

Washington SECC Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 AM by Chair Ted Buehner. The previous minutes were approved. There were no adjustments to the previous minutes nor additions to the agenda.

Announcements

There is an ongoing wildfire disaster happening in Southern California. Overall, dissemination of emergency information has gone quite well. Some of the limitations have been loss of power and destruction of cell sites. Starlink is being used as an alternative to cell service which has been made inoperative. More and more emergency management organizations are starting to utilize it. It is another tool in the toolbox.

There were some evacuation notices in LA that were resent days after they were originally sent out. This was due to the system being overwhelmed and a software glitch with their vendor. Our local emergency managers are aware of this possibility and have worked with their vendors to ensure they are working on mitigating this potential problem. It was suggested that emergency managers check with their providers to make sure that emergency alerts can't go into a queue and get sent at a later date. This is especially important when multiple alerts are being sent.

There are differences between EAS and WEA in the way they handle the distribution areas. You cannot use a map to launch an EAS--that is not how the system works. However, templates and maps for WEA can be downloaded and created in advance. This will save time when the alerts need to be launched. If you need assistance with this, ask your vendor and/or the IPAWS team for support.

The FCC is now going to require that wireless providers that provide wireless emergency alerts, to support 18 templated messages in the 13 most commonly spoken languages in the US. That's in addition to English and American Sign Language. This will be required within 30 months after the report and order is published in the Federal Register. Jim House has been working on this technology for several years now and has presented at the Partners In Emergency Preparedness Conference in recent years. In summation, the alert is supposed to

appear first in the device's default language and must be followed by the English version.

Old Business

It's a new year with a new meeting schedule. It is posted below and on the [WA PAWS](#) website. We will try to have an in-person meeting in Ellensburg in May.

There is legislation in Congress, HR 2892, The Weather Alert And Response Message (WARM). There are concerns about some of the limitations in the public alert and warning systems in some parts of the country. As mentioned in our last meeting, the GAO was going to be taking a closer look at the state EAS plans. Ted thinks we are doing quite well, but there is always room for improvement. And that is the goal of this committee. There have been some events recently (i.e. Lahaina Wildfire) where the warning system didn't work well. More information on HR 2892 is [here](#). Last month the bill passed the House, headed to the Senate and apparently died there.

The Weather Service tab has been updated in [WA PAWS](#), mostly making the adjustment of dropping tsunami watch as part of EAS. Use of EAS is now limited to just tsunami warning, making it consistent with the rest of the west coast. It could diminish the distant event lead time during the overnight hours.

Ted is always looking for more Tabletop Exercises to add to [WA PAWS](#) TAB F9. These are for both originators and broadcasters to train staff for different emergency scenarios tailored for your local area.

The WA-PAWS By-Laws revision is being revived. One sticking point is the plan for leader succession and the possibility of having regular elections. Keith and Lowell will help Ted review the By-Laws and get them ready to be approved by the membership. George Long and Scott Sipe will also assist.

New Business

The final 2025 RMT Schedule has been posted.

ATSC 3.0 has been in the works for several years and has been tested successfully in several markets around the country. Broadcasters will have an opportunity for bi-directional communication and data gathering with their consumers, as an alternative to Neilson. TV continues to evolve. How this will affect public alerting will be covered in a future meeting.

Red Grasso of the North Carolina First Responder Emerging Technologies Program gave a short presentation on Next Gen TV, what it is and what they have been doing with it in North Carolina. Television used to be the gathering place for the whole family. Now everybody is on their own devices. Using North Carolina as an example, their local PBS stations broadcast in ATSC 1.0 a HD channel and 3 sub-channels in SD. There is some bandwidth left for datacasting. With ATSC 3.0 all channels are in HD and there is more capacity for data. This data can take many forms such as text or video/audio files. This data could also be used for alerts and warnings. Instead of just a scroll at the bottom of the screen, EAS alerts could contain maps, pictures, suspect information, evacuation and shelter information, etc. ATSC 3.0 also contains what is known as a "wake-up bit". It can actually turn on a television set that is in the off state. However, there are on-going discussions on this involving potential liabilities for manufacturers and the potential for over alerting by originators. Also in NC, they are looking at the possibility of using that data to activate suburban and rural first responder pagers. This would give them a state-wide paging system fed by their PBS network. They have a prototype pager that is working well.

