request for additional funds to increase capacity. At least they could say "this is our established level, and we've exceeded that level for this amount of time." This would show the impact to System users and the need for more capacity.	

	Tim suggested another option to consider would be establishing 'time outs.' If a user talks for perhaps one minute straight, their transmission times out, and their call is dropped at that point. They must get back in the queue of users and reestablish their call. Major Leveque requested the User Council establish percentage today and figure out whether it becomes the accepted standard in a month or two. The suggested original recommendation was three percent for day-today and four percent for emergencies, but Brad felt one percent for day-to-day and two percent for emergencies was more realistic. Tim suggested there were several levels to consider: per site, in a Zone, and System wide. 'Mitch' asked if the SMO would step in and over ride Quarry Hill if they reached the site threshold. Tim said no, this is for multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional emergencies when resources would need to be prioritized. Major Leveque stated once again we have to establish a threshold and who can implement them. For example, he wasn't positive he wanted the SMO in the position to make a decision, without clear guidance, to be able say Troopers can't affiliate to Quarry Hill when they are transiting a particular area. The UC needs to create enough of a standard that everyone understands what the ramifications are and we don't have to convene a policy cabinet in the midst of a disaster. Corey stated there are too many mitigating circumstances that have to be looked at and suggested the group delay and decision until a policy was established. We should not be voting on "What we should consider as acceptable busies", until we can activated all Quantars. Every site is 100% active with "No", frequency management issues or conflicts. We can never come to a conclusion on acceptable busies with these mitigating circumstances. This will not happen until other agencies finally decide to migrate completely to the ALMR network. Once that issue has been corrected then we can move forward and decide a course of action. Tim stated you have to start by establishing a percentage which is not that difficult, and like Brad said, it's a moving target that can be adjusted up or down based on data and mission impact but you can't execute a trend unless you establish a standard by which you measure by.	3. User Council still must establish a System busy standard for day-to-day and emergency operations.

	Ocie agreed we have to have a baseline to adjust to. Major Leveque asked the group to table this for now. He asked the SMO to look at actions as to what might be offered for actions the UC could take. The UC should come back ready to make a decision at the June meeting about what number they should start to measure against. Ocie asked for a copy of the DOT report showing their calls. Major Leveque asked for one for AST, as well. This allows the organizations to see if they have internal actions they can take to bring the busy levels down.	4. SMO to provide DOT and AST with metrics showing their agency busies.
Fire Station 12 Move	5. Fire Station 12 move. The Fire Station 12 equipment was being moved due to conflicts with the garage door openers. SOA ETS had suggested the equipment be relocated at Chugach Electric Association on 94th and Old Seward. The location is extremely secure and has a 150-foot tower on site. Major Leveque to appoint personnel from the UC to the Change Control Board to review the Change Request.	
Draft OMO Budget	6. The draft FY10 Budget document was provided to the UC for acceptance and submission to the Executive Council. This is the budget produced by the OMO and may not reflect all the costs the OMO will incur. The OMO is looking for guidance/suggestions. Major Leveque suggested the UC members come prepared to the June 4 meeting with any proposed additions/ deletions to the draft budget. Del stated comments could also be sent directly to the OMO office at any time prior. The budget will then go to the EC in July or August.	5. UC to review the draft OMO Budget and bring any changes to the June 4 meeting.
Emergency Button Activation	7. Del stated that on Sunday, May 4, there was an activation of an Emergency Button. Palmer PD called the Help Desk and was transferred to the Motorola after-hours center who stated they didn't know what Palmer was talking about. Palmer PD sent an email to the SMO stating that the alarm was sounding across the System, when they looked at the radio unit identifier KFD85m; they contacted the Kenai Fire Department thinking it was one of Kenai's radios. Kenai FD didn't know anything about the alarm. Both MatCom and Palmer PD silenced the alarm and took no further action. The SMO and OMO researched the unit ID and found out it was a unit belonging to Kulis ANGB FD and was installed in a bus. The radio had been reprogrammed but not relabeled. The Emergency Button was marked	6. SMO to put together the list of three-digit identifiers and the POCS for all agencies on ALMR. SMO will also track all System-wide emergency button activations.

