2021 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG)

Annual Report

September 2022

FEMA

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National Executive Summary

1.   Introduction

1.1.   Purpose

The Calendar Year (CY) 2021 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report highlights working group activities and accomplishments that improved emergency communications operability and interoperability nationally.

In compliance with Title XVIII, Section 1805, of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act of 2007 (Public Law 109-295),[1] each RECCWG is required to report annually on the status of operable and interoperable emergency communications initiatives. RECCWG membership develops regional reports, with support from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Regional Emergency Communications Coordinators (RECCs) and the FEMA Disaster Emergency Communications Division (DECD). This document compiles the regional reports, along with this National Executive Summary. This is the fourteenth annual report developed and submitted through this process.

The CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report is distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce.

1.2.   Background

Congress directed the establishment of RECCWGs in each of FEMA's 10 regions as emergency communications planning and coordinating bodies. The first three statutory duties below align with accomplishments and priorities listed in each regional report. Completion of this report fulfills the fourth statutory duty.

> **RECCWG Statutory Duties (DHS Appropriations Act of 2007)**
>
> Assess the survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
>
> Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multiagency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.

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[1] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-109publ295/html/PLAW-109publ295.htm.

> Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.
>
> Report annually to the relevant Regional Administrator, the Director for Emergency Communications, the Chairman of the FCC, and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce on the status of the Regions in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks.

RECCWGs are member-driven organizations that collaboratively assess and address the emergency communications needs of the first responder and emergency management stakeholder communities. They are key forums to enhance the survivability, sustainability, operability, and interoperability of emergency communications across the whole community. RECCWG participants represent an active and diverse group of stakeholders from state, local, tribal, and territorial public safety organizations, as well as representatives from federal departments and agencies and private sector partners that share responsibility for coordinating interoperable emergency communications.

Through a mix of semi-annual meetings and monthly or quarterly webinars and teleconferences, RECCWGs focus on challenges and opportunities unique to each FEMA region and share information nationally through monthly national co-chair calls that focus on topics of multiregional or national interest.

1.3. 2021 Accomplishments and Priorities

This summary provides a national perspective of the RECCWG program by highlighting the key RECCWG accomplishments and priorities cited across individual Regional 2021 RECCWG Annual Reports, as noted below.

> **RECCWG 2021 Accomplishments**
>
> 1. Increased engagement and collaboration, expanding membership to non-traditional partners during response and recovery operations.
>
> 2. Facilitated situational awareness and coordination during real-world events and shared lessons learned
>
> 3. Expanded operability and interoperability efforts across state, tribal, regional, and international borders.
>
> 4. Conducted communications-focused exercises, developed after-action reports (AARs)/improvement plans (IPs), and used both to improve regional coordination.
>
> **RECCWG 2022 Priorities**
>
> 1. Continue to share and expand best practices between RECCWGs.
>
> 2. Continue recruiting power associations and pertinent private sector members into the RECCWG.

3. Promote and broaden planning and exercise activity efforts regionally.

4. Increase and diversify RECCWG membership and partners across the whole community.

5. Increase transparency of ongoing alert and warning (A&W) technology development and the impact of communications critical infrastructure failure.

2. 2021 Overview

The year 2021 brought frequent and numerous disasters, coupled with high levels of COVID-19 activity and vaccination efforts to control the pandemic. COVID-19 claimed the lives of more than one million Americans and severely impacted the economy. CY 2021 presented more severe weather across the country: a destructive wildfire season accompanied by extreme drought in the western United States, a major freeze event in the southwest, and several hurricanes/tropical storms in the Gulf of Mexico that caused further havoc as their remnants traveled up the eastern seaboard. RECCWGs persevered in the pandemic environment as public safety agencies, members, and partners began to resume projects that were postponed by pandemic limitations and began to look at future priorities to strengthen their communications postures in the various regions.

Throughout the year, the role of the RECCWG continued to develop. Following the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the natural disaster season, the working groups expanded their outreach and information sharing, offered membership to Emergency Support Function 12 (ESF # 12)—Energy communities following lessons learned during Hurricane Ida, and participated in the planning and execution of in-person meetings for the first time in two years.

The growth of individual RECCWGs also increased opportunities for coordination between regions and across the nation. The RECCWG program continues to facilitate cross-regional coordination through the National RECCWG Co-Chairs group, which holds monthly teleconferences to share solutions and best practices for addressing common challenges and to identify opportunities and priorities for cross-regional collaboration.

The RECCWG program grew by 182 participants in 2021, an increase of 18% over 2020.

