

Washington SECC Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 AM by Chair Ted Buehner. This was a hybrid meeting with several people meeting in person in Ellensburg. Introductions were made. The previous minutes were approved with a correction that has been posted on the state website. There were no additions to the agenda.

Ted was remote because he was on the east coast. He was able to join us because his filming assignment was postponed due to inclement weather.

Announcements

The Portland weather radio transmitter is being replaced. They will be off the air for a couple of days during the installation. On April 30, the National Weather Service lost about 1000 staff, roughly 20% of their people. Virtually all their offices have been affected. Many offices no longer have the staff to be open 24/7, even in the Midwest tornado regions. Offices, such as Portland and Seattle are serving to back up these offices.

The SECC list (TAB B2 in [WA PAWS](#)) has been updated. Besides the new FEMA Regional Communications Coordinator, Rebecca Dance, there is a new representative for cable.

The federal government is withholding funds to make further enhancements of the emergency alert system across the country. There has been some discussion on whether our SECC and others will provide feedback on that.

Old Business

Monte Simpson discussed the new Amateur Radio TAB. It has been in the works for several years. The purpose is to help emergency management, broadcasters folks and amateur radio members work together to provide backup information and resources to the public during a disaster. There are concerns that the various stakeholders have that need to be addressed. The goal is for amateur radio to provide primary communication, alternate communication and/or contingency or emergency information to the public. Monte emphasized that the various parties must work together as a team to get the information out to the public. The

document has been distributed on the remailer. This document will be distributed again in its final version and then voted on at the July meeting.

Simone will have an update on the LECC TAB by the July meeting. There have been a lot of changes lately.

There is nothing new on the SRN repair.

New Business

The Spokane NWS office was supposed to originate a RMT for the Inland Empire, but they couldn't due to an internet outage. They asked the state to originate but apparently it was not communicated that it was supposed to just be for the Inland Empire counties. So, it was run as an all-state RMT, and everybody got it. Simone is working with them and discussing other alternatives for backing up alerts. She expects to have more information by the July meeting.

The state is still using the wrong duration on their RMT's. It should be 3 hours, not 1.

The new state AMBER Alert coordinator is Mary Jo Margesson of WSP. Cari Gordon of WSP retired.

Committee Reports

Technical: The Seattle weather service office will have a planned outage for the NOAA weather radio on May 27th through the 29th. The outage in Portland will be from May 19th through the 21st.

Charlie reported that Maurice Goodall, up in Okanogan County, is working to expand his ability to monitor what goes out for EAS activity, with new antennas and receivers there. One thing that came up was that he wasn't receiving Okanogan RMT's through the public radio station he is monitoring. That actually ended up working out favorably... Since they were able to look at it; discover the omission (that's been added back in); and fix things for the future -- before the beginning of fire season.

Training: Nothing new.

Local Area Reports

In the Central Puget Sound local area, the RMT's have been successful. The LRN repeater is with Lowell for repair. Lowell is looking for Bob Meisner, a retired radio tech and local ham. If anyone knows how to get hold of him, please let Lowell know. Jason is also looking for options to replace the unit.

Nothing new to report in Clallam County.

The Coastal area had an LECC meeting in April. There's another one planned for September. They are working on their plan update over the summer with the goal of having it done by the end of the year.

There is nothing new in Cowlitz.

The Inland Northwest will be having an in-person LECC meeting in September. They are trying to pick a date that will allow the maximum number of attendees. They will be discussing private partnerships in terms of disasters. They will also discuss what they are doing better and how they can improve.

In Kittitas County, they have been running some tabletop exercises. They have been helpful with lessons learned and discussions started. They are amending their agreement with the state so that the Central Washington University Emergency Management and Police can send their own messages independent of the county should the need arise.

In Mason/Thurston, nothing to report.

In the North Central area, Rivercom is no longer originating tests. The Chelan County Sheriff's Office is doing it. For the May RMT, they did the audio using a file instead of speech to text. It was a substantial improvement. There will be a North Central LECC Meeting on June 6 in Wenatchee.

In Yakima, they had an LECC meeting in April. They also had a successful RMT in May.

Stakeholder Reports

WSAB: Keith reported that all the Snohomish County law enforcement and fire jurisdictions have upgraded their 911 system on May 6 so it is now encrypted. Broadcasters and newspapers have met with law enforcement leadership to work out a solution for all parties. They are creating a data feed on a password protected website that will be available to the press.

A new law that creates a new definition of broadcasters in our state went into effect in April. A broadcaster has been issued a license by the FCC, has a call sign beginning with K, and includes written information disseminated by those entities. Absent are You Tubers, bloggers, etc. That had been a sticking point with Snohomish County.

Other Business

Barry Mishkind brought up EAS software (as opposed to the current EAS hardware system). He thinks it's a bad idea because it has not been well thought out. There are many questions, such as who will write it, maintain it, support it, and for how long? And will it be cheaper or more expensive than the current system? He doesn't see an advantage. He hears a lot of rumbling of people pushing the FCC to move on this. But he notes, the rewrite of Part 11 has been going on for 13 years now. And to come up with a whole new system?

