



State Interoperability Executive Council Listening Session
SIEC session 4 – Comfort Suites, Green Bay
June 23, 2005 - 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM

At 1:00 PM the listening sessions begins with opening remarks from Dave Steingraber.

- Primary focus of the listening sessions is to hear the needs and concerns of stakeholders and those most directly affected by interoperability
- Operational concerns are especially of great interest to the council
- While technical and financial issues are an important component of achieving interoperability they are not the focus of the listening session

Members of the Executive Council present at the session include: Dave Steingraber, Neil Cameron, Johnnie Smith, Mayor Douglas Oitzinger

PowerPoint presentation by Tom Lobe (OJA)

- Federal Engineering conducted a statewide study resulting in recommendations from needs assessments
- The recommendations detailed three components of interoperability
 - o These included governance, technical, and funding aspects
- Governance
 - o The FE study recommends authorization of a State Interoperability Committee by either legislation or executive order from the Governor.
 - o FE interviews found that 93% of stakeholders indicated the need for an oversight board
 - o FE recommends that SIEC include representative stakeholders from both local and state government
 - o Executive order #87 and subsequent appointment of members to the SIEC by Governor Doyle
- Technical
 - o FE recommends Wisconsin adopt the methodology set forth by SAFECOM, a national program from the Department of Homeland Security
 - o FE also recommends adoption of the P25 suite of standards
- Funding
 - o A majority of stakeholders have indicated that funding is a significant issue in achieving interoperability
 - o Approximately \$14 million has been allocated for radio interoperability projects in Wisconsin
 - o Funding is directed towards voice system interoperability projects

- Funding and grant details are available in Homeland Security Bulletin 05-4 at <http://oja.state.wi.us>
- Executive order # 87
 - On February 2, 2005 Governor Jim Doyle signed executive order # 87 relating to Wisconsin radio communication interoperability
 - Wisconsin formally
 - Recognized the importance of public safety
 - Recognized the fact that public safety interoperability has not yet been achieved in Wisconsin
 - Recognized the significance of interoperable technology to enhance public safety and homeland security
 - Distinguished the need for interoperability between and within jurisdictions
 - Acknowledges that interoperable communications requires statewide coordination and leadership
 - Establishes the State Interoperable Executive Council (SIEC)
- The SIEC Council consists of members appointed by the Governor and include
 - OJA Executive Director, Adjutant General, Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, Secretary of the Department of Transportation, State's Chief Information Officer, a Chief of Police, a Sheriff, a Fire Chief, a local Emergency Management official, a Tribal official
- SIEC committees
 - Outreach Committee
 - Technical Committee
 - Operations Committee
- Mission of SIEC
 - To set goals and objectives
 - To develop a review strategy
 - Set technical and operational standards
 - Develop short and long term recommendations for local government action
- Interoperability Standards (SAFECOM methodology)
 - APCO Project 25 standards adopted
 - Portable and radio hardware defined as P25 compliant, must be upgradeable for cost not to exceed the cost of purchase in a P25 compliant state
 - New or replacement radio equipment operating below 700 MHz must meet FCC narrowband requirements
 - Repeater system site hardware designed to allow for upgrade to increased capability with minimum amount of hardware replacement
 - Power and cooling must be sized to accommodate the installation of hardware above the initial site complement. Planning should include requirements that account for expansion capabilities up to 3 times the initial installation

- Tower loading calculations for antenna and feed line should include future installation of microwave backbone infrastructure
- Infrastructure upgrades that involve linking control points to repeaters or tower to towers, must include planning for expansion to carry both voice and data traffic

Listening session begins:

Question: Excluding funding, what are the immediate and most pressing needs of local, regional, and state jurisdictions with regard to interoperability?

(General comment):

- We will need teeth to force the unwilling entities to join or this will never happen

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- What can't you do that you need or want to at this point?

General response (Dale Carper of Oconto City Police):

- We need to know how to do it to achieve interoperability
- We need information so we know what to buy to be compatible

(General comment):

- We need a planning process and shared vision
- Interoperability means different things to different people
 - Do we want to have 100% communication all of the time or only the ability for the right people to talk to each other at the right time?
- What are the standards? With aging equipment do we take the band aid approach or invest in upgradeable P25 compatible products only to have different frequencies?

(Dave Steingraber - Council):

- We need a good definition of interoperability
- We will listen to vendors
- We will need to see a range of technical operations to address operational concerns
- We understand that there are senses of urgency
- We would like to build on already existing systems as a cost effective solution

(Kevin Lemke of Fond du Lac city police)

- We need equipment now
 - Locals may already be opting to switch to different systems
- We need frequencies now and solutions must come sooner rather than later

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- What do you need in Fond du Lac?

(Kevin Lemke of Fond du Lac city police)

- We need technical frequencies for different events
- There are not enough channels right now as it is

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- Do you see these problems on a daily basis or for significant event plans?

(Kevin Lemke of Fond du Lac city police)

- Anytime we have multiple agencies that need response or to communicate we run into these issues

(General comment):

- SIEC needs to define roles of WICORTS
 - o Coordination needs to be established
 - Who is doing what? And when?
- The burden is on us to go with WICORTS and develop a statewide plan

(Ken Moram of the City of Fond du Lac Police):

- Is WICORTS trunking system plan going to happen?
- They are forcing us to go VHF now
- We need Fire and Police department frequencies now

(Dave Steingraber - Council):

- WICORTS and FE like VHF trunking and recommended it
 - o There are more VHF frequencies out there
 - o Frequency allocation is definitely a priority
- Lets work on defining the interoperability vision, then work on finding a way to get there

(General comment):

- The problems is that the proposed date of 2013 is too far off
- We do not want to waste money but some needs to be spent now and solutions cannot wait that long

(Mayor Oitzinger - Council):

- How can we communicate with you on these issues
 - o Email?
 - o Website?

Council comment (Dave Steingraber):

- Lets get email groups together
 - o We can hopefully add a sign up list on the website to keep in direct contact with you

(Dale Carper of Oconto City Police):

- A general suggestion from Oconto county and among others is that trunking systems for us are out of reach
- It is important to find out what the counties are capable of before trying to formulate a solution
 - o Look for the present capabilities

(General comment):

- WICORTS strategy looks at what we have today but it is a one size fits all approach
- Not everyone can adopt to the 'one size'
- It would be better to build on what we already have
 - o Economically it would be much better
 - o Technologically it would have downsides
- It would be best to balance technology with cost effectiveness

(Dave Steingraber - Council):

- FE said that existing 800 systems are good
- Bridging is a good and effective idea
 - o This may not be necessary state wide but proves valuable in urban areas

Question: What should we consider an acceptable level of interoperability?

(General comment):

- What we are wanting do and an acceptable level may be different things
- I think all agencies in a county should be able to communicate with each other with trunking being a solution

(Tom Lobe of OJA):

- What about communicating beyond county boundaries?

(General comment):

- Well that may be ok and work for some, but for me an acceptable level is about one county deep

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- So would interoperability include the capability of everyone to communicate by radio with everyone at anytime?

General answer:

- Maybe for some. Its difficult if not impossible to do

General comment:

- Brown county had a study done and found that it would be very beneficial to set up towers
- Even if effective solutions are found, its still a matter of money

(Russ Schreiner of Sheboygan County Sheriff's Dept):

- An effective prioritization method needs to be developed
 - o This should be resolved on local levels then move the solutions outward
- We can solve some issues locally
 - o We have already taken steps but we don't know what other counties will do in the future that will effect us
- Strategies for the future are where everyone should be looking

(General comment):

- Acceptable levels of interoperability depend on if it means every day incidents or large multi jurisdictional incidents
 - o These present a different set of needs

Question: What non-technological issue remains the biggest hurdle to achieving radio interoperability?

(General comment):

- Human ego and funding

Council comment (Mayor Otzinger):

- It seems that when crossing jurisdictional boundaries, language, protocol, and other political issues are important

(Neil Cameron – Council):

- What, as local users, are you not willing to give up?
- Frequency control? How do you speak?

(Johnnie Smith - Council):

- Human ego? What can we do to address that? Would outreach help?
- It seems to be an issue of home-rule and having choices on a local level

(General comment):

- Absolutely. The issues are ‘sandbox’ related
 - o Localities value their frequencies, ten codes, and control
 - o Money may be used as a lever though in having localities give up some interoperability control
- Some areas of the state are rich in resources and others are poor so financial incentives would help to encourage sharing

(General comment):

- In Appleton, we share a channel with police and Fire. This has worked well for two years

(Johnnie Smith - Council):

- We will be needing ‘teeth’ in what we decide to do. Will money be enough?

(General comment):

- Money is very important but someone needs to make people come together and force interoperability at the state level

(Mayor Oitzinger - Council):

- What about ten codes? How is money an issue with protocol issues such as these?
 - o It seems that there are many non technological barriers which money is not a direct issue

(General comment):

- This is true but someone at the top must be willing to stand up and set standards

(Mayor Oitzinger - Council):

- What should be done at the local level?

(General comment):

- Plain speak is a good step. Its more inclusive
- The problem is mandating it on a daily level where ten codes are used
- Not all jurisdictions will do it

General comment:

- Chief officials in jurisdictions have ultimate control over local issues
- At certain levels sheriffs don’t have to listen to county officials though
- Political problems could be either created or worsened
- No one has ever uniformed the ten code before
- APCO standard has been adopted but there are still conflicts

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- So we need standardization on ten code policy. How can we do that

- Will there be problems with this at county levels? How should this be implemented?

(General comment):

- The ten code issue is big at the Department of Corrections
 - o We have 800s at the institutions and we want P25 at facilities to talk to police, etc
 - o The problem is that there are institutions in 21 counties so communication with neighboring counties is especially difficult
- Since ten codes vary its hard to function and operate within the system
 - o It will be difficult to do away with them but it is too confusing switching back and forth

(Geoff Anderson of the Winnebago Co. Sheriff's office):

- We don't need any mandates from the state
 - o This ten codes issue is a local issue

(John Cmeyla of the Keywaunee Co. Sheriff's office):

- If licensing for frequencies is part of an interoperability strategy it would be possible to have a ten code/plain speech string attached

(Mayor Oitzinger - Council):

- When technical and/or procedural issues arise who do you call?

