



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana

Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee

<http://www.ohsep.louisiana.gov/interop.htm>

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Honorable Bobby Jindal
Governor of Louisiana
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Dear Governor Jindal:

On behalf of the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) it is my pleasure to provide this bi-annual report on the status of interoperable communications for first responders in Louisiana.

Under your leadership and oversight by Mark Cooper, Louisiana was successful in passing key legislation unanimously in both houses during the 2008 Regular Legislative Session. As a result of Act 797 (SB788), the Office of Interoperability has been established within the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. The Act also creates an Assistant Deputy Director of Interoperability, and establishes under the Unified Command Group; the SIEC.

The Interoperability Subcommittee, which will officially retain the name of Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC), will be comprised of 20 members consisting of six first responder associations, five state agencies and each of the nine regional representatives. This multi disciplinary and multi jurisdictional committee is responsible for providing governance over the Louisiana Wireless Information Network (LWIN) and continuing to lead the state toward progress in advancing emergency responder interoperable communications capabilities as they envision infrastructure, governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercises to support a statewide system accessible to all local and state first responders, with capacity and capability to transmit emergency communications across spectrum from daily usage to a surge during an unknown catastrophic event.

The state for fiscal year 2008/2009, appropriated over \$38 million for interoperability related projects. This funding is being used toward expenses related to administration and maintenance costs, the installation of a 3rd master site in north Louisiana, and the acquisition and installation of (42) 700MHz voice repeaters, which will provide 95% mobile radio coverage throughout central and

north Louisiana and 95% portable radio coverage in the southern areas of the state. Finally, over \$8 million has been allocated for the purchase of subscriber units and/or consoles for local and state agencies.

Background

Louisiana is challenged to develop an interoperable communications system among a landscape that is highly vulnerable to multiple weather events of catastrophic proportion. Further challenges include budget constraints, and grant restrictions that limit our options.

Louisiana's local communication systems are highly disparate. These systems range from recently deployed systems to aged and even out-dated systems. Local entities have been trying very hard to work within their means. There are parishes that have succeeded in establishing interoperability and others who struggle with a lack of funding and resources.

Prior to establishment of the SIEC, there was no consistent statewide guidance which resulted in individual parishes and state agencies making decisions that best suited their needs and resources. This is the major cause of disparate systems.

The SIEC has made progress to advance the state's communications capabilities. Its mission is to design, construct, administer, and maintain a statewide shared communication system with the capacity to transport voice, data, and imagery within the system as well as to develop and approve system design, system testing, and an implementation plan. To accomplish this, the SIEC established policies and secured funds for the system operation, administration, and maintenance.

This governance body has been an essential element in Louisiana's plan to build a statewide communications system.

SIEC Accomplishments

SIEC Meetings and Events

The SIEC has taken great effort to ensure the involvement of key stakeholders from local and state first responder organizations as they conduct regular monthly meetings to discuss the needs of communications interoperability in Louisiana. This process has provided the SIEC with essential information to make sound judgments as they pertain to interoperability as well as provide the populace with information such as progress and developments on communications networks.

Creation and Maintenance of the SIEC Website

The SIEC's website is a compilation of administrative and public awareness information providing both general information as well as a library of interoperability data available to all SIEC members and Louisiana first responders. Visitors can access the most up to date information regarding interoperable communications and to obtain copies of By Laws, Policies, Procedures, Plans and Presentations. The website address is <http://www.ohsep.louisiana.gov/interop.htm>.

Refinement of the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan

The Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) subsumes and builds upon previous planning efforts by state agencies and local jurisdictions in cooperation with key federal agencies. The SCIP continues to play a pivotal role in outlining the state's communication needs and addressing those needs to create a seamless interoperability network. The SCIP was drafted by the SIEC and support staff with the help of regional representatives, organizational leaders and state legislators in an effort to form a comprehensive plan for meeting the state's interoperability needs. This document also met the requirements of the Departments of Homeland Security and Commerce, Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program, serving as a model plan for other states to use as a resource tool in developing their plans. The approval of Louisiana's SCIP allowed the release of substantial Federal funding that plays a key role in moving Louisiana towards statewide interoperability.