Radio stations have changed. Everything is computerized now. There are already computers and software in EAS boxes. You still need receivers and some way to get the emergency audio on the air. Are owners and managers going to support spending money on an entirely new system? Does large radio want to kill EAS? Will the FCC abandon it in favor of WEA?

Keith largely concurred that larger markets drive the broadcast industry. But he stated there are 10000 stations in small and mid-sized markets in this country. And he doesn't see small market operators ignoring EAS or turning it aside. He does see that happening in the larger markets because a lot of what is distributed on EAS is a tune out. The large markets are ratings driven and every second counts. That's also true in the smaller markets, but to a lesser extent. People are more forgiving about content in the smaller markets.

Emergency information needs to be localized. An EAS message may contain general information about, for example, a tornado alert, but it may not have the specific information the public needs. Unfortunately, many stations are not manned any more during part, or all, of the day. Also, state and local EAS messages are optional.

Emergency managers and broadcasters need to build relationships so that both needs are met. And not just the engineers on the broadcast side. Managers and programmers need to be on board. And emergency alerts need to be written in a way that is concise and still conveys the information that needs to be delivered to the public.

Ted noted that May 18 is the 45th anniversary of the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. As in 1980, the 18th is a Sunday.

Terry Spring noted that Zoom now has the capability to generate a transcript of the meetings. He asked if that was something the participants wanted instead of the summary. He tried making a transcript, but Ted thought it was too long.

The meeting ended at 10:47 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 in-person and remote with Zoom on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, at 9:30 AM PST on Zoom.

CHATBOX

00:41:11YVEM Advanced Planning: YVEM- Yakima Valley Emergency Management Mike McMullen

00:56:37Lowell Kiesow: I heard Monte loud and clear

01:18:56Scott N7LOL: We have a weedeater that has joined in Ellensburg -----

01:19:41Scott N7LOL: Ok, we got that quieted down

01:19:44Scott N7LOL: Sorry

01:35:36Barry Mishkind: Simone - to modify the phrase: "From your lips to all EMs" If so, emergency information would be much improved all over the country.

01:41:04YVEM Advanced Planning: Yakima County Update-
Yakima County successfully sent out RMT last week. Did have an issue yesterday with an IPAWS test-x2(gave a format error and polygon error-yet appears identical to previous successful test) working with Everbridge to sort it out.

Recently folded the EOC-to-EOC comms exercise on 03-29-25 into a multi-exercise activity adding the PNWU MCI Exercise, a local Kittitas Co. to Yakima Co. marathon and evacuation exercise. This involved both EM & amateur /volunteer/ public resources in both counties.

LECC meeting in April -NWS Pendleton Presentation

01:41:35YVEM Advanced Planning: look at top

01:41:59YVEM Advanced Planning: no that's it

01:42:33Kevin Jackman: Skagit County successfully sent out our RMT on May 5th. My first EAS button push for North Sound

01:47:55YVEM Advanced Planning: emergency supplies go quick

01:49:13YVEM Advanced Planning: Would appreciate the transcript

2025 SECC MEETING DATES	LOCATION
Tuesday July 8	Anticipate SECC Meetings will remain virtual via Zoom until further notice, apart from perhaps a few well-advertised exceptions.
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](#).

* Denotes in-person attendance in Ellensburg

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	Meredith McClurkan	
WAEMD Multilingual	Lewis Lujan	
NWS	Reid Wolcott	
WEA	Bill Peters	
Amber Coordinator		
Eastern WA Leaders	Sandi Duffey	X*
	Charlie Osgood	X*
Data Base Manager	Simone Ramel-McKay	X
FEMA Reg 10	Rebecca Dance	X
Technical Committee	Lowell Kiesow	X
Comm Systems Chair		
Cable TV - Comcast	Trevor Nelson	
Administrative Assistant	Scott Sipe	X*
Recording Secretary	Terry Spring	X*
Amateur Radio	Monte Simpson	X
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	
Cowlitz/Wahkiakum	John Mackey Austin Smith	X
Inland N.W.	Simone Ramel-McKay	X
Kittitas	George Long	X*
Lewis	Ross McDowell	
Mason/Thurston	Sonya Kroese	
North Central	Charlie Osgood Brady Aldrich	X*
No. Puget Sound	Dan McDermott Dave Halloran	
Okanogan	Maurice Goodall John Andrist	
Yakima	Angela Brown (SunComm) Mike McMullen	X

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

NAME	AFFILIATION	PRESENT
Jerry Olson	KBPX Spokane	X
John Ebner	Jefferson County DEM	X
Mireya Garcia	Grant County EM	X*
Kevin Jackman		X
Joe Kline	KCTS-Cascade PBS	X
Jessica Olsen	Grant County EM	X*
Frances Burkhart		X
Joan Cromley		X
Robert Greene	Whatcom County Sherriff's Office	X
Tammy Wright	Mason County EOC	X
Steve Bonner	FC EM	X
Barry Mishkind		X