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Office of Emergency Communications



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NCSWIC

Annual Report
2014



National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators

Chair: Mark Grubb
Vice Chair: Steve Noel



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Introduction



Established in July 2010, the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) assists state and territory interoperability coordinators with promoting the critical importance of emergency communications and the sharing of best practices to ensure the highest level of interoperability across the nation. NCSWIC members are composed of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) from the 56 states and territories. In this key role, SWICs leverage their

relationships with partners involved in responding to disasters at all levels of government to advance long-term emergency communications initiatives. NCSWIC members strive to enhance the response capabilities of public safety responders by coordinating and collaborating with federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and non-governmental public safety responder agencies. As part of this effort, SWICs are responsible for the implementation of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) and Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP), which establish a vision for interoperability across the nation and in the state. The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) provides programmatic support to the NCSWIC and recognizes the critical role the SWICs serve in organizing and executing interoperability efforts in the states and territories.

In 2014, NCSWIC members enhanced communications response capabilities for the public safety community through increased coordination and collaboration across all levels of government and with multiple disciplines. This report provides a thorough overview of activities, products, and projects completed by NCSWIC members in 2014. Sections of the report review NCSWIC working group products and activities, in-person and web-based meeting outcomes, development of the NCSWIC Strategic Plan, SCIP revisions, and regional accomplishments.

2014 NCSWIC Working Groups

In December 2013, NCSWIC members convened in Brunswick, Georgia, at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, to identify strategic priorities for calendar year 2014. NCSWIC members voted to support three working groups aimed at achieving specific outcomes for each priority: 1) Outreach, 2) Funding and Sustainment, and 3) Collaboration and Preparedness. Similar to previous years, SAFECOM and NCSWIC collaborated on issues related to Outreach and Funding & Sustainment, while the Collaboration and Preparedness working group was solely organized by NCSWIC members. OEC leveraged the Regional Interoperability Council (RIC) Chairs to solicit membership for the various groups.

OEC partnered with the working groups to achieve specific goals associated with each priority. Working groups leveraged expertise within the NCSWIC and SAFECOM organizations to harness knowledge and share best practices and lessons learned across the group. Table 1 (p. 3) provides a list of achievements for each of the working groups.

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Table 1. NCSWIC Working Group 2014 Priorities and Accomplishments

Priority	NCSWIC Working Group Achievements
Outreach (NCSWIC/ SAFECOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revised and published the Public Safety Communications Evolution Brochure ✓ Developed and published the Broadband 101 presentation to educate non-users on public safety broadband ✓ Developed T-Band Giveback Slick Sheet (<i>published 2015</i>) ✓ Developed and published the SWIC Elevator Speech ✓ Began development of the Introduction to NCSWIC presentation
Funding and Sustianment (NCSWIC/ SAFECOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provided input to the 2015 SAFECOM Grant Guidance ✓ Developed and published a repository of public safety funding opportunities ✓ Developed and published the Public Safety Communications Funding Mechanisms document ✓ Developed and published the SWIC Success Stories promotional brochure ✓ Hosted a Grant Guidance session at the December in-person meeting
Collaboration and Preparedness (NCSWIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Developed the P25 ISSI Slick Sheet (<i>published 2015</i>) ✓ Developed and published a repository of After Action Reports ✓ Hosted a panel on the response to recent Oklahoma tornados at the December in-person meeting

June 2014 NCSWIC Meeting Overview

On June 2, 2014, the NCSWIC met in Westminster, Colorado, to discuss critical and emerging public safety issues, receive updates on the 2014 NECP and other OEC programs, and hear from fellow SWICs on state-level funding investments. Under Secretary Suzanne Spaulding, for the National Protection and Programs Directorate, kicked off the meeting by thanking the NCSWIC for its work and used the Boston Marathon Bombing as a success story illustrating SWIC progress toward interoperability. Bill Schrier, State of Washington Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO), presented information on current and future uses of social media and public data during emergencies. Jim Downes, OEC, presented work done by the Federal Partnership for Interoperable Communications (FPIC) to coordinate encryption keys for interoperability and discussed three best practices documents developed in collaboration with SWICs and SAFECOM on encryption.