The State's plan is purposely flexible, to meet the challenges in funding sources, development of standard operating procedures, on-going evaluation of system capacity and emerging technologies, and public information to increase local buy in and usage. In addition, this plan is integrated with the State's Homeland Security Strategy, specifically Goal 1, which calls for establishing an interoperable communications environment for all the State's first responders. Finally, the outlying goals established by this document incorporate the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum to ensure continuity and integration with the direction established by the federal government.

Development of Statewide Communications System, Policies

The SIEC and Office of Interoperability recently developed and approved statewide system policies. These policies provide detailed guidance on system governance general requirements, maintenance, expansion, enhancement, access and programming. The approved policies are outlined below:

Statewide Requirements Policy / 09-001

This policy outlines the statewide P25 System Governance, General Requirements, Maintenance and Expansion and Expansion.

The state delegates, through Act 797 (SB788), governance of the statewide communications system to the SIEC.

The general system requirements require the state to provide 95% or better coverage when using a portable radio inside a building within at least the more densely populated metropolitan areas of the state, and 95% or better coverage when using a portable street level radio in all other areas of the state.

The SIEC delegates maintenance of the statewide communication system to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Public Safety Services (DPS), Radio Communications Section.

Statewide System Access Policy / 09-002

This policy outlines the process for agencies to access to the statewide 700 MHz/800 MHz Project 25 System infrastructure. All federal and state first responder agencies, other than agencies utilizing the P25 System as of October 22, 2008, must obtain authorization to access the P25 system from the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) by submitting a letter of application to the Chairman requesting access.

The SIEC Chairman is required to submit applicable documentation to DPS, Radio Communications for agency User Information, Radio IDs and Talkgroup IDs. DPS will then work with the agencies to initiate access to the P25 system. Agencies are required to arrange their own programming of their subscriber units. GOHSEP, DPS, local radio shops and local government agencies are given authorization from DPS to provide programming capabilities.

Interoperable Channels and Talkgroups Policy / 09-003

This policy establishes procedures for programming of statewide interoperable channels and talkgroups into subscriber units and the use of the interoperable channels and talkgroups during day-to-day and emergency use.

The state requires all radios accessing the P25 system be programmed with the interoperability channels and talkgroups. The policies also list the Incident Commander as the person who designates which talkgroup will be used for an incident. Eavesdropping/Monitoring of Talkgroups is discouraged due to the potential to tie up multiple repeaters and add unnecessary congestion on the statewide system, resulting in busy radio signals.

Initialization of the state “Outreach Program”

The SIEC and Office of Interoperability have assisted in the education of local first responders within the nine regions providing a clear understanding of the state’s efforts to design a statewide ASTRO 25 (800/700MHz) compliant system, and to present the benefits of local participation in such a system. Since the Office of Interoperability began implementing outreach initiatives, many local first responders have requested access to the LWIN system. As of December 2008, there were over 36,000 subscriber units programmed into the system, with over 65% of these radios belonging to local first responders.

Response to Hurricanes Gustav/Ike

The LWIN voice communications withstood its first major test during Hurricane's Gustav and Ike. While there were some issues that the SIEC will continue to address through increasing system capacity and establishing redundant connectivity, overall, the system performed as designed. During the evacuation, response and recovery for Hurricane Gustav, over 1.2 million transmissions in the Greater New Orleans area were made utilizing LWIN with only 500 busy signals over a ten day period. During these two storms, Federal, State and local agencies were able to establish voice communications on shared talkgroups using existing infrastructure and assets. Louisiana's strategic technology reserve was utilized to its fullest extent by providing; satellite connectivity to sites which lost T-1 connections, issuance of 300 radios from the state cache to local and state agency first responders, and deploying three portable 700MHz tower trailers to provide communications in areas that where tower sites were down due to generator and electrical failures. This type of interoperable communications was something that the State was unable to accomplish during Hurricane's Katrina and Rita.

