State of Maine
Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP)

Bi-Monthly Update –December 2012 #38

State's Interoperability Vision

The State of Maine will have a firmly established, formally managed and maintainable communications environment, based on technology, protocols, training and usage, that will provide seamless communications capability to all emergency management, first responder, and response support organizations at the local, regional and State levels, enabling them to exchange information via voice and data means, as required by standard NIMS response procedures, to provide effective, coordinated and timely all hazards response to our citizens.

ALL About Narrowbanding

With less than two weeks left before the FCC Narrowband mandate deadline, what have we done and where are we?

To prepare for the Narrowband deadline State, County, Local and Tribal agencies have spent a great deal of time and their own funding to convert or upgrade their radio systems. In addition the Maine Emergency Management Agency has spent over $7.5 million of grant funds on equipment, exercises, and planning, to meet the December 31, 2012 deadline.

Maine has replaced thousands of wide band radios with new narrowband radios that have been dispersed to State, County, and local agencies. MEMA also joined with the Counties with on several pooled buys to reduce the cost of equipment, which helped put more radios in the hands of responders.

MEMA also purchased hundreds of new pagers to replace old non – Narrowbandable pagers. These new pagers helped ease the financial burden of local fire departments to ensure that the first responders could be notified of an event or emergency.

A Narrowband website was created that allowed users to obtain information on how to narrowband equipment, FCC relicensing and how to modify their license. MEMA also continues to publish this very SCIP Newsletter including important links, notices, updates, and assistance.

A letter from the Director of MEMA was mailed to Municipalities advising public officials of the upcoming mandate.

The "Narrowband: Are You Ready?" educational DVD was made informing first responders, public officials, and public safety officials of the consequences of not narrowbanding their equipment. The DVD has been requested in 23 other states (as far away as Alaska) to help their states inform their public safety officials.

MEMA also advised and informed private businesses including oil dealers, contractors, forestry, and transit organizations with mailings, workshops, and technical advice.

With the proactive approach - Maine is leading the nation in Narrowbanding, which has not been an easy task considering the financial

climate and the aging communication systems. Tremendous congratulations to all of those that took a proactive and sensible approach to meeting this daunting deadline. GREAT JOB MAINE…

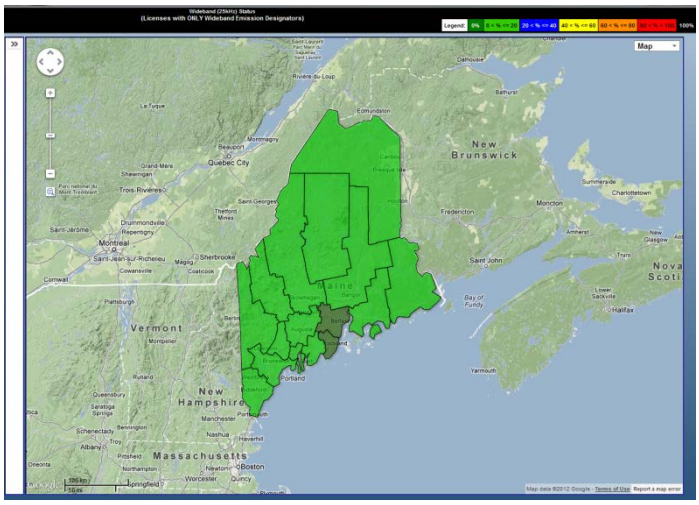
Where do we stand compared to the rest of the Country?

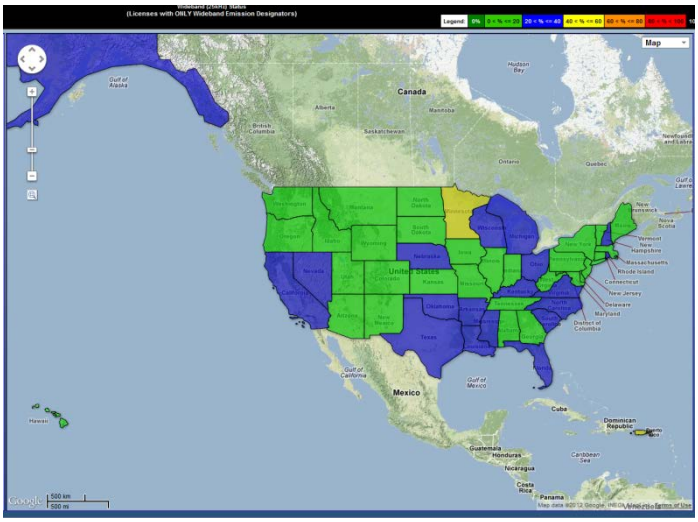
Wideband Frequency Left to Convert:
Maine: 12.1% Nation: 31.3%