During the meeting, Steve Noel, Oregon SWIC, led a working session on NCSWIC strategic planning, that included a discussion on NCSWIC member participation. During the working session, members developed portions of the SWIC Elevator Speech aimed at providing SWICs a high-level overview of the SWIC role. The Elevator Speech, developed during this meeting, was one of two promotional tools drafted by the NCSWIC in 2014. Following the working session, Robert (Dusty) Rhoads, OEC, and Trey Forgety, National Emergency Number Association, discussed governance implications for Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1). To end the meeting, a panel of subject matter experts provided examples of emergency communications funding investments at the state level. Panelists included Matt Leveque, Alaska SWIC; Major Steve Williams, Florida State Highway Patrol; and Mark Wrightstone, Pennsylvania SWIC.

December 2014 Joint SAFECOM-NCSWIC Meeting Overview

The NCSWIC convened with SAFECOM in December 2014, for the 5th semi-annual Joint Meeting at the National Center for Employee Development in Norman, Oklahoma. Forty-eight NCSWIC members and sponsored guests of the NCSWIC community attended, representing 46 states and territories. Joint in-person meetings serve as the primary venue for SAFECOM and NCSWIC members to share and solicit

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input from represented associations and to discuss how National guidance on emergency communications will be organized and applied throughout the country.

OEC Deputy Director, Chris Essid, began the meeting with a moment of silence for Gregg Riddle and Bill McCammon, two members of the public safety community who passed away in 2014. The joint meeting focused on the implementation of the 2014 NECP and the Emergency Communications Ecosystem. The sessions focused on the various segments of the ecosystem:

Government→Government	Laurie Flaherty, Department of Transportation, and Roberto Mussenden, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), discussed NG 9-1-1
Government→Citizen	Antwane Johnson, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), discussed the Integrated Public Alerts & Warnings System
Citizen→Citizen	Heather Kowalski, OEC, discussed Priority Telecommunications Services
Citizen→Government	Roberto Mussenden, FCC, provided an update on the FCC Interoperability Rule

Additionally, members of the local public safety community discussed response efforts to the 2013 Moore, Oklahoma, tornado. During the NCSWIC meeting, members received updates from OEC's Technical Assistance (TA) Branch, including updates from the TA and SCIP programs; heard from a panel of SWICs on outcomes and best practices from the First Responder Network Authority State Consultation Workshops; and provided input for the Introduction to NCSWIC presentation, a third promotional document slated for release in 2015. During the NCSWIC EC meeting, members approved changes to the NCSWIC Charter and began discussions regarding the reorganization of the NCSWIC working group structure, including approving a new naming convention, changing "working groups" to "committees." Further discussions and finalization of the new structure will occur in early 2015.

Highlights from the NCSWIC EC Meetings

In 2014, the NCSWIC EC participated in a number of teleconferences and in-person meetings. During these meetings, the group discussed activities conducted by their RICs, recent federal program updates, and announcements related to working group activities.

The NCSWIC EC met on the following dates:

- 1) February 5, 2014 – In-Person, Westminster, Colorado
- 2) April 1, 2014 – Conference Call
- 3) July 29, 2014 – Conference Call
- 4) September 17, 2014 – In-Person, Boulder, Colorado
- 5) October 14, 2014 – Conference Call
- 6) December 4, 2014 – In-Person, Norman, Oklahoma

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Membership

The following graphic illustrates the 2014 NCSWIC EC members by region as of December 2014.