Nine of the FEMA Regions have established RECCWGs to meet the original vision described in the DHS Appropriations Act of 2007, to assess the survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of emergency communications systems and coordinate RECCWG activities with federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial responders and private industry partners. Figure 1 breaks the 1,175 RECCWG participants across the ten RECCWGs in 2021 and illustrates how they have embraced the whole community concept to strengthen preparedness and response. The number of CY 2021 communications and public safety personnel is an 18% increase, with 182 additional participants over the CY 2021 participation total.
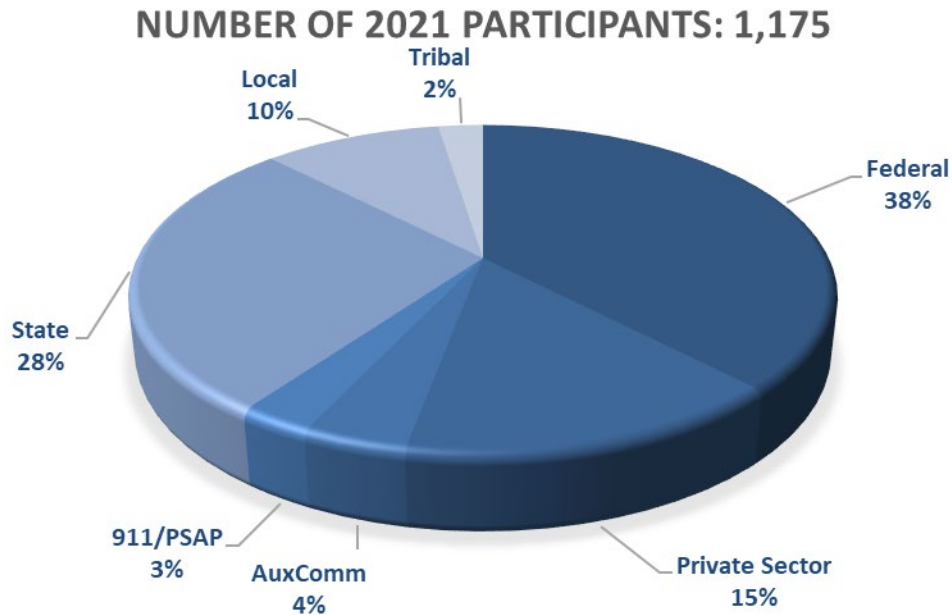
Figure 1: RECCWG Members and Partners

Region 2 members elected not to establish a formal RECCWG or update annexes to their Regional Emergency Communications Plan; instead, they continue to work toward interoperability and planning through other state and territorial coordination bodies. However, they plan to hold more formal RECCWG forums in the future. The Region 2 Annual Report provides a detailed account of CY 2021 activities.

3.   2021 RECCWG Accomplishments

RECCWGs continued to mature through increased opportunities for inter-regional and national coordination. In addition to regionwide efforts described in the 10 RECCWG Annual Reports, the National RECCWG Co-Chairs group, which consists of one member from each RECCWG to lead its efforts, holds monthly teleconferences to share solutions and best practices to address common challenges and identify opportunities and priorities for cross-regional collaboration.

The following sections detail the following accomplishments in overall RECCWG progress in CY 2021.

1. Increased engagement and collaboration, expanding membership to non-traditional partners during response and recovery operations
2. Facilitated situational awareness and coordination during real-world events and sharing lessons learned
3. Growing operability and interoperability efforts across state, tribal, regional, and international borders
4. Conducted communications-focused exercises, developed AARs/IPs, and used both to improve regional coordination.

3.1. Accomplishment 1: Increased Engagement and Collaboration, Expanding Membership to Non-Traditional Partners During Response and Recovery Operations

3.1.1. HURRICANE IDA/ESF #12 PARTNER EXPANSION

After the 2020 Hurricane Season, the Region 6 RECCWG addressed the importance of telecommunications (ESF #2) and energy sector (ESF #12) partnerships during disaster restoration efforts and identified power provider candidates for memberships in their respective states. Nine new ESF #12 partners joined the RECCWG.

Before the 2021 Hurricane Season, the energy sector partners facilitated electricity sector knowledge throughout the region by presenting ESF #12 electricity sector restoration operation plans to the entire RECCWG. The relationship and coordination efforts were bolstered during Winter Storm Uri, when ESF #2 provided communications assistance to the energy companies, who lacked a way to communicate and coordinate their restoration efforts. The region quickly realized the importance of coordinating these two efforts, as power is needed for communications and communications are critical for energy providers to respond.

3.2. Accomplishment 2: Facilitated Situational Awareness and Coordination During Real-World Events and Shared Lessons Learned

3.2.1. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS AND DISASTER COORDINATION

The nation experienced 58 major disaster declarations in 2021. RECCWG members provided communications support to response efforts during federally declared disasters, as well as to local emergencies across the nation. Lessons learned from disasters in recent years helped them better prepare their areas of responsibility for future large-scale disasters.

RECCWG members maintained situational awareness and close communication with each other through virtual meeting platforms, and some were able to resume in-person meetings. Most regions held regular monthly meetings in addition to the data collection and situational awareness calls to address disaster response, access control, and multi-jurisdictional support needs. As the year progressed, inter-regional information sharing on travel restrictions, access control, and permitting issues became vital to the agencies responsible for restoring infrastructure and deploying personnel across state borders.

3.2.2. SHARING LESSONS LEARNED

State and local communications leaders used the RECCWG forum to collaborate on best practices and regional challenges as community vaccination centers (CVCs) became a nationwide focus. As both government and private industry personnel performed communications-specific site surveys and began building temporary mass-vaccination sites, RECCWG members attended coordination meetings to share challenges they faced and learn about those of their counterparts in other areas,

such as network capacity, virtual private network issues, and the increased need for mobile communications solutions. They met regularly until CVC operations stabilized, then eventually demobilized. Additionally, the growth of private industry participation in the RECCWG paid dividends when CVCs needed supplemental equipment and network support. RECCWG members engaged telecommunications providers, who in many cases augmented CVC networks at no charge to the government.

Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs)

Public safety telecommunicators answer 911 calls and dispatch police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel; their ability to maintain operations is critical to every resident in the United States. In 2020, public safety answering points (PSAPs) across the country were threatened by COVID-19, which had already caused other buildings to shut down for decontamination or containment procedures. Innovative solutions to this challenge emerged at the local level, including remote dispatch capabilities, alternative active PSAP sites, backup staffing and facility plans, and developing schedules and work arrangements that allowed greater distancing. These solutions became invaluable to public safety telecommunicators nationwide. RECCWG members also shared many of these solutions with their counterparts in other regions of the country, resulting in more comprehensive contingency plans for PSAPs in 2021. These procedures have become best practices to standardize 911 procedures in the "new normal" for COVID, as well as to maintain more effective staffing postures for incidents such as wildfires and tornadoes when several PSAPs are impacted.

Three-Digit Dialing and Cellular Roaming

The RECCWG regions affected by Hurricane Ida used relationships with federal partners for situational awareness on issues identified after the hurricane. Louisiana identified several issues with the use of three-digit dialing and cellular call roaming. Louisiana uses 211 as a statewide network for citizens to request assistance and promoted its use during the Ida response. It was quickly realized that individual agreements with each commercial cellular carrier were needed to make 211 work. Similarly, roaming services needed to be open on all commercial cellular networks. Using the Region 6 RECC daily coordination call, RECCWG members were able to immediately offer support when Louisiana shared that they had identified these communications issues. Bringing this issue to the RECCWG allowed them to coordinate with the commercial carriers regarding the cellular roaming issue and involve the FCC, who immediately started working to find solutions. The FCC provided solutions to set in place prior to a disaster to mitigate the identified communications gaps in the future.

3.3.   Accomplishment 3: Growing Operability and Interoperability Efforts Across State, Tribal, Regional, and International Borders

In each region, RECCWGs expanded and expedited the deployment of communications assets and personnel through their collective knowledge, relationships, and wide-ranging experience. Below are highlights of the cross-regional activities noted in the 2021 RECCWG Annual Reports.

3.3.1. REGION 1 – CONNECTICUT, MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW HAMPSHIRE, RHODE ISLAND, VERMONT

- Continued leveraging virtual communications capabilities to enhance response during pandemic and disaster response efforts.

- Successfully used Mutual Link to connect the Region 1 Incident Response (IR) Land Mobile Radio (LMR) network to Region 2 LMR networks during Hurricane Henri response operations.

- Began planning a communications exercise in the summer of 2022 between Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Maine to test their tied communications systems.

3.3.2. REGION 2 – NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, PUERTO RICO, UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

- Region 2 engaged the Region 1 and 3 RECCWGs to explore joint meeting and exercise opportunities.

- Based on engagement with Region 1 RECCWG members, coordinated with FEMA to install satellite voice/radio/data systems, land mobile radio, and internet-based platforms in several locations to provide alternate, contingency, and emergency modes of communications during response/recovery operations.

- Organized training from FEMA to all Region 2 state/territorial partners on the FEMA Lifelines initiative. This reporting and operations mechanism informs situational awareness and increases operational coordination to better inform multi-jurisdictional senior leadership's critical decision making.

3.3.3. REGION 3 – DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, DELAWARE, MARYLAND, PENNSYLVANIA, VIRGINIA, WEST VIRGINIA

- Conducted interagency planning for the 59th Presidential Inauguration and response to the attack on the U.S. Capitol January 6, 2021.

- Continued leveraging virtual communications capabilities to enhance response during pandemic and disaster response efforts.

- Continued building out Next Generation 911 systems between Region 3 states.

3.3.4. REGION 4 – ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, KENTUCKY, MISSISSIPPI, NORTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE

- Added the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians joined Mississippi's state network, the Mississippi Wireless Information Network (MSWIN), bringing over 700 users to the system. This action improves state-to-tribal communications interoperability and situational awareness during response/recovery operations.

- Used Bridge 4 Public Safety (B4PS) to allow private nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners and commercial carriers to communicate with the responders in the field, increasing coordination between borders.

- Collaborated extensively with the Seminole Tribe of Florida throughout 2021 to expand the reach of emergency communications assets and infrastructure, operating the first 700 MHz radio system and other communications resources within the tribe.

- Conducted a plenary session with state, local, and tribal members; private industry; and federal partners that included a tabletop exercise and discussions about regional initiatives, lessons learned from 2021 hurricanes, and long-term RECCWG objectives.

3.3.5. REGION 5 – ILLINOIS, INDIANA, MICHIGAN, MINNESOTA, OHIO, WISCONSIN

- Worked with the CISA to acquire technical assistance to develop a communications-focused exercise.

- Leveraged the RECCWG forum for state and local communications leaders to collaborate on best practices and regional challenges as CVC became a nationwide focus.

- Shared best practices from the Region 5 Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Working Group and the FEMA Field Integration Team and Minnesota subject matter experts to several region 5 states, with states hoping to expand participation.

- In the RECCWG's growing AuxComm group, was active across the region and beyond its borders, welcoming new participants and conducting net check-ins to maintain operator proficiency.

3.3.6. REGION 6 – ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, TEXAS

- Coordinated multi-agency emergency communications networks during natural disasters; used relationships from the RECCWG to mirror the structure in the Texas Communications Coordination Group (CCG) for disaster response coordination during Hurricane Ida.

- Collaborated to coordinate efforts on the ground to support emergency communications restoration and recovery efforts during Hurricane Ida. RECCWG members, including from Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and federal members from FEMA, CISA, Comms Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC), FCC, and NTIA, leveraged relationships established prior to the event to form a Communications Coordination Group that improved the effectiveness of the response.

- Continued leveraging virtual communications capabilities to enhance response during pandemic and disaster response efforts.

- Created a successful forum for EMAC requests and collaboration between states and agencies in the region by including the whole RECCWG during incident responses.

