ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes

Alaska Land Mobile Radio

Date: November 5, 2008

1. Attendance Roster

User Council Members and Alternates

P = Present	T = Via Telephone	A = Absent

Primary

T	Adams	Ocie	Mr.	SOA – DOT&PF
A	Fisher	Bryan	Mr.	SOA Other – DMVA (representing all other AK Agencies)
T	Fronterhouse	Bev	Ms	Fed Non-DOD – DOI
	VACANT			Fed Non-DOD – TSA
A	Schmidt	Sheldon	Chief	Municipalities, Southeast Rep – Sitka PD
A	Johnson	Brad	Chief	Municipalities, Northern Rep - Fairbanks PD, **Vice Chair**
P	Leveque	Matt	MAJ	SOA – DPS, **Chair**
T	Beals	Mark	Chief	Municipalities, Central Rep – Bear Creek Fire Service Area
T	Mitchell	William	Mr.	DOD - Eielson
P	Murphy	Peter	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD - FBI
T	Newman	Natalie	Ms.	DOD – US Army Alaska
A	Shearer	James	TSgt	DOD – Elmendorf

Alternate

A	Blaine	Scott	TSgt	DOD - Elmendorf
A	Borrego	Susan	Ms.	Fed Non-DOD - FBI
A	Caldwell	Jim	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD - TSA
T	Gibbs	David	Mr.	Municipalities, Northern Rep – Fairbanks North Star Borough Emergency Manager
T	Hansen	Glenn	Mr.	SOA Other - DMVA
A	Keeney	George	Chief	Municipalities, Central Rep – Valdez FD
A	Lewis	Mike	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD - DOI
A	Patz	Greg	Mr.	SOA - DOT
	VACANT			DOD - US Army Alaska
A	Royal	Ronald	Mr.	DOD – Eielson
A	Leggett	Ray	Chief	Municipalities, Southeast Rep – Skagway PD
A	Smith	Juliana	SSgt	DOD – Elmendorf
A	Wilson	Barry	LT	SOA – DPS

Other Attendees

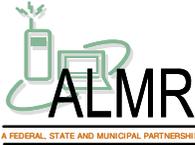|				
P	Heyano	Steve	Mr.	LifeMed Alaska LLC.
T	Goggia	Tammy	Ms.	Soldotna Dispatch Center Supervisor
P	Kohler	Jim	Mr.	SOA ALMR Project Manager
T	Quickel	Joe	Mr.	DOD Project Office
P	Shafer	Sherry	Ms.	OMO Document Specialist
P	Smith	Del	Mr.	Operations Manager

T	Tucker	Jeff	Chief	Executive Council - Municipalities

2. Meeting Minutes and Action Items

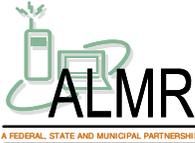| Agenda Item / Topic	Discussion	Action Items
Called to Order	Major Matt Leveque called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.	
Roll Call	Roll call was taken and a quorum achieved.	
Previous Meeting Minutes Approval	Minutes from October 1 meeting were reviewed. **Motion: Accept and approve the October 1, 2008, meeting minutes.** **Motion:** Mr. Ocie Adams **Second:** Mr. Pete Murphy **The minutes were approved.**	
Review of I&R Log	**Active Issues**	
#57 – User Council Vacant Positions	The recently appointed User Council Alternate representative from Central, Chief George Kenney, still awaiting approval by the Executive Council. The TSA primary representative and USARAK alternate representative remain vacant. Ms. Natalie Newman stated the USARAK Alternate position will be filled by end of month.	
	Pending Issues	
	There were no pending issues.	
	Issues Closed at, or since, last meeting	
	There were no issues closed at the last meeting.	
Review of Action Items from Previous Meeting	Issue #5 on the outstanding Action Items, OMO work with SMO to come up with the limitations and suggestions to the System Key programming issues, remained open. Major Leveque asked Mr. Del Smith for an update on that item. Del stated Mr. Chester Ince had sent an inquiry to Motorola® asking whether radios could be programmed with a generic system key. Motorola® revised it was not an option to use a generic, or non-write protected, system key. Radios had to be returned to depot to be cleared. Pete stated they had been dealing with this issue for some time and their system key was non-write protected. However, they cannot access the trunking. Del asked Pete if that meant radios programmed with ALMR trunking sent to the lower 48 were not usable and the	1. OMO will forward email from Motorola® to User Council on information pertaining to system keys.