Wideband Call Sign Left to Convert:
Maine: 7.2% Nation: 25.5%

Wideband Transmitter Left to Convert:
Maine: 4.6% Nation: 21.4%

Maine is leading the Nation except for American Samoa (With only two transmitters!). Maine's percentages could be lower but some other factors can be considered. Some licenses will not be narrowbanded because of non-relicensing or non-usage of existing equipment; therefore, the licensee will not be using the radios anymore and just letting their license go. Great work Maine and if you would like to see other States or percentages please contact the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator at MEMA





MSCommNet

Maine State Government Fulfills Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Mandate.

All land mobile radio repeater equipment for Maine State Government has been converted to operate in narrowband mode, meeting the FCC narrowband mandate for January 1, 2013.

To convert the mountaintop radio repeaters, on-site visits to 35 sites across the state commenced on June 18, 2012, with many sites hosting more than one repeater. West Kennebago Mountain, accessible only by helicopter, was the final site converted on November 28, 2012.

The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) - as the lead coordinating agency for narrowbanding in Maine - published work progress during the cutover to narrowbanding to keep interoperability partners informed. The State announced the conversions site-by-site to mitigate potential impacts. Continuous interoperability between state, county, local, tribal, and federal law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services (EMS), and emergency planning agencies is essential. Radio Services technicians from the State's Office of Information Technology (OIT) performed the narrowband switchover work on mountaintops. OIT's MSCommNet (Maine State

Communications Network) Project Office, augmented by contracted technicians, also deployed narrowband-compliant and MSCommNet-ready radio equipment for State agency customers: more than 1071 new mobile radios were installed in State vehicles, 1220 new portable radios issued to State personnel, and 87 base stations installed in State facilities.
The State received a 12 month "Narrowband-Waiver" from the FCC which will prevent violations should unintentional "off inventory" wide-band radios be still in use. OIT will convert any and all State equipment identified in the coming months, to comply with the FCC narrowband requirement.
Installation of the new radios fulfills part of the MSCommNet project objectives, including meeting the FCC narrowband mandate. OIT continues to move forward with the MSCommNet unification and modernization of public safety radio communication systems for Maine State Government.
The concurrent MSCommNet project is ongoing and scheduled for completion in late 2013.

Source: MSCommNet Project Office 11 December 2012
for more information tom.driscoll@maine.gov

NARROWBANDING

PUBLIC NOTICE

Released: November 30, 2012
WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU, PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU, AND OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY PROVIDE REMINDER OF JANUARY 1, 2013 DEADLINE FOR TRANSITION TO NARROWBAND OPERATIONS IN THE 150-174 MHz AND 421-470 MHz BANDS
This *Public Notice* reminds licensees, frequency coordinators, equipment vendors, and other interested parties of the Federal Communications Commission's January 1, 2013 deadline for private land mobile radio (PLMR) services in the 150-174 MHz and 421-470 MHz (VHF/UHF) bands to migrate to Narrowband (12.5 kHz or narrower) technology.1
To receive the full FCC Announcement please use this link for further information
http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/narrowbanding-overview

Countdown to Mandatory Narrowbanding
days hrs
13 12
Are You Ready?...

Border Interoperability Demonstration Project

The BIDP continues to move forward with partnerships still being made between our Canadian counterparts and the State of Maine responders. MOU's are being worked on so the equipment can be utilized. On the technical side, the proposed tower sites are under review for Historic and Environmental approval, construction anticipation will be in the spring.