	'phone' and the driver was trying to make a phone call from the radio. Every subscriber is supposed to have a three-digit indicator in the prefix to identify the owning agency. SMO is going to verify the System has these programmed properly. Major Leveque stated if dispatch centers had a list of the identifiers and good emergency phone numbers they'd be more inclined to make the phone call and check the status of the emergency. Major Leveque asked Casey if they had the ability to track System wide Emergency Button activation and Casey stated the SMO did. This would give agencies the ability to see if it's someone who may need additional training. Tim also suggested the possibility that the agency could receive a form letter from the OMO that explains the purpose of the button and that additional training might be required to preclude inadvertent Emergency Button activations. If any agency continues to be a 'repeat offender,' then perhaps more stringent actions could be taken. He also stated each agency should have procedures for clearing Emergency Button activations. Del suggested this might be a good article for the next newsletter, as well. Ocie stated when he trains his personnel he has procedures to contact the dispatch centers ahead of time and inform them he is going to activate an Emergency Button for training purposes. Major Leveque suggested that maybe Ocie could share his procedures with the OMO.	7. DOT to provide OMO with Radio Training materials to include Emergency Button training.
System Management Office	**Mr. Casey Borg, System Manager**	
Regional Talk group Usage	Casey stated on the Talk group decision paper, the SMO is suggesting the use of Regional ICS talk groups rather than scrambling to develop code plugs every time someone comes on the System. The Regional talk groups provide a resource that is not being utilized. If agencies are not using them now, then how legitimately are they going to be able to operate on them in a real emergency? Ocie stated he supports this because when each time DOT has to reprogram their radios it costs around $30,000 to fly in two technicians to do the work. Major Leveque asked Casey to further explain what the	

	recommendation ultimately means. Casey stated that rather than establishing multiple talk group sharing agreements, when there is an incident, all the participating agencies simply move over to the Regional ICS talk group or patch in. Brad stated that in Fairbanks this method of operation is already in use. They have established tactical talk groups that are already in place and they have used since they've been on the System. The concept is already in practice, they just are not doing it on the Regional ICS Zones. Del stated the OMO/SMO is not mandating that agencies must use the ICS but suggesting it as an alternative for setting up multiple talk groups and paying to repeatedly reprogramming subscriber units.	
Joint Project Team Status Update		
	Mr. Tim Woodall, ALMR Project Manager	
	1. The contract for adding three channels to Site Summit is in contracting and should be awarded by September. 2. June 23 – 25 there will be a Communications Conference in Soldotna. The 103rd Civil Support Team will be demonstrating communications capabilities that can be used in support of civil disasters. ALMR will be deploying the Transportable and a focus on the deliberative communications planning process will be examined in a table-top exercise. 3. The MotoBridge© project is moving ahead. There is no more money to add locations. Currently, the requirement is to validate those locations that were previously funded. The State of Alaska is making some minor revisions to their site locations but everything is proceeding. 4. The DOD has issued a Wildland Fire Warning Order (WARNORD). A fire zone will be created in all the cached radios in the two Transportable Systems. This zone will be published in a Tactical Interoperable Communication Plan (TICP) so DOD can coordinate with state and outside fire fighting agencies if the need arises. Both Major Leveque and Ocie requested the list of fire channels.	
	Mr. Jim Kohler, SOA ETS Program Manager	
	1. Mr. Kohler stated, reference the MotoBridge© contract, of the State's 15 allotted sites, three or four of the original locations have changed. 2. The build out/de-confliction punch list items are in the	

	high-priority phase. Those items ETS cannot get to by June 30 will be contracted out. 3. Jim stated he is working with the Executive Council so that at the May 22 meeting a couple critical agreements will be completed. 4. The Cost Share discussions are still on going and three concepts on how costs might be shared have been developed.	
Next meeting	Major Leveque stated the next scheduled meetings are June 4, July 2, and Aug 6. Both Del and Brad will be in Orlando, FL, at the Florida Interoperability Network (FIN) familiarization and training. They will join the UC meeting by teleconference, if available.	
New Business	There was no new business presented.	
Adjourn	A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Brad and seconded by Mr. Glen Hansen. **The meeting was adjourned at 1525.**	