Region I

Michael Varney, CT*
Vacant

Region II

Bob Barbato, NY*
Felix Garcia, PR

Region III

Mark Grubb, DE* (Chair)
Vacant

Region IV

Nick Brown, GA*
Robert Steadman, SC

Region V

Darryl Anderson, OH*
Joe Galvin, IL

Region VI

Nikki Cassingham, OK*
Todd Early, TX

Region VII

Jason Bryant, KS*
Craig Allen, IA

Region VIII

Bob Symons, WY*
Jeffrey Pierce, SD

Region IX

George Molnar, NV*
Victoria Garcia, HI

Region X

Steve Noel, OR* (Vice Chair)
Matt Leveque, AK

2014 NCSWIC EC Elections

In accordance with the NCSWIC Charter, RIC Chairs/EC members serve two-year terms. In 2014, an election for the even-numbered regions (II, IV, VI, VIII, X) was held. No changes in representation occurred in Regions II or VIII; however, several NCSWIC members joined the NCSWIC EC from Regions IV, VI, and X, detailed below. The term for new members began October 1, 2014.

- Region IV: Vice Chair – Robert Steadman
- Region VI: Chair – Nikki Cassingham, Vice Chair – Todd Early
- Region X: Chair – Vice Chair – Matt Leveque

The NCSWIC Charter states that the NCSWIC EC elects its Chair and Vice Chair biennially from the elected EC Members at the first meeting after October first. At the December meeting, the NCSWIC EC

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voted Michael Varney to serve as the NCSWIC EC Chair, replacing Mark Grubb. Also at the December meeting, NCSWIC EC members voted to begin electing the NCSWIC Chair and Vice Chair at the same time. In December 2015, the NCSWIC EC will elect both the Chair and Vice Chair positions.

Technical Assistance Branch: 2014 Review

In 2014, OEC's TA Branch continued to support states and territories in their efforts to enhance emergency communications capabilities and preparedness. TA support included onsite training, assisting special events and exercises, and statewide planning workshops and support services. Provided at no cost and tailored to stakeholder needs, the services and resources are designed to support SWICs in advancing interoperable communications nationwide.

- **TA Engagements:** In 2014, OEC's Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) completed 219 TA engagements. The top five offerings requested during the year included: the Broadband (BB) suite of workshops; Communications Unit Leader Exercise (COMLEX) support; Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM) training and support, Communications Unit Leader (COML) training; and Communications Unit Technician (COMT) support. ICTAP also began promoting the Communications Unit Exercise (COMMEX) Train-the-Trainer program, which helps states conduct their own communications exercises using ICTAP procedures and materials. ICTAP extended its training to federal partners, who work closely with the emergency communications community during activations. Ten federal courses were executed in 2014, and three additional courses were conducted that had a combination of federal and state students.
- **Support for Communications Exercises:** OEC supported several types of communications-focused exercises. These included COMLEXs, COMMEXs, table top exercises, functional exercises, and support to a federal full-scale exercise. In 2014, ICTAP trained 393 students in the COMLEX and COMMEX exercises.
- **Public Safety Tools Web Site:** OEC made major improvements to the Public Safety Tools (publicsafetytools.info) website in 2014. These included new features to the Communication Assets Survey Mapping (CASM) Next Generation (NextGen) tool. During 2014, CASM NextGen had 273 new users, over 8,000 logins, and almost 55,000 new data updates.
- **National Interoperability Field Operations Guides (NIFOGs):** In 2014, OEC distributed 17,439 copies of NIFOG version 1.5.
- **SWIC Reference Guides:** In 2014, OEC developed customized data guides, *Statewide Interoperable Communications Reference Guides*, as tools for SWICs providing visibility about the SWIC position and a high-level overview of emergency communications for each state and territory. OEC provided guides to all 56 states and territories. OEC will continue to coordinate updates with each SWIC to ensure their accuracy.

<u>DHS/OEC TA by the Numbers</u>
• 219 TA Engagements Completed
• 393 Exercise Students
• 273 New Public Safety Tools Users
• 8,000 CASM Logins
• 17,439 NIFOGs Distributed
• 56 SWIC Reference Guides Provided
• 47 SCIP Workshops Conducted

SCIP Program Update

The SCIP is a critical tool for states and territories to enhance interoperable and emergency communications capabilities. In 2014, OEC continued to provide support and services in the form of facilitated workshops, streamlined reporting, and innovative tools.