The NAB has been pushing for a software solution for EAS. This would allow EAS to evolve as technology evolves. There has been diminishing support for EAS hardware. Sage is no longer manufacturing the ENDEC. Keith expects to learn more when he is in Washington, DC visiting Congressional representatives in March.

Committee Reports

Technical: There are still some citizens that are hunting around for information about EAS and EAS Tests. Be careful about sharing sensitive information. One, who uses the handle "Yuds", has contacted EM's locally. Contact has been by phone and email. FEMA is aware of this. If you are contacted, please let FEMA know.

Training: Ted reminded us that the training TAB on the [WA PAWS](#) website has a lot of useful information for originators, broadcasters and anybody that's involved in public alerting and warning. And when you do a tabletop, invite as many kinds of players as you can.

RMT: Roland sent out the reminder for the January RMT. Hopefully it was received by all the originators.

Local Area Reports

In the Central Puget Sound local area, NORCOM 911 is no longer issuing public alerts or tests. Pierce County covered the last RMT and Jason will coordinate with other agencies for future tests. The LRN repeater is still down. Nick Winter has agreed to work on it. Lowell will be delivering it to him. If it's not repairable a replacement will have to be found.

The RMT issues in Clallam County have apparently been resolved.

The Coastal area LECC is meeting on January 23rd. They are working on their plan revision. Their LRN is working well and there are plans to expand it to Pacific County. There is a problem with a station in Pacific Beach receiving weather radio. Scott plans *to* go there and assist them.

In the Columbia Basin, Sean reported that they did a successful RMT.

The Inland Northwest is having an online LECC meeting this month.

The Kittitas County LECC is meeting this month. Kittitas County Emergency Management is waiting for their certificates to upload into Everbridge so that they will finally be able to push messages to the public. When it happens, a tabletop exercise will be scheduled to get everyone familiar with the process.

In the North Central area, they are watching the LA fires with interest. Maurice noted that the evacuation alerts he issues are more specific as to location. There have been no problems with their RMT's. Their LECC has not met in quite some time, but they do communicate often.

Stakeholder Reports

WSEM: The SRN is still inoperative. Lowell plans to reach out to state EMD and work on a solution with them.

NWS: There is a new NOAA weather radio station in the Enterprise, Oregon, area.

Amateur Radio: The amateur radio TAB is still being edited with plans to finish it for SECC review soon.

Other Business

None.

The meeting ended at 10:40 AM.

Please share future agenda items with SECC Administration Assistant Scott Sipe at scott.sipe@alphamediausa.com who compiles the agenda.

For information on joining the SECC remailer, go to [this link](#).

The next meeting will be with Zoom on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 9:30 AM PST.

CHATBOX

01:00:17 Ed Taylor: Ed Taylor, City of Lacey
01:00:38 Jim House (he/they): Good morning! Jim House, Disability/AFN Integration Manager for the Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning with WA Statewide Independent Living Council.
01:08:04 Justine Chorley: Do we know what system they were using for WEA
01:08:34 Chris Arnesen, KATU: We're using Starlink here at KATU and at KOMO with our LiveU backpacks. For the price, it is very effective and we definitely recommend it.
01:15:38 Jim House (he/they): What is the timeline for implementation?
01:25:36 George Long Kittitas County LECC: I can help
01:28:35 Justine Chorley: My apologies I need to jump to another meeting
01:43:01 Char Dewey NWS Spokane Warning Coord. Meteorologist: I was just applauding. Great presentation, thanks for sharing!
01:43:11 Red Grasso (North Carolina): Happy to connect - red.grasso@nc.gov
01:49:28 Sean Davis, Franklin County EM: Dear Sean Davis of Franklin County Emergency Management and the Columbia Basin Local Emergency Communications Committee,

I am a radio listener who is interested in the Emergency Alert System.