- Added nine new ESF #12 partners to the RECCWG following lessons learned from the disaster season.

3.3.7. REGION 7 – IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA

- Provided a forum for cross-state and cross-regional collaboration to enhance the effectiveness of communications during response/recovery operations.

- Conducted a multi-jurisdictional and regional communications tabletop exercise to enhance the region's readiness posture and reinforce the value of the RECCWG.

- Implemented interoperable communications systems across the region by establishing mobile satellite (MSAT) services in state emergency operations centers (SEOCs) for state-to-state and state-to-federal communication as a contingency and emergency mode of communications.

3.3.8. REGION 8 – COLORADO, MONTANA, NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, UTAH, WYOMING

- Conducted a tabletop exercise to determine communications gaps and develop strategies to mitigate them to improve regional capabilities in support of each other.

- Enhanced AuxComm services to confirm communications capabilities are available during a major disaster by holding monthly radio network tests.

- Improved state and cross-border communications interoperability through partner engagement with neighboring states based on relationships built over years of RECCWG participation.

3.3.9. REGION 9 – AMERICAN SAMOA, ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, COMMONWEALTH OF NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, GUAM, HAWAII, NEVADA

- Participated in a series of workshops and a tabletop exercise by the FEMA National Exercise Program to test readiness response and recovery efforts across the Region's Pacific area.

- Revised the Region 9 RECCWG organization to create two subgroups: one for CONUS states and one for OCONUS states and territories (Hawaii and the Pacific territories) to focus activities on common issues and priorities for respective members. The additional focus on challenges with long-range continuity methods of transmission resulted in repairs and improved capability of FEMA National Radio System (FNARS) and satellite communications in the Pacific.

- Participated in monthly amateur radio testing within the region and with other regions on a national level. High Frequency (HF) radio is a critical mode of communications for Region 9, which spans thousands of miles and whose major hazards include typhoons, earthquakes and tsunamis.

3.3.10. REGION 10 – ALASKA, IDAHO, OREGON, WASHINGTON

- Increased use of Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) and analysis guiding wildland fire protections for communications infrastructure.

- Completed Oregon's Emergency Communications Annex update.

- Continued leveraging virtual communications capabilities to enhance response during pandemic and disaster response efforts.

> Relationships built through more than a decade of RECCWG activities and engagement enabled a more rapid and effective response through mutual awareness of each other's capabilities and needs in times of disaster.

4. Accomplishment 4: Conducted Communications-Focused Exercises, Developed AARs/IPs, and Used Both to Improve Regional Coordination

RECCWGs from Regions 4, 5, 7, and 10 participated in communications focused exercises to improve regional coordination of state communications personnel. RECCWGs developed AARs and Improvement Plans to build on challenges identified in the exercises. Regions 5, 7, and 10 used the IPs to form the foundation of full-scale exercises which were executed in 2022. Region 4 developed PACE plans for contacting SEOCs in an exercise planned for 2022. By expanding on lessons learned and pre-identified challenges in 2021, the RECCWGs will continue to enhance regional coordination and strengthen interoperability in 2022. More details on the exercises can be found in the 2021 Regional Annual Reports.

5. CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

Table 1 presents a snapshot of RECCWG events. These events are described in further detail throughout this summary and within the Regional Annual Reports that follow.

Table 1: 2021 RECCWG Activities

Events	Activities
2021 RECCWG Meetings	- Held 65 regional teleconferences - Held 13 regional plenaries (6 virtual; 7 in-person/virtual) - Held 11 national co-chair calls to gather input on national priorities and trends
2021 RECCWG Activities and Initiatives	- Region 3 RECCWG held a tabletop exercise simulating emergency communications with ECD - Region 4 RECCWG hosted 26k AuxComm net check-ins conducted monthly throughout the year - Region 5 RECCWG hosted several subcommittee meetings for the AuxComm, Training/Exercise, and WebEOC committees - Discussions resulting from Region 6 RECCWG's disaster response efforts following Hurricane Ida enhanced member readiness posture and reinforce the value of their RECCWG - Region 8 RECCWG held a tabletop exercise simulating an ESF #2 Wasatch Fault catastrophic earthquake to address emergency communications needs for the Region - Region 9 RECCWG created two sub-groups, one for CONUS and one for OCONUS (Hawaii and Pacific territories)

Events	Activities
2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members	▪ All regions continued COVID-19 Disaster Declarations ▪ Region 1 had 11 disaster declarations, including hurricanes Ida and Henri ▪ Region 2 had 7 disaster declarations, including tropical storms in New Jersey and New York and hurricanes Ida and Henri ▪ Region 3 had 7 disaster declarations, including Hurricane Ida and support for the January 6 incident on the U.S. Capitol ▪ Region 4 had 22 disaster declarations, including Hurricane Ida and tropical storms in Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina ▪ Region 5 had 1 disaster declaration, including severe storms and flooding in Illinois and Michigan ▪ Region 6 had 11 disaster declarations, including hurricanes Zeta, Ida, and Henri ▪ Region 7 had 2 disaster declarations, including severe storms in Missouri and Nebraska ▪ Region 8 had 14 disaster declarations, including multiple wildfires, severe storms, and flooding ▪ Region 9 had 18 disaster declarations, including multiple wildfires and severe storms ▪ Region 10 had 17 disaster declarations including multiple wildfires