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In 2014, OEC conducted 20 SCIP Revision Workshops to support states and territories in revising their SCIPs to account for voice and data communications over the next two to five years. Each state and territory outlined its priorities via goals and initiatives, determined a method to achieve and track progress, and outlined a process to report accomplishments. The SCIP Program worked closely with stakeholders to support the finalization and approval of each SCIP following the workshops. In 2015, OEC will coordinate with states and territories to schedule a workshop if they have not already completed one.

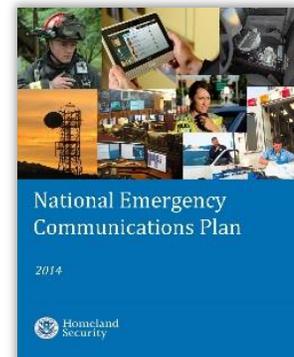
- **Annual SCIP Snapshot and eSCIP Tool:** In 2014, OEC provided tools to support SCIP implementation to streamline the annual reporting process. The Annual SCIP Snapshot and eSCIP tools are both available [online](#) to provide tracking capability for SWICs to monitor the progress made on goals developed during workshop discussions.

Policy & Planning Branch: 2014 Review

2014 NECP

In the 2014 NECP opening letter, DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson states, “The first [NECP], published in 2008, was a tremendous success thanks to cross-stakeholder engagement and partnerships.” NCSWIC’s support and contributions during NECP development are a reflection of the Secretary’s sentiment. On November 12, 2014, DHS officially published OEC’s cornerstone initiative – the updated NECP. This milestone was announced via an official DHS [blog post](#) titled, “2014 National Emergency Communications Plan Sets Path for 21st Century Public Safety Communications.” As the first public notification, the blog post marked the official NECP release and national rollout.

Prior to public release, OEC applied a bottom-up, stakeholder-driven approach to NECP development. In doing so, all major public safety and emergency communications partnership and advisory groups, including NCSWIC and SAFECOM, participated in opportunities to provide critical feedback. As a result, stakeholder engagements totaled over 30 working sessions (e.g., in-person meetings, webinars, conference calls) involving more than 350 emergency communications representatives at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels as well as academia and industry. OEC’s extensive outreach effort to stakeholders captured a broad range of perspective and inputs. All feedback served as key insight directly shaping NECP concepts and framework. Accordingly, the 2014 NECP has been developed as a plan for the nation, and it focuses on three stakeholder-driven priorities over the next several years: (1) identify areas for improvement in Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems; (2) ensure preparation for adoption and use of broadband technologies, including the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN); and (3) enhance coordination across the emergency response community.



Since public release of the NECP, OEC has initiated a national rollout effort. The strategy aims to generate broad awareness of the 2014 NECP, educate stakeholders on the updated plan, and establish a foundation of support for implementation. Such efforts include the December 2014, joint NCSWIC and SAFECOM meeting in Norman, Oklahoma, which provided a forum to discuss public safety issues, NECP implementation, and the new emergency communications ecosystem. OEC has also provided NECP-related briefings at various other meetings and conferences. Collaboration with partnership

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groups, such as NCSWIC and SAFECOM, has helped to allow news of the NECP release to reach stakeholders across the nation.

To view or download an electronic copy of the 2014 NECP, a summary slick sheet, or a brochure, please visit the [NECP website](#). For NECP inquiries, please contact Eric Runnels, OEC's National Planning Chief at OECNECP@hq.dhs.gov.

SAFECOM Guidance

The *Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants (SAFECOM Guidance)* was released in March 2014 in anticipation of FY 2014 grants Funding Opportunity Announcements. The *SAFECOM Guidance* details current information on emergency communications policies, eligible costs, best practices, and technical standards for state, local, tribal, and territorial grantees investing Federal funds in emergency communications projects. Most notably, the *SAFECOM Guidance* reflects the updated 2014 NECP. Beginning in FY 2014, grantees receiving emergency communications funding through the DHS grants are required to comply with the *SAFECOM Guidance*.

