

Washington SECC Meeting January 12, 2021

The meeting was held virtually via Zoom. Roll call began at 930 PST with the meeting starting 8 minutes later, wrapping up at 11:06.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved. A call for additional agenda items revealed none.

Announcements: There has been some national chatter lately about the possible misuse of EAS by political opportunists, causing apprehension. Safeguards are in place to ensure the system is only used for legitimate purposes.

The recent bombing in Nashville near a AT&T facility disrupted phone and internet in the region for 4-5 days. This is an example of why the internet should not be the only method of communications in an emergency and why we have backup systems in place.

The FCC recently announced that the ARS (Automatic Reporting System) is to be rolled out during first quarter of this year. More information on exactly when it will debut is forthcoming. It is also not known what deadline each SECC will have to enter all required information into ARS, but possibly by the end of the year.

The FCC has issued a EAS Enforcement Advisory. See it [here](#).

The new Mason/Thurston local EAS local plan is on the state EAS website. See it [here](#).

Old business: The State Plan Revision Sub-Committee has been preparing for ARS for over a year. ARS will become the new state EAS Plan, aligning with FCC needs. To better satisfy and serve state and local community public warning needs beyond ARS, the new Washington Public Alert and Warning System (WA-PAWS) plan will eventually replace the current State EAS Plan, likely before the end of the year.

WA-PAWS will be broken down into categories of overview, structure, distribution, LECCs, Amber Alerts, and Additional Resources with topic tabs in each category. Of those tabs needed for ARS, more than half are done. Over 60 percent of the remaining WA-PAWS tabs are also finished. For the tab on text-to-speech, the sub-committee is looking for local IPAWS guidelines other than AlertSense. If you have local best practice guidelines for Rave, Code Red or Everbridge, please share with the sub-committee ASAP.

New business: Amber Alerts - All the recent AMBER Alerts resulted in the successful recovery of the children involved. There have been citizen complaints about alerts from one side of the mountains showing up on the other side. The reason for statewide distribution is that it does not take much time to travel from one side of the state to the other. However, it will be proposed that AMBER Alerts in the future will be either west-side or east-side instead of state-wide, and must be approved by the AMBER Committee. So far, the complaints have only been for WEA alerts.

Washington State Emergency Management has been working to shorten their message templates and make them more TTS (Text To Speech) friendly. TTS is implemented differently in EAS and WEA. For EAS, TTS is done automatically in AlertSense. The duty officer can listen to it before it is sent out and make corrections to pronunciation and syntax. For WEA, the alert is sent as a text message and the conversion to speech occurs in the phone. The sender has no control and different phones will do the conversions differently. So, why not just have the duty officer record it? It is a lot more time consuming and the TTS works well.

Cancellations for Amber Alerts are not usually done, yet they have been done on some recent alerts via EAS, not on WEA. Some jurisdictions appreciate having the cancellations.

During the recent abduction in Spokane, a WEA Alert was originated locally before it could be issued by the state using the normal channels. This caused some confusion. More communication between the impacted community and the State Patrol is needed.

Technical Committee: The committee is working on a FAQ tab for WA-PAWS that will primarily help those not familiar on how alerting is accomplished in the state from a technicians perspective. Suggestions for the FAQs are requested.

Training: Ted recently did a very well received EAS-101 presentation for the San Juan County Amateur Radio Society. He encouraged their participation in the North Puget Sound LECC. He is continues to try to communicate with FEMA about a national training plan.

Local Reports: There was an issue with low audio levels during EAS Tests on some parts of the Comcast cable system. The problem was shared with Comcast and it was resolved.

The Central Puget Sound local area has had 2 successful RMT's in a row. So has Mason/Thurston.

Franklin County has procured a new frequency for their analog backup distribution system. In the past, they used a frequency supplied by KONA radio.

In the Inland area, Spokane Emergency Management did their first RMT. They have been previously done by the sheriff's department. They are doing live RMT recordings instead of using TTS.