	trunking capability was not accessible. Pete stated that the information in the radio was overwritten with the out of state information and therefore lost when the radios are returned to Alaska and no system key was available to reprogram them.	
	One of the remaining issues is the security of ALMR information that could be accessed outside Alaska if that information was not write protected using an Advance System Key.	
	Major Leveque asked that if someone had a programming kit they could open an ALMR radio and read all the talkgroups and other programming.	
	Mr. William 'Mitch' Mitchell noted that anyone could buy that software and load it on a computer and read it. He also mentioned there was a website posting all the information about ALMR and offering to provide a radio with all the talkgroups for ALMR to individuals for a fee. By encrypting transmissions, the information on ALMR is non-accessible.	
	Also, having a system key prevents any cloning of ALMR radios, or altering the information in the radio.	
Operations Management Office Update	**Mr. Del Smith, Operations Manager**	
LifeMed Alaska, LLC.	1. Del stated recently the UC has addressed Alaska Professional Volunteers, who is a licensed ambulance organization, coming on the System. This is a slightly different organization but an ambulance service none the less. LifeMed is also a non-profit ambulance service with some air assets. They would like to use ALMR in their helicopters when coming into a loading zone to communicate with the personnel on the ground ALMR is allowed under 5000 feet so there should be no transmissions above that. MotoBridges™ can do air-to-ground patching of a temporary bridge outside of the 5000-foot parameter.	2. OMO to propose a process for applications for these types of new members and establish criteria for acceptance to be presented at the December UC meeting.
	Mr. Steven Heyano stated they have two ground ambulances in Bethel and two rotary wing aircraft, one in the MatSu Borough and one in Soldotna.	
	Del stated Bethel would not be an issue because there is no ALMR there.	
	Mr. Jim Kohler asked with respect to LifeMed and APV who would be the sponsoring stakeholder through which the membership is managed.	

Del stated the general consensus was they would be lumped into the local and potentially others and the sponsoring agency for sign off would be the State of Alaska.

Jim stated he was not objecting, but wanted to make sure there was a trail that is established so that the sponsoring group makes sure that they manage those expectations. That there is a process statement that if someone seeks membership should they not come up through the sponsoring agency first.

Major Leveque stated he agreed and that not only does there need to be a sponsoring agency, but also a User Council representative for them. Major Leveque asked if these types of agencies should be declared as public safety organizations and therefore DPS should embrace them.

Jim stated the State was not trying to turn anyone away but there are some responsibilities on the stakeholder that need to be addressed/clarified when they in turn have to turn around if in fact one identifies in the cost share scenario what the stakeholder is responsible for funding. At some point lines may have to be drawn because we do risk opening the System too broadly. The earlier we define them, the better off we will be.

Mr. Ocie Adams mentioned ASARA and the fact they already had a Homeland Security grant to buy their radios. He asked Del if he had an opportunity to contact them about joining ALMR. Del stated not at this point.

Major Leveque stated the group had been working closely with LT Barry Wilson and AST may be the pass through for their organization and other similar ones. He stated it makes sense that someone who would be the sponsor bring forward the membership application.

Jim offered to the chair that 30 – 60 days would not be critical to these organizations and would it be appropriate that the OMO construct a set of protocols to present to the User Council that have to be answered to help determine if it is critical for an applying agency to be part of ALMR or just convenient.