9-1-1

OEC completed the 9-1-1 Governance and Planning Case Study, which examined the governance, planning, and funding challenges that states are facing regarding 9-1-1. The case study made a number of recommendations for OEC to improve coordination between 9-1-1 entities and other federal, state, and local public safety organizations. OEC also established the Federal 9-1-1 Focus Group under the Emergency Communications Preparedness Center. The focus group is planning to improve coordination between federal agencies regarding 9-1-1 policies.

Regional Accomplishments

The inter-state RICs were developed to promote communication and collaboration among SWICs with the purpose of establishing interoperable communications solutions with neighboring states, FEMA regions, and counties. The RICs also serve as the venue to ensure the actions and guidance sought by the EC are communicated, vetted, and implemented. Each FEMA Region has its own RIC Chair and Vice Chair. Membership includes the SWIC from each state or territory in the FEMA region. Below are summaries of the RIC accomplishments for 2014.

Region I and Region II

In 2014, Region I focused on conducting training and exercises, the deployment of new facilities and systems for use by first responders and emergency management, and the revision of SCIPs. Examples of accomplishments in Region I include:

- Maine sponsored a Vigilant Guard exercise emphasizing communications tasks with participation from military and civilian responders, and held six cross-border exercises in support of the Border Interoperability Demonstration Project.
- Vermont completed the deployment of the Vermont Lifeline, a radio system that ensures first responders will have access to all statewide Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) statewide. This service provides essential communications support to responders operating in difficult or remote terrain, such as the mountainous northern region of the state.
- Massachusetts completed a SCIP Revision Workshop in September, which identified strategic goals and initiatives that the state will accomplish over the next five years. Additionally, Massachusetts continues to utilize statewide Communications Unit (COMU) personnel.

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- Connecticut conducted an Emergency Support Function #2 exercise in conjunction with federal partners as well as a state-agency-level exercise. In addition, Connecticut deployed an alternate Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with no preparation in order to earn Emergency Management Assistance Compact accreditation.
- New Hampshire completed governance processes to launch their SIEC this past summer, and are currently working on legislation for the SIEC. Additionally, New Hampshire completed a SCIP Revision Workshop in October, and assigned strategic goals to SIEC working groups and sub-committees to implement SCIP goals statewide.
- Rhode Island upgraded its EOC to enhance coordination and is actively working to complete a State Interoperability Field Operations Guide (FOG). Additionally, the state held a COML and COMT class to enhance communications capabilities with focus on the fire services..

Region I continues to face the challenge of resource allocation (i.e., funding and staffing) to support various programs and system maintenance. Another issue for Region I is the unique “Line A” issue. Frequency allocation above Line A, which spans sections of the region, require intense coordination among federal, state, local, and Canadian authorities to ensure frequencies are allocated correctly and in a manner that ensures no frequency interferes with another. Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire are working collectively to enhance interoperability between agencies along the border, and with their Canadian counterparts.

In 2014, Region II remained busy increasing governance coordination around the Region as well as ensuring that usage and technology were implemented to deal with real-world events.

- New Jersey successfully hosted Super Bowl XLVII. Statewide communications operations and planning and Federal coordination were integral in the event’s success.
- New York conducted a demonstration testing video, data, and voice interoperability between schools across counties.
- New Jersey and New York both adopted COMU credentialing and certification programs. These programs align with other northeast states in anticipation of cross border emergencies or Emergency Management Assistance Compact requests.
- Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands promoted governance meetings in an effort to increase interoperable and emergency communications in the territories. These governance bodies faced the challenges of briefing newly elected officials and working with federal partners on interoperable system deployments.

In addition, states in Region II worked hand-in-hand with airport authorities to ensure they had communications capabilities necessary to handle an increase in responses to heightened Ebola virus passenger screenings.