The North Central local area is working on coordinating WEA alerts with neighboring counties. They are trying to minimize confusion when neighboring counties have similar street names. Radio waves do not respect political boundaries.

In the Okanagan, the September RMT was missed, since they sent several real alerts during that time period. Other RMTs have been okay. They have the equipment on hand to rebuild their LRN that has been inactive for several years.

At Washington State Emergency Management, the legacy AlertSense system will end at the end of March for EAS in favor of the IPAWS version of the system. The state has been paying for the legacy service for all counties for many years. At some point, the legacy version will probably be discontinued by AlertSense anyway. Going forward, any IPAWS compliant software will send messages to the EAS, WEA and NWEA. The state will be assisting counties in the transition. They will need to have a COG (Collaborative Operating Group) agreement with FEMA. The state vets the application and sends it to the Department Of Homeland Security. Twenty five counties have completed the process, one is in progress and 13 are left to go.

An Earthquake Early Warning WEA test will occur on February 25 for King, Pierce and Thurston counties. A real alert would give an earthquake warning seconds or even minutes before a quake, and be automatic since human intervention or decision-making takes precious warning time. The test will only involve phones with WEA 2.0 or 3.0 and invited users in a selected outreach effort must opt-in to receive this test message. They do not want people to get annoyed by receiving the test and opt-out of WEA altogether.

FEMA has entered into a nationwide partnership with Lamar Advertising ([Lamar](#)) to display emergency messages on their electronic billboards. See the press release for more information [here](#). More clarification is needed at the state level.

The new Non-Weather Emergency Message (NWEM) program by the National Weather Service (NWS) is expected to roll out by April. NWEM replaces HazCollect.

At the National Weather Service Portland, retired Tyree Wilde's replacement is Trina Jenson. Partial county alerting is being tested in southern Nevada and message originators need to be planning for sub-county alerting. It will probably not happen in Washington state until at least late next year. An update for the NWS TAB in the state plan is being drafted.

Monte reported that Ted's EAS-101 presentation really impressed the San Juan County amateur radio people.

The Coastal LECC is re-activating. They have not had a meeting in some time and requested a copy of the EAS-101 presentation for distribution prior to their next meeting.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 9:30 AM PST and likely on Zoom again.

SECC MEETING ROLL CALL – January 12, 2021

POSITION	NAME	PRESENT
Chair	Clay Freinwald	X
Vice Chair	Ted Buehner	X
WEMD Chair	Chis Utzinger	X
WEMD A&W	Tony Clark	X
WEMD Multilingual	Lewis Lujan	
NWS	Reid Wolcott	X
WEA -	Bill Peters	
WSP Amber Coordinator	Carri Gordon	X
Eastern WA Leaders	Sandi Duffy	X
	Charlie Osgood	
Data Base Mgr	Simone Ramel-McKay	X
FEMA Reg 10	Laura Goodreau	
Technical Committee	Lowell Kiesow	
Comm Systems Chair	Phil Johnson	X
Cable TV - Comcast	Cami Peacock	
Recording Secretary	Terry Spring	X
Amateur Radio	Monte Simpson	X
Test Coordinator	Roland Robinson	
WSAB	Keith Shipman	

LECC Chairs

OPERATIONAL AREA	NAME	PRESENT
Central Puget	Phil Johnson	X
Clallam	Anne Chastain	
Coastal	Hannah Cloverly	
Columbia Basin	Sean Davis	X
Cowlitz/Wahkiakum	John Mackey Beau Renfro	
Inland N.W.	Simone Ramel-McKay	
Kittitas	Brad Tacher Nicholas Elliot	
Lewis	Larry Minor Scott Mattoon Andy Caldwell	
Mason/Thurston	John Price	
North Central	Charlie Osgood Sandi Duffey	X
No. Puget Sound	Dan McDermott Jay Morrison	X
Okanogan	Maurice Goodall John Andrist	X
Yakima		