Major Leveque stated the three organizations currently seeking membership while all in the emergency business are significantly different and it would be worthwhile for the UC to have a process, the legwork accomplished, and when the membership applications comes forward after a certain number of months, it should take no more that 10 minutes

	discussion on any given one. Chief Mark Beals brought up the non-governmental agencies and there are a few on the System now and how they are being dealt with when others would soon want to come on the System. Major Leveque stated his recollection that from the very beginning, the local government regions (Central, South Central, and South East) were to include those non governmental agencies that had a specific area, not like the ones being discussed now. Chief Jeff Tucker interjected those volunteer fire agencies are registered with the state and so are the ambulance services. The third party agencies are anomalies because they can be for profit or not for profit or affiliate organizations. Jim stated his reason for advancing this is establishing a policy for criteria, and everyone is satisfied that the criteria is met. Down the road, whoever is sitting in the chairs of the UC won't have to re-establish the criteria. Major Leveque stated it made absolute sense to establish some kind of checklist or process for this as well as some offline conversations should occur on whom should capture the not clearly groupable agencies.	
Common Language Protocols	2. Del advised the group the information the OMO was able to find online was included in their packages. He would also be attending IACP and try to gather additional information on where police organizations are regarding common language or plain talk. Additionally, he had called Chief Huen at APD and the Chief stated he would be glad to have his agency participate in common language discussions. Major Leveque stated he had had many conversations with AST dispatch center supervisors and trooper commanders and AST feels the time is not right. As he spoke with their dispatch supervisors in Fairbanks, MatSu, Soldotna and Ketchikan, the center supervisors have some grave concerns about: a) the reason to do this, and b) exactly what it would look like. He asked Ms. Googia to address the group from a dispatch perspective. Ms. Tammy Goggia stated their bottom line is the concern about hampering the brevity that 10-codes provide the dispatch environment with multiple frequencies going at once. That would be there key concern about not dictating it for day-to-day operational use.	3. OMO will send out an email to the User Council on formation of a working group to seek interested parties to participate.

Major Leveque stated another issue for consideration that he heard from the Center Supervisor at MATCOM is that their CAD system is geared toward accepting 10-codes when keying in the data. He thinks this would overcomplicate a dispatcher's job having to make the mental conversion from plain language to a 10 code before entering it.

Del stated in talking to other Chiefs of Police, most are not conceptually opposed, but it's more the applications level that there seems to be a question on how critical this is other than where AST and APD would rub up against each when AWARN is built.

Del stated there is, if you are updating or replacing a CAD system, an opportunity to correct this issue. ALMR is not suggesting agencies go out and do it immediately but the reference from Virginia and Homeland Security is that since you have so many agencies on the radio now, it's imperative they are able to understand what the other guy is saying. If we are going to move to Common Language then it ought to be common Language all the time, not flipping back and forth. That would be much like taking a radio out of a cache that you've never seen before, and trying to use it.

It does require, in lots of circumstances, modifications of current systems such as the CAD.

At some point in time, it may become a grant issue

Major Leveque stated that DHS already did have that language in their grant process, but that it states in an emergency, everyone commits that Plain Language must be used. The biggest problem that we hear about is that in a big event, cops fall back into using 10 codes and that complicates the language part. In Alaska, that does not appear to be much of a problem.

One concern is there no national Common Language standard at all. He is not convinced right now that the UC has to tackle this. DPS is happy to participate in a working group but with great anxiety.

Mr. David Gibbs stated he would be very much in support of moving forward with a Common Language protocol.

Ms. Bev Fronterhouse stated she had spoken with all her agencies and they would support it, as well. However, they did clearly state they would support whatever direction AST moved.
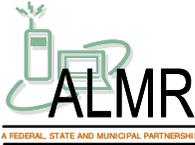
Mitch stated this doesn't really affect DOD because they generally don't talk outside of Eielson and they don't use 10 codes.

Major Leveque clarified that as ALMR participants, everyone would commit to go a particular direction or not.