Multi State Communications

The SIEC continues to enhance interoperable communications among Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana through the Gulf States Interoperable Communications Compact (GSICC). The three states participated in the second annual Gulf States Interoperability Conference in Mobile, Alabama in November of 2008. There the GSICC formed a steering committee comprised of three state representatives to continue moving the states forward in developing a detailed plan to provide interoperability among the states. Louisiana will be entering into a Multi State Intergovernmental Agreement with Mississippi to connect the two state's 700 MHz systems. The GSICC jointly applied for FY2007 Homeland Security Grant Program funding and was recognized in the top 15% of applicants nationwide as having a sound plan to connect the disparate state systems. Louisiana understands while advances will be made over the 2009 calendar year, it is anticipated a full integration of communications for all three states will consist of a three to five year period.

Louisiana has also been collaborating with Arkansas and Texas to look at ways in which interoperability and wireless communications can be enhanced between the States for day-to-day and emergency operations.

Interoperability and Other Systems

UHF and VHF systems are primarily in use by rural smaller jurisdictions but mostly concentrated in the northern Louisiana by local police, sheriffs and fire departments. The State recognizes that some agencies will continue to use their existing systems and may never or not readily move to the LWIN. The SIEC believes that as the system becomes ubiquitous in the State that almost all these agencies will move to the system. However, the SIEC will continually work in coordination with local first responder agencies to determine whether they need

continuation of gateway technology or assistance in developing a plan to transition to the LWIN.

State Funded System Maintenance

In order to encourage migration and usage from existing disparate systems to the LWIN, in FY2007-2008, the State appropriated funding to cover 100% of the cost associated with LWIN administration, maintenance and operation. Local first responder agencies are not assessed fees to access LWIN or to connect locally-owned infrastructure to LWIN.

All procurements utilized by the State's dedicated funding for the LWIN will be for the purchase of 700/800MHz digital compliant equipment. In addition, GOSHEP, as the State Administrative Agency for the Federal Homeland Security Grant Program, strongly encourages local jurisdictions to invest new monies in 700/800MHz digital compliant technology.

Strategic Technology Reserve

A variety of communication resources are available for immediate deployment in an emergency or major incident. These assets are available upon request through Emergency Support Function (ESF) 2, and include the following:

- Radio Caches
 - ✓ GOHSEP (200) EFJ Portable Radios, Located in Baton Rouge at GOHSEP
 - ✓ GOHSEP (185) Motorola Portable Radios, Located in Baton Rouge at GOHSEP
 - ✓ LSP (144) EFJ Portable Radios, (15) per Troop Headquarters and the remaining at DPS Radio Communications
- Mobile Command Posts – Though not all inclusive, these command posts are equipped with 700/800 MHz, VHF, UHF, aviation and HF radio communications systems, IP gateway devices, satellite communications, video conferencing, telephone and computer systems.
 - ✓ LSP – (2) Located in Baton Rouge
 - ✓ GOHSEP – (1) Located in Baton Rouge
- Mobile Communications Equipment Trailers – These trailers are located in the northern regional of the state, LSP headquarters and southeast regions of the state. These trailers are equipped with 700/800 MHz P25 trunked site, 800 MHz mutual aid repeaters, VHF/UHF mutual aid base stations, satellite dish, interoperability gateway and internet and Voice-Over IP access.
 - ✓ GOHSEP (1) Located in Ouachita and (1) Located in Jefferson
 - ✓ LSP (1) Located in Baton Rouge
 - ✓ LSP (1) 800 MHz Smartzone System trailer equipped for the 800 MHz system and includes 800 MHz mutual aid repeaters.
- Satellite Trailer
 - ✓ LSP (1) satellite dish trailer to restore a broken T-1 line at a tower site
 - ✓ LSP (1) box satellite dish trailer to expand capacity at a site.
- Rapid Restoration of Communications (RapidCom) – Mobile trailer provides immediate on-site communications enhancement or supplementation to local governments when deployed from GOHSEP headquarters with the following

capabilities: radio communications, satellite connectivity, voice over IP telephony, and wireless network and internet connectivity.