(General comment):

- FCC

(Mayor Oitzinger - Council):

- For planning, expending, training issues who do you call to see what standards to use?

(General comment):

- APCO, NENA

(General comment):

- Technical questions mean issues for us when there is no internal expertise of the system
 - o Vendors drive technology
 - Asking vendors for answers costs a lot of money
 - o There is a need for independent source for technology issues
- There should be some support system or number to call for answers

(General comment):

- Enhanced basic 911 and centralizing it would create a good clearinghouse

Question: What training issues need to be addressed to achieve radio interoperability?

(General comment):

- It is important to start locally with training issues, protocol, radio usage, etc.
- Consider using patching, bridging
- It is important to look beyond ones own communication centers
- Coordination is needed to build gaps and address those training issues

Question: What role should vendors play in the future of interoperability?

(General comment):

- Vendors should not be doing system specifications for us
- They drive the system right now and we cannot turn it around as a single county.
 - o Hopefully the state can help

(Dave Steingraber - Council):

- Should we allow open architecture or competitive specifications?

(General comment):

- Open architecture provides flexibility

(Dave Steingraber - Council):

- Multiple vendors breed accountability issues and confusion
- Should there be bids placed on the whole system or specs?
- One funding issue is that the state may have control

(Geoff Anderson of Winnebago Co. Sheriff's office):

- I.S. and I.T. departments can help with some computer issues
- As municipalities grow, we will need additional resources to help

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- Local or regional levels have support that localities could not otherwise have access too

General comment:

- Many places have turned over radios to I.S. departments and there is a need for communication

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- Usually I.S. departments are for smaller jurisdictions
- What about regionally addressing the issue?
- It becomes a question of whether interoperability is a local, regional, or larger issue

(Gary TenHaken Sheriff of Sheboygan County):

- Our data system is on Motorola
- Open architecture can work if its mandated one way or another and there is no choice

(Mayor Oitzinger - Council):

- Are there system integrators available?
- Are there products on the market that can assist in bridging communications gaps?

(General comment):

- Most vendors do some work on this issue, but cross-vendor issues do not work
 - o Vendors will not work with one another
- Engineers can solve some of these problems and issues on paper but technologically speaking, no

(Mayor Oitzinger - Council):

- It seems that if engineers talk, the specs should coordinate and there should be someone to go to for these solutions

(General comment):

- Some vendors have integrators but only provide them for their own products

(Johnnie Smith - Council):

- We should examine the possibility of mandating and requiring our vendors to have products that integrate with other vendors' components

(General comment):

- This may jeopardize our choice of systems
- We told Motorola that we wanted 'open architecture' equipment and they backed out

Question: What is the role of municipal, county, and tribal governments in interoperability?

(General comment):

- They need to vote 'yes'!

(Johnnie Smith - Council):

- We talked in other sessions about outreach for mayors, county executives, etc. Is this a good idea?

(General comment):

- If a county takes a leading role in this they must understand all of the needs of the members in the county
- Its important to balance the needs and concerns of all parties involved

(General comment):

- We have a users committee made up of members from all disciplines
 - o This committee provides direction for all 911 centers
 - o It's a monthly meeting
 - o The committee used to be under the direction of the sheriff
 - o System is effective and works well

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- Is it a sheriff's system or separate utility?

(General comment):

- It is an independent committee

(Dave Steingraber - Council):

- There are seventeen counties right now looking to work together
- We are looking at multi county management

(General comment):

- There are definitely cost issues
 - o Small counties are very limited
 - o Usually smaller localities do not buy large quantities and lose out on large order purchasing deals available to larger areas like Milwaukee

(Neil Cameron - Council):

- In this case, the SIEC could look toward state standardized purchasing contracts given to a few vendors
- It would not be beneficial to limit ourselves to a few vendors though
- If the state can negotiate quotes we are able to go off of purchasing plans

(Dave Steingraber - Council):

- Procurement plan is a good idea

- It would help obtain equipment at the best prices
 - It is an equipment option
- It is important to look at what other states have done in the position we are facing
 - Many states simply issue out radios
 - Others bought frequencies
 - Michigan had an expensive solution that did not end up being as effective as first believed
 - Virginia simply bought and reallocated frequencies
- The bottom line is that local governments will have to foot some of the bill
 - OJA can leverage and make decisions with the use of some funding but cannot cover the entire bill
- It looks like everyone could use direction in this process but also a good degree of independence on a local level

Meeting Ends at 3:30 PM

Attendance at listening session:

Gary McClland, John Lampkin, Robert Kisea, Randall Frailing, Daniel Dahlke, Richard Myers, Rudy Nyman, Clark Guse, Tom Hermsen, Diane Hayes, Gary TenHaken, Glenn Berg, Russ Schreiner, Steve Sternhardt, Karen Carlson, Geoff Anderson, Mark Piechowski, Mark Zeier, Ken Moram, Kevin Lemke, Dale Carper, John Cmeyla, Terry Zimmerman, Michael Mika, David Hartman