Mitch said where it would affect them (EIE) most is if their security forces were interacting with state troopers.

Major Leveque said that we would all have to commit to the fact that we would speak Common Language in the event of a multi-agency situation but that this was also for day-to-day ops. He clarified with David Gibbs that FNSB would like to see us transition to a mandatory Common Language approach for day-to-day as well.

David confirmed this but also stated that he was in no way diminishing the pain and anxiety this would cause some agencies but it is entirely possible albeit painful.

Mitch stated that he just wanted to clarify that EIE vote didn't count much and it would be more of what State and local first responders wanted to do.

Major Leveque reiterated it would be a commitment as to what 'we' as a System would commit to doing. He also stated that apparently in Ketchikan a year or two ago, a conversion was made from 10 codes to plain language and they have switched back. He had not spoken with them to determine what happened.

He asked to what degree a fire department would need 10 codes and to what degree were they using them before their transition.

Chief Tucker stated fire and EMS in Florida transitioned while he was there but they had similar 10 codes to the police at that time. He said the brevity issue doesn't really come into play; it doesn't take any longer to say '10-51' than it does to say 'responding.' It was a difficult situation for them during the transition but again it's the interoperability between different agencies. You'd be hard pressed to find a fire or EMS agency in the United States that hasn't adopted Common Language. It's Law Enforcement that is taking a long time to transition.

Jim interjected that although he didn't have an active dog in the fight, but he wanted to offer the working group that if there was something close to a national standard they could

	explore that for edification. Does it have to be all or the other?
	Del stated the OMO would look into the information that is available on what other areas have settled on and provide it to the working group.
	Major Leveque asked Ms. Googia if there was a way to do this in increments where the most common 10 Codes could be converted to Common Language first.
	Tammy stated there were perhaps six 10 codes that both their fire and police use consistently. She asked if they were planning on taking three 10 codes at a time and converting them.
	Major Leveque wondered if this approach would let us see what the practical ramifications would be but not necessarily traumatize everyone all at once. He asked for suggestions for who should sit on the working group.
	Del suggested since many UC members were absent, perhaps the OMO should send out an email advising the council that a working group was being formed.
	Major Leveque asked that operators or dispatchers be special appointees to the working group if at all possible.
	Mr. Glenn Hansen stated he was a technician and wouldn't be able to provide the type of expertise to make appropriate recommendations.
	Natalie seconded Glenn and stated she wouldn't want to make decisions for their police or fire. They speak their own set of codes.
	Del stated OMO would send the email to the UC and UC members could decide if they wanted to participate themselves or designate someone. Provide the name to the OMO.
Delta Coverage Issue	3. Del mentioned that during the 2007 Annual Customer Satisfaction survey there were some concerns over coverage in the Rural Deltana area. The OMO worked to address those and thought they were resolved. Early in 2008, the OMO was advised that Cellular One had installed some antennas on the Fort Greely tower. It appeared the base followed the proper procedures but the Army representative did not advise the OMO prior to the modification. There is no way of telling if the additional antennas are causing any interference, but coverage in the