6.   CY 2021 Summary of Member-Reported Events

RECCWG partners across the United States enhanced emergency communications through response to real-world events, disasters, exercises, conferences, training events, and workshops. Figure 2 provides a summary of the 363 emergency communications events reported by RECCWG members throughout the year. Additional details are provided in each RECCWG Report.
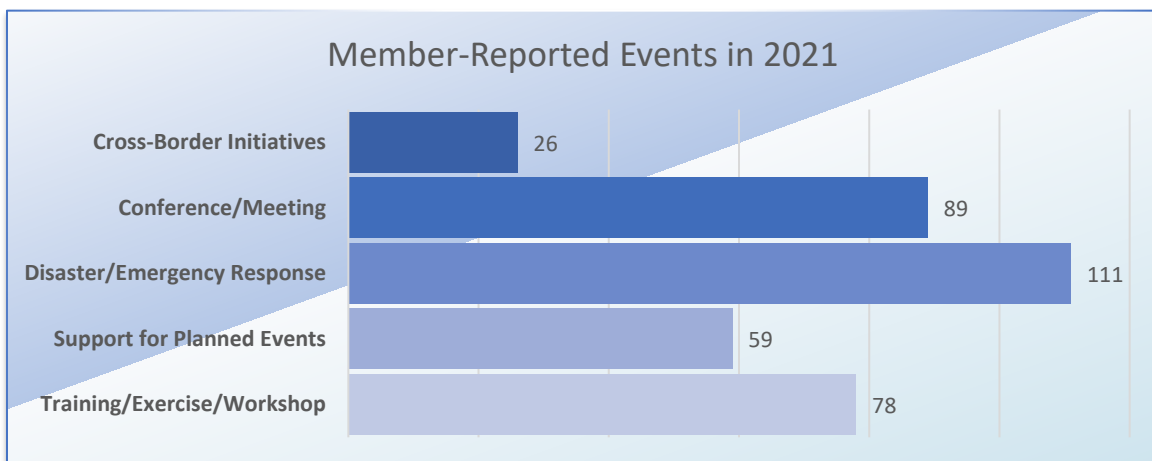
Figure 2: Member-Reported Events

7. CY 2022 RECCWG Priorities

RECCWG members identified the following five priorities for 2022. Regions may have additional priorities as noted in their regional reports.

2022 RECCWG Priorities

1. Continue to share and expand best practices between RECCWGs.

2. Continue recruiting power associations and pertinent private sector members into the RECCWG.

3. Promote and broaden planning and exercise activity efforts regionally.

4. Increase and diversify RECCWG membership and partners across the whole community.

5. Increase transparency of ongoing A&W technology development and the impact of communications critical infrastructure failure

7.1. Priority 1: Continue to Share and Expand Best Practices Between RECCWGs

Throughout 2021, RECCWG members developed relationships and promoted sharing best practices following response efforts. Lessons learned must be examined to implement procedures that address issues by updating plans, policies, and operational strategies that account for the latest feedback from the field. RECCWG members will continue to use teleconferences, in-person and virtual plenaries, and national co-chairs coordination calls to share and promote best practices between the 10 FEMA regions.

With another busy hurricane season forecast for CY 2022, responding entities can review the AARs from hurricanes Ida and Henri for best practices from regions that were impacted by the severe weather as a preparedness activity. In 2022, RECCWGs plan to focus on data from past and recent events and amend plans to be more prepared prior to hurricane season and other disaster seasons.

Several RECCWGs have taken the initiative to contact neighboring regions to offer communications support and resources, invitations to conferences and training events, and participation in sub-working group efforts. Their collaboration will be strengthened by evolving interoperability solutions, outreach, multiregional participation in large-scale exercises, and absorbing best practices based on the outcomes of national events and other grassroots endeavors.

7.2. Priority 2: Continue Recruiting Power Associations and Pertinent Private Sector Members into the RECCWG

RECCWG members addressed the importance of telecommunications (ESF #2) and energy sector (ESF #12) partnerships during disaster restoration efforts. RECCWG members should continue to identify power provider candidates for membership in their respective working groups. Working

closely with energy sector partners increases electricity sector knowledge and builds stronger relationships between multi-jurisdictional and private/public sector partners of the RECCWG, both of which are vital during response efforts.

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION GROUPS (CCG)

Coordinating multi-agency emergency communications networks during natural disasters is imperative for rapid and effective response following major incidents. A CCG is made up of federal, state/local, tribal, and industry partners.

In 2021, Louisiana used relationships from the RECCWG to mirror the structure in the Texas CCG for disaster response coordination during Hurricane Ida. Texas provided valuable documentation and insight for the development of the Region 6 CCG. Several RECCWGs are expanding their partnership with electric companies and co-operative associations who deal with power utilities, working to develop cross-sector relationships prior to disasters. The initiative has been discussed in numerous regions. Regions 1, 5, and 6 have established sub-working groups, and initiatives are underway in all the regions to strengthen coordination and awareness of critical infrastructure sectors and the impacts they have on communications.

7.3. Priority 3: Promote and Broaden Planning and Exercise Activity Efforts Regionally

7.3.1. TABLETOP AND FULL-SCALE EXERCISES

Many events planned in 2021, including communications exercises, were rescheduled when pandemic restrictions were reduced. RECCWG members should continue to look for opportunities to test their equipment and procedures in 2022.

RECCWG in regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 have planned table-top exercises and full-scale exercises with a communications focus. These exercises will test existing plans and procedures in a large-scale incident response to better understand the thoroughness of those plans.

