

Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee
State of Louisiana

<http://gohsep.la.gov/SIEC>

Jeff Landry
GOVERNOR



Mark Ward
CHAIRMAN

APPROVED - MEETING MINUTES

April 29, 2026

The Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) met on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at the State Emergency Operations Center, located at 7667 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, and via Teleconference.

I. Call to Order

A. Chairman Mark Ward called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

A. GOHSEP, Jake Chatfield, conducted the SIEC roll call and a quorum was established.

B. The following SIEC members were present or absent as noted:

Committee Members Present	Representing Agency
Mark Ward – Response Division Director	Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)
Steven Cockerham – Designee for Adjutant General of the Louisiana National Guard	Louisiana National Guard
Bill Vincent, Secretary/Treasurer APCO Lafayette Parish Communications District (Ret.)	Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO)
Jeb Tate Director, IT & Telecommunications, Jefferson Parish Government	Region 1
Kevin Forbes, DPTY West Feliciana Parish Sheriff's Office Office Designee for Billie Mertz	Region 2
Conrad Baker, CPT Technology/911 OPS Center St. John Parish Sheriff's Office	Region 3
Scott Ben Office Designee for Ellis Boothe	Region 6
Doyle Dempsey, MAJ Support Bureau / Asset Management Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office	Region 7

Committee Members Present	Representing Agency
Robert “Bobby” Moore, Fire Chief, Ouachita Parish Fire Department	Region 8
Derek Sentino, LT Director of Mobility & Communication Services	State of Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections, Public Safety Services, Louisiana State Police (DPS)
Bryan Zeringue, Chief Thibodaux Police Department	Louisiana Association of Chiefs of Police
Jayson Richardson Sheriff of Desoto Parish	Louisiana Sheriff’s Association

Committee Members Absent	Representing Agency
Jason Lionberger, Director Calcasieu OHSEP	Regional Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Director’s Committee
Brian Champagn, Chief Lafayette Fire Department	Louisiana Fire Chief’s Association
Christin Verdin	Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs
Robert Daughdril Emergency Preparedness Coordinator	Louisiana Ambulance Alliance
Stacey Blanchard, CPT Assistant Director, St. Martin Sheriff’s Office/OHSEP	Region 4
Richard McGuire Executive Director Calcasieu Parish Communications District	Region 5
Michael “Mike” Moore, SGT Canine & Patrol Division Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff’s Office	Region 9

III. Approval of Minutes

Bobby Moore made a motion to approve January 21, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Conrad Baker seconded the motion. The SIEC voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2026, meeting.

IV. Chairman’s Report

- A. Chairman Mark Ward began by thanking the members for attending the meeting and introducing himself as the new Chairman.
- B. Interoperability Program Manager, Jake Chatfield advised the board on statewide issues with Starlink units not getting appropriate updates and becoming unserviceable. Also, Jake updated the committee to on the results of the recent statewide exercise “2026 Cajun Krackin”. ESF2 conducted 28 injections that

included numerous ham radio traffic. Exercise provided good lessons learned along with contingencies if core services are lost. Jake updated the committee that SIEC Subcommittees are approved from GOHSEP Legal Department to hold meetings via Teams to allow more regular meetings.

- C. Statewide System Maintenance Report – Fefe Franklin with the DPS Radio Communications Section provided detailed information about the LWIN system. This information is available on the SIEC Website under the Meeting Minutes link.

V. Advisory Committee Reports

- A. Budget and Finance
No updates.
- B. Technical
No updates.
- C. Policy and Planning
No updates.
- D. Training and Outreach
No updates.

II. Unfinished Business

- A. Vernon McFadden from MCS updated the committee on the status of the seven-site addition status along with Yllka Gallardo with project manager for Motorola. Longview tower site build is complete except AT&T backhaul. The acceptance testing pending and the goal is to be online within 1 month once backhaul is configured. South Livingston tower site location has been identified. The building remediation is needed and does have an operation generator. MCS is currently working on costs and potential lease funding. Bossier City is still looking at additional site walk that is planned by mid-May. Morehouse tower site has identified location. Texas Gas is willing to contribute tower support but requires an MOU (not lease) between GOHSEP and Texas Gas. OBozo East tower site has been identified but currently lacks funding. Concordia tower has a recurring coordination planned regularly to identify location and pursue MOU with locals. Youngsville has a location identified. Parish has received a budgetary quote and GOHSEP is awaiting funding decision. Currently, tower trailer #97 is currently being used for coverage.
- B. Vernon McFadden updated the committee on the LaPlace and Gray tower sites. LaPlace remediation in three phases; phase 1 (new roof/exterior repairs) 90% completed. Phase 2 is pending a purchase order. Gray tower is experiencing infrastructure issues with the vertical bridge. MCS will continue to prioritize the repairs.

III. New Business

- A. Vernon McFadden advised the committee that Vermillion Tower leaseholder Kinetica has advised they are exiting tower business and LWIN must vacate. MCS is currently working with locals and Motorola for coverage maps for a potentially shorter replacement site. The goal is to move to new site to avoid extra storage costs along with uninstalling and storage of existing equipment.
- B. Vernon also advised that Golden Meadow tower: completed and fully operational; noted as the 154th tower site on the LWIN system.
- C. MCS facility fire incident caused by a water pipe leak dripped onto UPS's lead-acid batteries. MCS and GOHSEP have obtained the replacement UPS quotes and finally moved back into building. LWIN network experienced loss of power for only a few sites and no LWIN equipment was damaged beyond UPS.
- D. Mark Ward presented to the committee that tower lease process needs to be formalized as to how new leases, utilities, and telecom costs are approved. This will assist in overcoming future legislative budget constraints. The intent is to create an updated memorandum of understanding for workflow and prior cost-allocation calculations for future towers.

IV. Public Comments

- A. Conrad Baker raised concern about rumors from Motorola/sales outreach that MCC7500 consoles are nearing end-of-life and may stop working on LWIN; requested official clarification and written guidance. Mike Dronet of Motorola explained that there is effort underway with LSP and GOHSEP to upgrade GTR repeaters to newer "D series" under the SUA Plus program. The lifecycle roadmap can be provided to the committee when they come available. The GTR EOL around system is released 2029/2030 and the MCC EOL around system release is 2027/2030. The current release path referenced as moving to 2025.1 with 4-year support plan. Mike explained that GTR site upgrades are included in the SUA Plus proposal, but the console upgrades are the responsibility of local agencies. The Avtec consoles are off-RNI (use mobile radios) and would not need to be touched. The committee requested to have a distributed official lifecycle and timeline materials to reduce confusion and "hearsay" quotes. The Technical subcommittee meeting anticipated bringing in Motorola, confirm timelines, and chart an affordable path forward.

V. Next Quarterly Meeting

Chairman Mark Ward advised the committee that without objection, the next quarterly meeting of the SIEC would be August 26, 2026, at 1:30 PM, in person at the GOHSEP's EOC. There were no objections.

VI. Adjournment

Bryan Zeringue made a motion to adjourn, and Steven Cockerham second the motion. The SIEC voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:25 pm.