Region III

In 2014, Region III states prioritized preparation efforts for the NPSBN as well as upgrading core radio system capabilities. States continued their involvement in the Middle Atlantic Consortium for Interoperable Nationwide Advanced Communications (MACINAC), a regional consortium which serves a coordinating function to help member states prepare for and make decisions regarding the NPSBN in a concerted and cooperative fashion. Maryland took the lead in this effort by hosting the Nation’s first Initial State Consultation with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet).

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Region III was able to make significant improvements to public safety statewide radio systems due to the strong oversight of various governing bodies that guided the operation and maintenance of, and upgrades to these systems. Maryland completed the second phase of an upgrade to its First Responder Statewide Radio System (Maryland First) that increased coverage within the State. Pennsylvania completed the engineering and design of a Project 25 (P25) system that will replace the existing statewide radio network to increase interoperability. Delaware worked to mitigate in-building coverage challenges by integrating Bi-Directional Amplifiers into its statewide 800 MHz radio network in key areas. West Virginia's Statewide Interoperability Radio Network (SIRN) operations team continued to work closely with its neighbors in Washington, Allegheny, and Garret Counties in Maryland to ensure interoperability across the rugged terrain.

During 2014, Region III also supported several high-profile events and incidents:

- The District of Columbia regularly supported and coordinated communications support for high-profile or National Security Special Events such as the annual 4th of July celebration. Maryland and the City of Baltimore provided comprehensive planning for the 200th Anniversary of the National Anthem.
- In Virginia, certified COMLs and COMTs supported law enforcement from all levels of government in the search for University of Virginia student Hannah Graham. In addition Virginia deployed over 300 cached radios and repeaters to support the vast search effort.
- Pennsylvania utilized its statewide radio system during a six week manhunt for a suspect wanted for the murder of two State Troopers. Hundreds of law enforcement personnel utilized the interoperable capabilities to coordinate the search and ensure the life-safety of those involved.

Despite Region III's high degree of success in 2014, states still struggled with funding and coordination efforts related to federal communications certifications. Region III states faced difficulty receiving funding for public safety communications through existing grant programs. In addition, one state noted a lack of state control over certifications to speed the credentialing process for COML and COMT personnel.

Region IV

Region IV continued to prioritize training and exercises in 2014. States within the Region worked to streamline governance and coordination related to regional interoperability efforts. Florida completed Operation Radar II, a multi-day emergency communications exercise with 600 personnel from across the state and at all levels of government. Georgia held its annual exercise at Stone Mountain in order to test 125 Mobile Communication Vehicles and personnel on a variety of highly-technical tasks. Tennessee, Alabama, and North Carolina held smaller communications focused exercises, continuing their efforts to enhance interoperability. Additionally, COMT and COML classes, including Train-the-Trainer courses, were held across the Region to build skills and ensure continuity of emergency communications leadership.

Region IV continues to face sustainability issues relating to equipment, infrastructure, and personnel. Some states in Region IV also struggled with consistent funding and staffing for the SWIC position. Across the Region, states worked to reduce misunderstanding about the SWIC role and its value to a state's interoperable and emergency communications programs.

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Region V

During 2014, Region V remained focused on upgrading statewide interoperability systems, planning for new and emerging technologies, and conducting mutual aid exercises and planning. The states are working collaboratively through the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband planning process with FirstNet and exploring system level connectivity to support inter-state operations. Ohio completed a P25 upgrade to its statewide system and consolidated several regional systems into a connected 'system of systems' in support of first responders across the State. Indiana initiated a P25 update for its statewide system, which will result in net growth in system size and usage. Michigan initiated a lifecycle update process for its statewide system to ensure long term system sustainability. Illinois and Michigan made significant progress toward planning for NG 9-1-1 technologies and systems, including working with state legislators to ensure program sustainability. Illinois and Wisconsin are in the process of reviewing their current government structure. Minnesota accomplished a major milestone when all 104 PSAPs achieved interoperability by connecting to Minnesota's NG 9-1-1 Network. Additionally, Minnesota engaged in a multi-region, multi-urban area communications exercise that tested a variety of skills.

