



# Homeland Security

## IT Program Assessment USCG- Rescue 21 (2010)

### Review

The DHS CIO conducted a comprehensive program review of the USCG Rescue 21 Program on March 12, 2010 with representatives from DHS OCIO, USCG OCIO, the appropriate USCG Directorates, and other DHS HQ elements. The Rescue 21 program is modernizing the National Distress Response System (NDRS) to support operational commanders in maintaining effective USCG Search and Rescue capabilities.

Major findings include the following:

- Rescue 21 is a Level I program that is used a phased approach to deploy updated Search and Rescue capabilities along 90% of U.S. coastline (based on risk and environmental factors). As of December 31<sup>st</sup> 2009, Rescue 21 covered 34,912 miles of U.S. coastline.
- USCG is functioning as System integrator for the upcoming or ongoing Western Rivers, Alaska, and Vessel deployments.
- The Program is utilizing a 19 year IDIQ contract with mixed types of CLINs (CPFF, T&M) to obtain needed resources. To ensure efficient contract and technical performance in the field, the program is utilizing two Program Resident Offices (PRO) in Arizona and Alaska, embedding USCG personnel with contractors.
- USCG is using a combination of leased, owned, and co-located towers for Rescue 21 and has partnered with other federal, state and local authorities to reach mutually agreeable and efficient solutions on sites. Tower Re-plan, however, is one of the most critical issues for the program.
- The system utilizes OneNet for communications, and while OneNet continues to exceed availability requirements, availability is a concern for the program.
- Rescue 21 facilities have been constructed to accommodate integration with additional equipment such as the USCG's Automated Identification System.
- The program has a proven Disaster Recovery capability that has been demonstrated during hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Gustav.
- As each sector is built, System Acceptance Testing (SAT), Regional SAT, Direction finding & Vessel coverage testing is performed and discrepancies are corrected prior to conditional acceptance.
- Rescue 21's net-centric design allows for multiple communications configurations depending on the scenario or complications being experienced.
- Environmental factors such as swampland, or mountainous regions with short building seasons affect deployment in several sectors.
- Reduced program funding will adversely affect the amount of coverage and timely deployment of Rescue 21 capabilities

### Mitigation Strategy

Tower Re-plan, network reliability and changes in external standards are the key concerns of the program; however funding is an underlying risk for timely delivery of capabilities. The USCG is proactively working to stay ahead of all these issues. They are conducting early tower site selection/ lease negotiation, and co-location activities via the DHS "Tower Team" to deal with Re-plan issues; prototyping backup communications systems to mitigate concerns about OneNet availability; and, proactively staying abreast of issues such as AES, IPv6, tech refresh, and obsolescence. Their APB Revision 5 accounts for technical costs based on historical trends.



## Assessment

The Rescue 21 program is a fairly mature technical program and it covers a significant amount of coastline; however there are a few challenges associated with full capability deployment such as environmental factors, staffing certain sectors, etc.. Reduced program funding, however, presents one of the larger obstacles to capability deployment. USCG has been creatively finding solutions to its challenges and continues to look for ways to make efficient use of resources, but funding projections may force the USCG to make difficult trade-off decisions in the future.

**Score:** 4