Are Morrow and Umatilla Counties, Oregon part of the Columbia Basin, Washington operational area or the Eastern Oregon operational area?

I am asking because Washington State and Oregon's EAS plans are showing conflicting information regarding which operational areas the two counties are part of.

Sincerely,

Yuds

01:50:32 Sean Davis, Franklin County EM: redacted@gmail.com
01:50:54 Sean Davis, Franklin County EM: That was the email I received his request from
01:57:54 Ted Buehner - Chair Wash SECC: Terry - I see a few new people who have joined since the roll call - in the participants list.
02:03:27 Arthur Grunbaum - KGHI 91.1-KGHE 89.1: KGHE 89.1 has lost its tower and equipment location in Montesano, due to the purchase of the tower by 911. We are looking for a replacement location, if anyone can suggest an alternative.

2025 SECC MEETING DATES	LOCATION
Tuesday Jan 7	Anticipate SECC Meetings will remain virtual via Zoom until further notice, apart from perhaps a few well-advertised exceptions.
Tuesday Mar 11	
Tuesday May 13	
Tuesday July 8	
Tuesday Sept 18	
Tuesday Nov 9	

Note –

- The above schedule can be altered by the SECC as needed, particularly if that second Tuesday of the month conflicts with a holiday or other special day.
- The SECC may hold special meetings as required.

To subscribe to the Washington State EAS remailer, follow this [link](#).

SECC Members

POSITION	NAME	PRESENT
Chair	Ted Buehner	X
Vice Chair	Lowell Kiesow	X
Chair Emeritus	Clay Freinwald	
WAEMD Chair	Kevin Wickersham	
WAEMD A&W	Chris Phillips	
WAEMD Multilingual	Lewis Lujan	
NWS	Reid Wolcott	
WEA	Bill Peters	
Amber Coordinator	Carri Gordon	
Eastern WA Leaders	Sandi Duffey	X
	Charlie Osgood	
Data Base Manager	Simone Ramel-McKay	X
FEMA Reg 10		
Technical Committee	Lowell Kiesow	X
Comm Systems Chair		
Cable TV - Comcast	James Casson	
Administrative Assistant	Scott Sipe	X
Recording Secretary	Ferry Spring	X
Amateur Radio	Monte Simpson	
Test Coordinator	Roland Robinson	
WSAB	Keith Shipman	X-

LECC Chairs

OPERATIONAL AREA	NAME	PRESENT
Central Puget	Jason Shirron	X
Clallam	Justine Chorley	X
Coastal	Pat Anderson	
Columbia Basin	Sean Davis	X
Cowlitz/Wahkiakum	John Mackey Austin Smith	
Inland N.W.	Simone Ramel-McKay	X
Kittitas	George Long	X
Lewis	Ross McDowell	
Mason/Thurston	Sonya Kroese	
North Central	Charlie Osgood Brady Aldrich	
No. Puget Sound	Dan McDermott Dave Halloran	X
Okanogan	Maurice Goodall John Andrist	X
Yakima	Angela Brown (SunComm) Mike McMullen	

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

NAME	AFFILIATION	PRESENT
Jim House	Coalition On Inclusive Emergency Planning	X
Ed Taylor	City Of Lacey	X
John Ebner	Jefferson County DEM	X
Arthur RD Grunbaum	KGHI-KGHE	X
Chris Arnesen	KATU	X
Conner Crookshank	KBTC-TV	X
Mireya Garcia	GCSO EM	X
Char Dewey	NWS Spokane	X
Patiel Bedrosian	KSPS Spokane	X
Red Grasso	North Carolina PBS	X