Region VI

States in Region VI successfully implemented and utilized Statewide Interoperability Executive Councils (SIEC) and the SWIC position to increase participation in interoperable communications efforts and to administer grant funding in a coordinated manner. Many states in Region VI stated that working groups and advisory committees associated with the SIEC used State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) grant funding to execute specific projects. However, funding remains a challenge for many projects in Region VI. Many states that were successful in organizing the administration of SLIGP grants also face the challenge of determining which of the many critical projects should receive funding. The SIECs also coordinated the maintenance of statewide systems under the direction of the SWIC and worked to leverage additional assets and expand their user base.

Additional efforts throughout Region VI in 2014 included the following:

- In Oklahoma, the SWIC oversaw the establishment of the Oklahoma Public Safety Broadband Network in anticipation of the FirstNet activities, and released version 2.0 of the Oklahoma FOG.
- Texas increased participation in the Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan, with over 1,800 agencies at all levels of government and across multiple disciplines now participating.
- Arkansas has successfully completed their Arkansas Interoperable Communication Field Operations Guide (ARFOG).

Region VII

During 2014, Region VII successfully increased participation on governance bodies and worked on LMR system infrastructure. In Iowa, extensive work was done to increase participation from local government into the Statewide Interoperability Governing Body, which led to an overall increase in support for various interoperability programs. Kansas and Missouri added additional sites to the statewide systems to increase coverage and usage. Kansas made site improvements to expand tribal public safety coverage and is planning an exercise with a tribe to build greater cooperation. Additionally, Kansas and Missouri developed a credentialing system for its COMLs and COMTs, and Missouri created a system of self-certification for vendors to ensure operability on the statewide LMR network.

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In 2014, Region VII was challenged by various usage issues. Some states reported difficulty getting federal users onto the systems due to operational or technical difficulties. Other states faced encryption issues and interoperability challenges due to radios being incompatible with the statewide system.

Region VIII

In 2014, Region VIII focused on technological and organizational updates in order to streamline services and increase interoperability. Every state in the region completed important steps to upgrade systems within its operating area. Colorado, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming began or completed core system upgrades that will extend the life of critical core systems and increase interoperability. North Dakota conducted a major study on development of a statewide trunked radio system and initiated funding efforts. Montana completed a significant upgrade to its statewide trunked LMR system and adopted a new SCIP which includes broadband goals and initiatives.

Colorado and Utah updated their SCIPs to incorporate strategic goals and initiatives and to include planning for public safety broadband. Several of Region VIII's states reported challenges due to the increased complexity in the emergency communications ecosystem and aligning strategic plans to address these changes. Challenges included managing additional disparate systems, long-term funding planning, and an increase in activities related to FirstNet.

Region IX

Region IX had a busy 2014, engaging stakeholders through communications exercises, interoperability and infrastructure outreach, and planning for Super Bowl XLIX. Hawaii coordinated the first meeting between the State's Department of Defense and county and state communications providers in order to assess the status of communications infrastructure. Nevada held its third annual interoperability summit and conducted 30 outreach events on interoperability and public safety broadband. Nevada's meetings reached approximately 1,000 stakeholders statewide. In conjunction with interoperability outreach, Nevada also began conducting training on its Core Radio System for users. Arizona held a full-scale statewide communications exercise in November 2014, which brought together over 100 communications personnel from over 45 different agencies.



Given the high number of engagements and exercises for stakeholders, Region IX faced the challenge of having enough staff to fill the demand for interoperable and emergency communications work. While some states wanted to focus on NG 9-1-1, the lack of personnel or assistance for coordinating outreach and governance limited the Region's ability to move forward on projects.