7.3.2. AFTER ACTION REPORTS (AAR)

Regions plan to develop AARs that capture the success and struggles resulting from stressing communications capabilities and resources in states and regions. RECCWGs will use the AARs to develop IPs to adjust their future operations and make responders more effective. Region 5's RECCWG improvement plan, which began development in 2021, includes the six highest-priority topics the states felt they needed to address. A full-scale exercise in 2022 will test those improvements, with a focus on mitigating identified shortcomings. Region 4, 5, 6, and 7 RECCWG members have also been checking amateur radio operators and the Central U.S. Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) to improve contingency and emergency modes of communications. Other regions have also been participating in amateur radio and Shared Resources High Frequency Radio

Program (SHARES) testing on a regular basis. This increased level of activity was initiated in large part due to an awareness that backup systems are needed in catastrophic level incidents.

7.3.3.   PRIMARY, ALTERNATIVE, CONTINGENCY, AND EMERGENCY (PACE) PLANNING

RECCWG members and subcommittees are evaluating existing PACE plans for continuity of operations if day-to-day and contingency communications modes become degraded or unavailable. Most RECCWGs have set PACE planning as a priority for their working groups. Incidents such as the bombing of a central office in Nashville, an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack anywhere in the nation, or cyber-attacks against the communications and/or power sector critical infrastructure would be devastating to all jurisdictions' ability to communicate and provide situational awareness to key multi-jurisdictional decision makers. Almost every RECCWG set assessing and developing effective PACE plans as a priority for 2022.

7.4.   Priority 4: Increase and Diversify RECCWG Membership and Partners Across the Whole Community

RECCWGs will continue to engage with the whole community to diversify their membership to reflect the various disciplines interacting with first responders. They will expand membership through consistent outreach and by forming sub-working groups to examining emerging issues in technology and emergency communications.

7.4.2.   SUB-WORKING GROUPS

RECCWG sub-working groups offer members from multiple jurisdictions a focused forum for examining regional issues. They share the results of their work with their respective RECCWG, which, in turn, can elevate issues to the national level through the monthly RECCWG Co-Chairs teleconference.

Sub-working groups have become a mechanism for both research and outreach in the FEMA Regions. Currently, RECCWGs have varying types of sub-working group organizations and participation. Moving forward, every region will hear about the successes, challenges, and benefits of creating focus groups for subject areas, such as power, AuxComm, cross-state interoperability, or governance, to help other RECCWGs develop similar programs and potentially increase their membership. Greater participation of sectors that directly impact communications will expand awareness of RECCWG members.

7.4.2.   INCREASE TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT

Several RECCWGs established a priority to increase their engagement with tribal emergency managers and communicators to improve integration between the states, federal support agencies, and tribal authorities. RECCWG members hope to foster relationships with tribal jurisdictions to expand information sharing and develop new perspectives into communications interoperability between state, local, and tribal regions. A better understanding of each other's capabilities, plans, and potential requirements will improve the quality and timeliness of a response impacting tribal

nations and state/local agencies. Initiatives such as creation of a Tribal Frequency Operations Guide (FOG) in Region 5 is an example of building awareness and seeking to improve engagement between state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal authorities.

7.4.3.   INCREASE AUXCOMM ENGAGEMENT

Every RECCWG has a priority to increase engagement with the amateur radio community, along with expanding awareness and the use of SHARES. Both programs offer a potential contingency or emergency mode of communications. With expanded RECCWG engagement, the capability, proficiency, and effectiveness of amateur radio and SHARES participants will improve. Several regions have formed radio amateur training planning and activities committees (RATPACs) to train and improve capabilities of amateur radio operators. SHARES participation is on a steady rise through RECCWG membership awareness activities in most regions. With continued engagement and training, RECCWG leadership hopes to develop a more professional and reliable capability in the future.

7.5   Priority 5: Increase Transparency of Ongoing A&W Technology Development and the Impact of Communications Critical Failure

7.5.1   INCREASE AWARENESS OF A&W TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS

The existing Emergency Alert System (EAS) was created in the Cold War era. IPAWS was created in 2006 via Presidential Executive Order to help modernize the system. Critical infrastructure still relies on copper lines and disappearing modes of transmission as the telecommunications industry transitions from analog to digital modes. Just as Next Generation (NG)-911 is an effort to modernize the 911 system to a digital format, efforts to create a NG-EAS are underway.

State, local, tribal, and territorial members of the RECCWGs are keenly interested in how these changes will be incorporated and how they may impact existing systems. Members on a national level have expressed interest in learning more about when and how this transition will occur. RECCWGs are an ideal body to work with for situational awareness, since they are comprised of multi-jurisdictional disciplines from both the public and private sectors.

7.5.2.   INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACT TO PSAPS

The bombing of a major telecommunication provider's central office on Christmas of 2020 shed light on the interdependencies of numerous key nodes and other parts of public safety communications across the country. One central office failing in Tennessee impacted 911/PSAP operations in five states in the South and Midwest. Those impacts were unexpected and shared widely through the emergency communications community. Key leaders in states and RECCWG members sought to understand how the infrastructure in another state impacted their operations. RECCWG discussions in 2021 raised concerns by leaders who feared they lacked sufficient understanding of the interdependencies within the national telecommunications infrastructure. RECCWG members

expressed an interest in increased engagement with telecommunications carriers to understand where dependencies may lie and how best to mitigate them during 2022 RECCWG activities.

8. Looking Ahead

- RECCWG efforts to facilitate and formalize cross-regional and national information and resource sharing events in 2022 will add momentum to the program and improve emergency communications interoperability.