A second cross-border partners meeting was held in Rangeley in November. Two representatives from Quebec responder agencies participated along with several Maine agencies. Additional meetings will be held with New Brunswick and Aroostook and Washington County agencies. Table Top Exercises are also planned for the first part of 2013

MSCommNet Videos Available Online

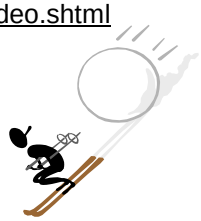
By Tom Driscoll, MSCommNet Project Office

Short videos about **MSCommNet** — Maine **S**tate **Comm**unications **Net**work — the new public safety radio communications network for Maine State Government are available online.

RegionNet. In one video short, Lieutenant Colonel Ray Bessette, Deputy Chief of the Maine State Police talks about RegionNet, a VHF analog interoperability layer in the new MSCommNet System that will enable communications with county, local, and other partners. MSCommNet will be implemented in two phases - commencing in the summer of 2012, and scheduled for completion in 2013. The video was recorded in March 2012 during the statewide MSCommNet outreach sessions.

The video link below will take you off the State of Maine website and to the YouTube Video website; a transcript is provided next to each link.
www.maine.gov/oit/services/radio/mscommnet/video.shtml

Varda Units



The **V**oice **A**ctivated **R**adio **D**ispatched **A**larm (VARDA) that was identified a few months ago as not being narrowband compliant *can* be reprogrammed. According to the VARDA Company they have been working feverishly to ensure that all units will meet the narrowband mandate deadline. All units have to be sent back to the manufacturer for reprogramming. The Maine SWIC and the Office of the Attorney General have been in contact with the manufacturer to ensure that these units will be compliant. The VARDA units are typically used for domestic violence victims that can alert police departments of an emergency via the radio.

EMAC Deployment

Recently a volunteer multi-disciplinary team of emergency operations specialists left Maine and headed to the Emergency Operations Center in Brooklyn, New York. The team provided much-needed relief to those serving survivors of Hurricane Sandy.

The group reported to the New York City Emergency Operations Center. The team included personnel from the Maine Air and Army National Guard, the Departments of Public Safety and Transportation, and the Maine Emergency Management Agency as well as a local Fire Chief and private sector energy expert. Team members specialize in several different emergency support functions. Those team members that deployed were:

Department of Public Safety, Maine State Police:
- Lt. Shawn Currie
- Lt. Bill Harwood

Department of Transportation:
- Brian Burne
- Donald Hutchins

Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management:
- Bruce Fitzgerald, MEMA
- Steven Mallory, MEMA
- 2LT Michael Stansfield, Maine National Guard (Army)
- LTC Brenda Jordan, Maine National Guard (Army)
- SFC John Knoblach, Maine National Guard (Army)
- MAJ Jack Decker, Maine National Guard (Air)
- SSGT Nicole Mathews, Maine National Guard (Air)

Partners:
- Darrel Fournier, Fire Chief, Town of Freeport
- Joseph Sukaskas, volunteer, energy expert

From a Communication aspect, one of the tasks assigned was to establish an Incident Radio Communication Plan (ICS 205) which had not been done. This Communication Plan was completed in less than 6 hours due to the coordination of two SWIC's and a retired NYPD Commander who was a COML. The plan was over seventeen pages (17) long and involved over 250 frequencies; and included UHF, VHF, 800, and trunking systems. Another task was to program 340 portables that were being used by National Guard and EMS crews conducting "wellness" checks in the badly damaged Rockaways neighborhood.

CONOPS & PL Tones

It is very important that when you program your radio to ***not*** program these frequencies with private line (PL) tones. The purpose of CONOPS is to have simple interoperable channels that all agencies will recognize and utilize at all times.

Border Interoperability Guide (BIG)

The second edition of the Border Guide is almost ready to be printed and distributed to the Counties along the border. Before this is disseminated please send me your revisions as soon as possible before this goes to print. Thanks for all those that have contributed to this epic field operation guide. Please contact me if you would like to have a copy and or any questions.

Do you know someone that wants to receive the SCIP Newsletter? It is simple to do, just follow this link to be put on the distribution list.

Signup for the SCIP Newsletter

Contribute to the SCIP Newsletter?

If you would like to contribute articles for upcoming SCIP Newsletters to highlight innovative practices in your respective counties and/or areas, please contact Steven.mallory@maine.gov