Region X

During 2014, Region X responded to real-world fire and inclement weather incidents and continued to implement exercises and outreach. Alaska coordinated a successful response to a Type 1 wildfire that involved several responding agencies that successfully used communications assets, training, and strategic plans. Idaho and Oregon also prepared for fire season by coordinating frequencies, enhancing interagency coordination, and developing FOGs for use during the season. Washington successfully

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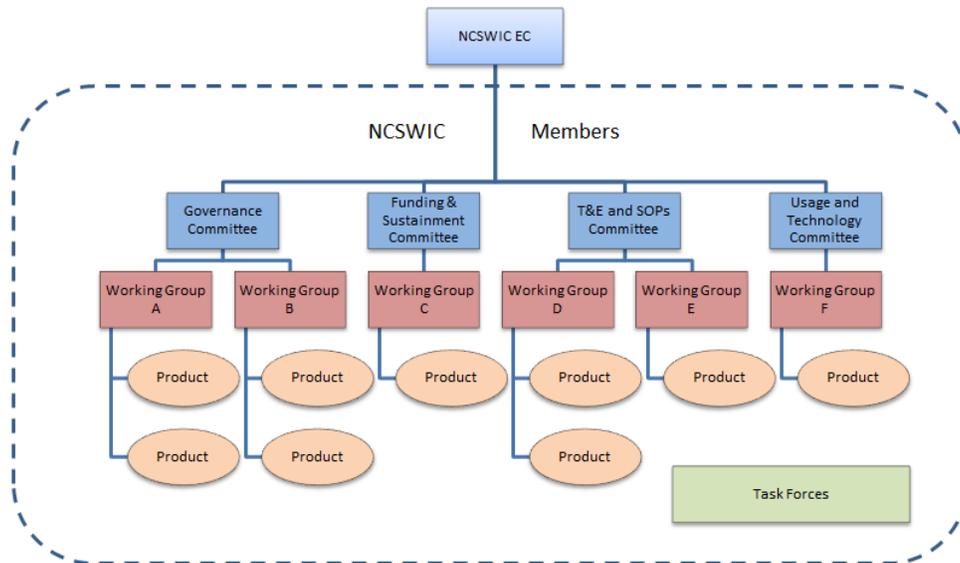
utilized interoperability in the response to a major mudslide with pre-planned radio caches, a trained COML, and governance planning to control the response.

Alaska held two major exercises, including the Alaska Shield 2014 exercise and a cross-border exercise involving several states and Canada. Idaho participated in the Alaska Shield exercise and conducted a broadband planning workshop as well. Oregon conducted a broadband planning workshop and held a communications exercise to certify additional COMLs and COMTs. Washington conducted a broadband planning workshop, followed by a FirstNet Consultation workshop. In addition, Washington worked on its system infrastructure by building several additional radio improvements.

Region X, like many regions, encountered staffing issues as well as a lack of governance capabilities. Several states in Region X have implemented rules that limit the amount of outreach that can be conducted with stakeholders. In addition, the amount of work is often more than current staffing levels can handle. This affects the ability of governance bodies to meet, plan, and perform critical interoperability-related tasks.

Year Ahead: Collaborative Efforts in 2015

At the December in-person meeting, the NCSWIC EC discussed adopting a new committee structure that mirrors the lanes of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum. Members proposed establishing six committees: Governance, Training and Exercises, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Usage, Technology, and Funding and Sustainment. The NCSWIC EC continued discussions during two subsequent conference calls on January 13 and February 12, 2015. Following discussions with OEC, the EC approved the following committee structure:



- **Governance Committee:** Focuses on emergency communications governance, both internal and external to the NCSWIC program.
- **Funding & Sustainment (Joint Committee with SAFECOM):** Identifies innovative ways to sustain current programs, activities, and roles pertinent to NCSWIC; and provides input on lead funding sources and appropriations.



- **Training & Exercises and SOPs:** Focuses on streamlining processes and identifying SOPs related to public safety communications at all levels of government; and aims to coordinate closely with OEC on service offerings.
- **Technology and Usage (*Joint Efforts with SAFECOM*):** Promotes the use of technologies, resources, and processes related to emergency communications and interoperability.