- The RECCWGs will continue their regional and national outreach and coordination with tribal entities, the 911 community, amateur radio and nongovernmental organizations, private industry, and other whole community partners to improve emergency communications interoperability.

- RECCWGs will continue to seek resources and funding in 2022 to meet regional and national objectives and enrich the organizations whose members volunteer their time and expertise to continue to build on past successes.

- The following RECCWG Annual Reports from each region provide regional insights into CY 2021 RECCWG accomplishments as well as 2022 priorities, opportunities, and challenges.

Appendix A: Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAR	After Action Report
ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Service
AuxComm	Auxiliary Communications
A&W	Alert and Warning
B4PS	Bridge 4 Public Safety
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
CCG	Communications Coordination Group
CVC	Community Vaccination Centers
CY	Calendar Year
CUSEC	Central U.S. Earthquake Consortium
DECD	(FEMA) Disaster Emergency Communications Division
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EAS	Emergency Alert System
ECD	Emergency Communications Division (of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency)
EMP	Electro Magnetic Pulse
EMS	Emergency Medical System
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FNARS	FEMA National Radio System

FOG	Frequency Operations Guide
HF	High Frequency (radio frequency)
IPAWS	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System
IP	Improvement Plan
IR	Incident Response
ISAC	Information Sharing and Analysis Center
LMR	Land Mobile Radio
MSAT	Mobile Satellite
MSWIN	Mississippi Wireless Information Network
NECP	National Emergency Communications Plan
NG-911	Next Generation - 911
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
PACE	Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Point
RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service
RATPAC	Radio Amateur Training Planning and Activities Committee
RECC	Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator
RECCWG	Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group
RECP	Regional Emergency Communications Plans
SEOC	State Emergency Operations Center
SHARES	Shared Resources High Frequency Radio Program
TTX	Tabletop Exercise

REGION 1
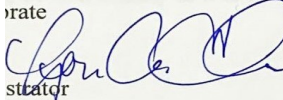
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 1
J.W. McCormack POCB, Room 442
Boston, MA 02109-4595

FEMA

DATE: May 4, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: John Rabin
                                        Assistant Administrator
                                        Response Directorate

FROM: Lori A. Ehrlich
                                        Regional Administered

SUBJECT: FEMA Region 1 Regional Emergency Communications
                                        Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

www.fema.gov

As required by 6 U.S.C. 575, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The Annual Report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 1 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined RECCWG Annual Report for calendar year (CY) 2021, which will be distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

- Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
- Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.
- Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

The Annual Report reflects the accomplishments that the Region 1 RECCWG membership achieved to meet the intent of the statute. As such, no modifications were made by the FEMA Regional Office without the expressed approval of the RECCWG membership. The final report as attached wholly represents the RECCWG membership's input and does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the Region.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG has as a venue for federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, and the Whole Community to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region as shown through activities in this report. The accompanying Annual Report provides important insight on how emergency communications related efforts are moving forward in this Whole of Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.

Enclosed: Region 1 CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report   www.fema.gov

REGION 1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION WORKING GROUP

CY 2021 OVERVIEW

The Region 1 Emergency Communications Working Group (RECCWG) is composed of the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. In 2021, RECCWG members continued to work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic alongside its federal, private sector and tribal partners to advance communications interoperability throughout the region.

Figure 3: 2021 RECCWG Participation
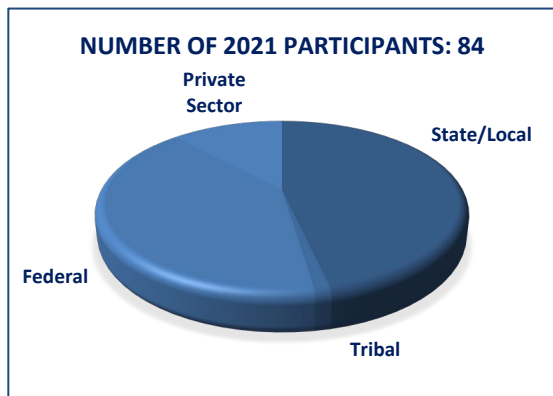
Region 1 had 84 participants across various jurisdictions and disciplines including state, local, tribal, federal, and private sector.

RECCWG participation in 2021 is shown in **Figure 3**.

Region 1 experienced major disasters

> Every Region 1 State declared at least one disaster in CY-2021.

in 5 of its 6 states from weather events such as Tropical Storm Henri, Isaias, and remnants of Hurricane Ida along with severe storms and flooding. In addition to natural disasters, RECCWG members responded to and reported on numerous incidents including COVID-19 Vaccination Center Support and planned events that required interoperability among field personnel, command centers, volunteer organizations, and local agencies. Each event posed a unique set of challenges that responders and officials, many of whom are members of the RECCWG, were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the region and across the country. **Figure 4** provides a snapshot of regional events, such as incident responses, planning activities, trainings,