	area is not as good as it should be.	
	The OMO has drafted a letter to send to Motorola to see what steps need to be done to correct the coverage issues for the folks in this are	
Console Maintenance	4. Del stated this is in regard to the SLA that the UC established and console systems standards. The reason this issue came up is that there are only two agencies on ALMR who currently have monitoring by Motorola in Schaumburg, IL. There have been a couple instances where a technician was dispatched with what was thought to be a System problem and it turned out to be the agency's console.	4. OMO to survey console owner's to see what their internal processes are with regard to console maintenance & advise them if a technician is called out and the problem turns out to be the agency's console, then the agency will be billed.
	One of the jobs in the OMO is to enforce the SLA standards and with those that are not being monitored are more than likely not going to meet that standard.	
	Pete asked if ALMR was requiring agencies to use the monitoring because the FBI consoles cannot be monitored. Del stated no, the only requirement was that consoles be maintained at 99.999%.	
	Mitch thought the SMO could log in remotely and look at the consoles and get basically the same readout and Eielson uses their consoles daily.	
	Del brought up the issue of whether it is an unreasonable standard, and if the SLA is not going to be enforced then maybe it should be re-examined. The bottom line is if SMO looks at the consoles for an agency, rather than a paid contracted agency, the cost of this service is still coming back to ALMR and not the responsible console owner under the SLA.	
	Jim posed what would the agency do normally if they knew immediately it was the console; who would they call to fix it, etc. They should have something in place for their daily life anyway; what are their internal processes to make sure their equipment meets their standards.	
	Del stated there was one other agency that has a time and materials contract with ProComm a year ago to address this type of issue, although they did not renew it. Agencies should have a plan to address this one way or another.	
	Major Leveque said aside from the money cost, the related question is what is the cost to the interoperability of the System if something breaks. Is it appropriate to hold the console owner responsible for the System gap or do we just	

	say if you don't fix your equipment, that is your problem? We shouldn't be operating on a break-fix method and cost the System. David suggested maybe looking into a "opt in" for a system wide agreement for this type of monitoring; economies of scale might be cheaper than individual contracts, and this would ensure the reliability standard is maintained.	
E-Button Testing	5. Still struggling with the E-Button issue. There was a test and apparently one of the dispatch centers did not hear the initial announcement. The test itself was "Help, Help." The dispatch center who did not hear the test announcement was concerned there was an actual emergency and was too far away to do anything. The OMO identified who the individuals involved were and dealt with it. The OMO has a procedure waiting to come forward to the User Council review committees which will cover radio usage protocols. Prior to that procedure being approved, if an agency is going to do a test: 1) they must announce a it is a test prior to the actual 'test'; 2) they must use an appropriate transmission to conduct the 'test;'' and 3) they must answer the conclusion of the 'test.'	
Site Busies	6. Del mentioned the spreadsheet in the UC packages showing the stats on the on-going compilation of site busies.	
Site Summit	7. The 3-channel addition installation at Site Summit was completed; however, there is a multi-coupler problem and those channels are not operational yet.	
System Management Office Update	**Mr. Casey Borg, System Manager**	
	Mr. Casey Borg was involved in an exercise at Camp Mad Bull. No update was presented.	
Joint Project Team Update	**Mr. Tim Woodall, ALMR Project Manager**	
Current On-going Projects	Mr. Joe Quickel presented on behalf of Mr. Woodall. There are six current DOD projects 1. Site Summit (briefed during OMO update) 2. In-Building coverage at Clear AFS. 3. Monitoring of Birch Hill humidity control installation issues. 4. Economic Analysis surveys and interviews. 5. Cold installation of MotoBridge^{TM} gateway units is on going; 17 are currently installed.	
	Mr. Jim Kohler, SOA ETS Program Manager	
Honolulu Site	Mr. Jim Kohler stated the Honolulu site is completed and has been turned on for the 30-day burn in period.	

Alaska Land Mobile Radio

Haines & Ketchikan Installs	The last two sites are Haines and Ketchikan. Permitting is in process and a lease with the Forest Service is required. There will be no construction until weather permits at the high tower sites.	
Old Business	There were no items for this meeting.	
Next meeting	The next regularly scheduled meetings are Dec 3, 08 and Jan 7, 09.	
New Business		
DOT Tower Installation	1. Ocie stated DOT has received funds for the tower project at Valdez. A soil sample would be taken in the spring.	
User Council Elections	2. Elections for the UC Chair and Vice Chair are January 09. Ms. Shafer will send out information the same as last year.	5. OMO to send out information on User Council elections.
User Council Approval of Documents	3. Major Leveque reminded the council there are currently five plans out to the UC for vote of approval. The suspense date is Nov 13.	
Adjourn	A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Ocie and seconded by Natalie. **The meeting was adjourned at 1517.**	