- ✓ GOHSEP (3), Located in Baton Rouge
- Mobile Communications Center Trailer – Communications Center trailer provides support as an alternate EOC's for both GOHSEP and local parish EOC's. The trailer contains servers to support phone & data stations for locations that have lost assets. Included in the trailer are 70-VOIP telephones and 70 laptops.
- ✓ GOHSEP (1), Located in Baton Rouge
- Interoperable Communications Extension System (ICE_S)
 - ✓ Louisiana National Guard (1) ICE_S, a mobile tower with satellite backhaul and 100 cell phones provisioned to operate on that tower as well as commercial networks. ICE_S is one of 24 systems currently in operation with the Army and Air National Guard, Northern Command, and FEMA. These other systems are available to the Louisiana National Guard upon request in times of emergency.

National Recognition

Louisiana has been recognized nationally as a leader in establishing statewide interoperable communications. Listed below are the various recognitions:

- Development of Louisiana's SCIP, recognized as a model plan
- Development of Louisiana's PSIC grant investments, recognized as a best practice for a multi disciplinary and multi jurisdictional approach in achieving statewide interoperable communications
- Development of the interoperable communications grant investment for the Homeland Security Grant Application for federal fiscal years of 2008 and 2009, recognized in the top 15% of all other state's applications.
- PSIC grant administration and audit readiness, invited to present PSIC administration and audit readiness as a best practice to the staff of the Department of Homeland Security at their annual convention
- Statewide governance and LWIN implementation, invited to be Key Note Speaker at the National Governor's Association's Policy Academy to present Louisiana's governance and LWIN implementation plan to other states as a best practice
- Statewide System Policies, invited to participate on national working group to develop best practices for statewide system policies for other states to use as a resource tool.

Emerging Technology

The SIEC also recognizes the importance of monitoring emerging technologies that may have application in the enhancement of interoperable communications. The Office of Interoperability recently awarded PSIC funding to local agencies to fund emerging technology solutions. The agencies are currently evaluating broadband IP based 2.4/4.9 GHz mesh network technologies.

Funding Summary through FY2008/2009 Appropriation

Louisiana has committed over \$68 million in funding from a variety of local, state and federal sources to purchase equipment for the LWIN infrastructure. With the current level of funding the system will fall short of achieving the goal to provide statewide communications infrastructure and redundancy providing secure 95% or better coverage when using a portable radio inside a building at street level in the more densely populated metropolitan areas of the State, and secure 95% or better coverage when using a mobile street level radio in all other areas of the State. Additional appropriations for infrastructure and system maintenance will be critical to completing the final phase of system implementation for voice communications.

Subscriber Radios

Louisiana has committed over \$15.8 million in funding from several state and federal sources, for the purchase of both portable or mobile radios and console dispatch equipment for local and state agency responders. The ratio of assignment of the equipment has been 85% local responders and 15% state agencies.

System Maintenance

Louisiana has committed over \$14.5 million in funding from the state general fund and federal grants towards ongoing statewide system maintenance. The system maintenance continues to be provided by the Dept of Public Safety and Corrections, Public Safety Services through interagency agreement with GOHSEP.

Continued funding sources will be identified and researched by the Office of Interoperability and SIEC Budget and Finance Subcommittee. As with the current committed funding sources the subcommittee's research will be diverse and include, but are not limited to the following:

State and local funds: The State and local governments will continue to collaborate and coordinate requests for appropriation funding to be used towards implementation of the SCIP. Examples of State and local revenues which may be used to fund appropriation requests include, but are not limited to bonds, and commercializing available state-owned tower space.

Grants: The State will continue to seek federal grants from areas such as, the Community Development Block Grant Program, Homeland Security Grant Program, Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program, Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program, Community Oriented Policing Services Grant Program, the Port Security Grant Program, and congressional earmarks.

Public/Private Partnerships: The SIEC will continue to enter into cooperative agreements with local and state agencies and private entities to support the goals and objectives of the SCIP. Projects which may be considered are: leasing versus buying technology and infrastructure; co-locating towers; and providing redundant connections to infrastructure.

Achieving statewide interoperability for Louisiana's emergency responders is a massive undertaking, and together we will continue making efforts to improve interoperable communications systems and foster cooperative relationships among all first responders as Louisiana leads the nation in achieving true communications interoperability with a shared system providing a more efficient, and effective emergency response team for the citizens of our State.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Brant Mitchell

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cc: SIEC Members

Enclosures: Louisiana Wireless Information Network – Coverage Map
Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan