

September 16, 2015

Present:

Terry Spring-KWPX
Roy Benevente-EMD
Clay Freinwald-WSU
Ted Beuhner-NWS Seattle
Lowell Kiesow-KPLU
Steven Williams-EMD

Phone:

Joey Peters-Alert Sense
Mark Allen-WSAB
Dale Kloes-Skagit County
Phil Johnson-CPS LECC

The meeting was called to order by Clay Freinwald. Introductions were made. The minutes for the previous meeting were corrected (name miss-spelled) and approved. There was a call for additions to the agenda, but none were received. Clay has been working on a number of studio moves and transmitter installations recently. This has meant he has had less time for EAS. These projects are mostly completed so he will be getting caught up with EAS matters soon. He is aware that the web site needs updating and that will be addressed soon.

EAS was used during the recent wildfires. There were several evacuation alerts. Douglas County reported having problems getting alerts played on a local cable system. Verifications and arrangements need to be made in advance. The state emergency management requested transmitter status from broadcasters in the fire area and got a good response. The FCC was going to shut down an unlicensed translator in Republic during the fire. Apparently it is the only source of local information in the area. The state got the feds to hold off their enforcement action until after the fire danger is past.

The Columbia Basin local area has requested that their March RMT be run in the second week of the month. It is normally in the first full week. They are required to test the entire alert system for Hanford twice a year. There is an environmental concern. They do not want their sirens to disturb some nesting eagle pairs. This is just for 2016 for now.

The FCC is starting 3 new CSRIC groups. One will be looking at multi-lingual alerts. The Monroe EAS box currently has that capability. Another is EAS security. The third will be working on a EAS Handbook revision. Clay will be involved in the latter. See <http://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/advisory/csric/> for more information.

A planning meeting for the upcoming Cascadia Rising exercise was held recently. Represented were FEMA, local and DC, broadcasters, wireless and emergency management. Clay pointed out the need to get information from emergency management to whatever stations happen to survive a major disaster. If the electricity was out, people would go to either their car radios or wind up radios trying to find information. There needs to be a way for emergency personnel to take over unattended stations in order to get emergency information out. There is a breakdown in information. Broadcasters need to have a notebook of some kind on a shelf in their control

rooms that have information of what to do in a disaster. There is legislation on the books for disaster response and recovery. It needs to be amended to include broadcasters.

Someone is needed to take over the leadership in the Inland local area. Marlin Jackson has left Spokane and is now at KLEW-TV in Lewiston.

There was a get-together in Bellingham so the new people in Whatcom and Skagit counties could meet each other and network. EAS was discussed.

In old business, volunteers are still needed to keep Tab 10 current in Eastern Washington. The local LECC's need to participate to keep this information up to date. We also need cable participation in the SECC.

After the fires are over, there needs to be a Webinar and conference call with the affected emergency managers as a follow up. Discussion topics could be issues with disseminating information, training and other problems. It should be done while the fires are still fresh in everybody's minds. It could be a basis for training.

Lowell is almost done with the event code consolidation.

Clay is still looking for his replacement. He is still considering splitting up his job to make it less onerous for his replacement. Having one or more people just manage the many data bases involved would take a tremendous load off the Chair. Anyone interested?

In Washington State, AMBER alerts are well-used. There have been 15 since the program started, and 5 so far this year.

Alert Sense has started migrating to a new system. This will happen over the next 2-3 months. They will be changing to a new domain name, although the current one will be available for the foreseeable future. Alert Sense will help any station make the changes. They will have the capability of monitoring each station and will be able to let them know if they become disconnected from their server. This will be voluntary. The change could be difficult at small stations due to lack of in-house engineering expertise. It might work better for them if it is done when their EAS box is upgraded or replaced. Alert Sense will provide their own text to speech conversion if they receive an alert without an audio file, rather than have the stations use the TTS engines in their boxes. This will make it more likely that word pronunciations will be correct, especially of local place names.

At the Washington State Association of Broadcasters, Mark Allen will be retiring soon. His replacement should be announced next month. He asked for more management participation in EAS but heard nothing back. Silver Alerts started on August 27. There has been one so far.

At the National Weather Service, Ted Buehner passed out the scripts for this year's October RMT. For Eastern Washington it is for the earthquake drill only. For Western Washington it is for both the tsunami and earthquake drills.

The NWS requests that the stations regularly monitor the weather radio receivers for reception quality especially if a test is missed. If there is a problem with receiving a test they would like to know if:

- It is just the test or if all audio is bad.
- Other stations in the area are having problems.

- The previous test or alert was received OK.
This will help them diagnose the problem.

Actually it is good practice to check all EAS sources regularly.

Nothing new on Mt. Octopus.

Roland sent out the 2016 RMT schedule. If there are any issues please bring them up on the remailer by October 1.

In the Central Puget Sound local area, Phil Johnson reported that ESCA is shutting down by the end of the year. It's functions will probably be taken over by Snohomish County Emergency Management but that is not certain yet.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 12 at 9:30 AM at Camp Murray.

Terry Spring
Chief Engineer