exercises, and communications coordination efforts, that have required support from RECCWG members in Region 1.
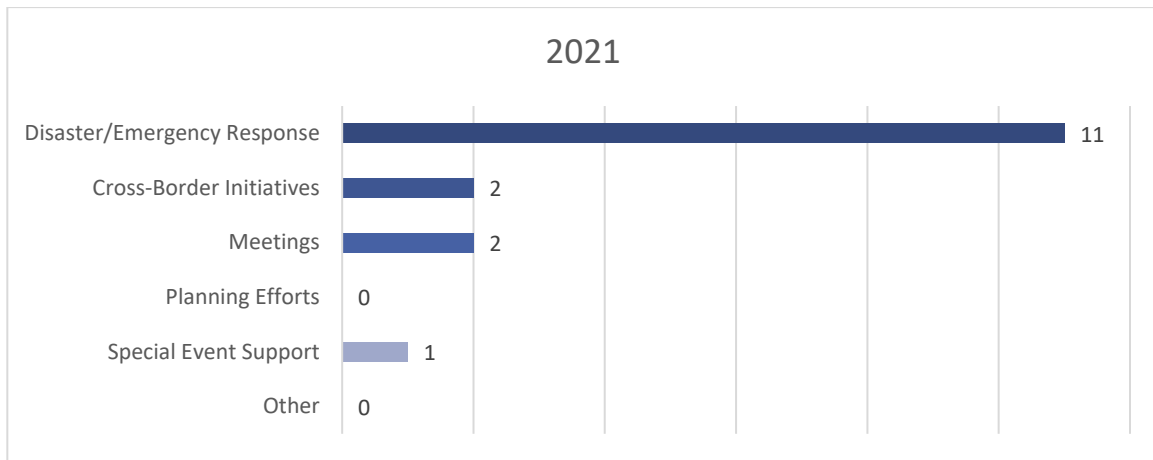
Figure 4: Regional Events

The Region 1 RECCWG tackled emerging challenges to interoperability as the nation dealt with mass COVID-19 immunization operations and unexpected realities of missing workers in public safety organizations such as fire, law enforcement, emergency management, PSAPs, and 911 operators. Innovations for transforming the workforce and dealing with sanitation efforts in facilities were developed and shared regionally to enable each other to adapt and succeed in delivering needed services to the public. The R1 RECCWG collaborated to share communications lessons learned and best practices to enable the best possible service to their respective citizenry.

The Region 1 RECCWG operationalized their Incident Response (IR) Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Network for the first-time during Hurricane Henri response efforts in CY2021.

Highlights of the RECCWG's accomplishments in 2021 are documented in this report and serve as examples of the advancements made within Region 1 and through the RECCWG program nationally. Similarly, priorities for 2022 have been set to leverage the extensive professional experience, comprehensive conversations and research, and close collaboration among member agencies within the region.

For additional information regarding the Region 1 RECCWG, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 1 RECCWG Lead (RECC), John Robinson, at John.Robinsonjr@fema.dhs.gov or 978-461-5369.

Table 2: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

Name	Role or Agency
RECCWG LEADERSHIP	
Russ Webster	Region 1 RECCWG Chair/Regional Administrator
Jarrett Devine	FEMA Region 1, RECC
John Robinson	FEMA Region 1, RECCWG Program Lead
Connecticut (CT) Representatives	
John Gustafson	Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS)
Frank Kiernan	Director of Operations, Southwestern Regional Communications Center
Michael Kowalczyk	Support Services Technician, Town of South Windsor
Clayton Northgraves	Connecticut SWIC, Director of Emergency Communications Department
Keith Victor	Communications System Manager/Communications Unit Leader (COML) and Communications Technician (COMT) Instructor, Town of West Hartford
George Vitone	Lieutenant, Darien Police Department
Dan Warzoha	Emergency Management Director, Greenwich
Scott Wright	DESPP
Maine (ME) Representatives	
Steve Edmond	Maine Deputy SWIC
Tom Higgins	Bangor Fire Department
Kathy Knight	Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems (EMHS)
Steven Mallory	SWIC/Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
Mike Smith	Maine 911
Darren Woods	Emergency Management Director, Aroostook County
Massachusetts (MA) Representatives	
Andrew Bagdonas	Communications Manager, MEMA
Matthew Barstow	Director of Telecommunications, MA State Police
Mark Cady	Lieutenant, City of Worcester Fire Department
David W. Clemons	Operations Section Chief, Massachusetts Department of Fire Services (DFS)
Kelvin Mahoney	MA-TF1
Gerald Reardon	Cambridge Fire Department (Retired), SAFECOM Executive Board
John Surette	Senior Radio Technician, Boston Police Department
Paul Zito	MA-TF1
New Hampshire (NH) Representatives	
Pete DeNutte	New Hampshire Interoperability
Sean Goodwin	Communications Administrator, NH Department of Safety Division of Emergency Services
John T. Stevens	SWIC/New Hampshire Department of Safety
David Rivers	New Hampshire 911
Rhode Island (RI) Representatives	

Name	Role or Agency
Joe Delgiudice	Radio Engineer, Public Safety Communications, City of Providence
Brian Glancy	Rhode Island Interoperable Communications Committee
Thomas Guthlein	SWIC/Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA)
Christopher McGrath	Operations Support Branch Chief at Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency
James McLaughlin	RIEMA
Alexander Potts	Communications Technician, RIEMA
Gil Woodside	Communications Supervisor, RIEMA
Vermont (VT) Representatives	
Chief Al Barber	Hinesburg Fire Department
Josh Cox	VEM
Ian Kilburn	VEM
Brett Larose	Vermont Emergency Management
Terry LaValley	SWIC/FirstNet Single Point of Contact (SPOC)
Emeritus Representatives	
Michael Manning	Vermont State Police (Retired)
Tribal Representatives	
Nelson Andrews	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
Private Industry Partners	
Lisa Benincasa	Principal Consultant for New England, ATT/FirstNet
Rob Boice	System Performance Director, Verizon
Nieama Booker	Verizon
Eric Hagan	Public Sector Account Executive, Sprint
Calvin Jackson	Verizon
Robert Komoroski	AT&T FirstNet
Denis Lenehan	Principal Consultant, ATT/FirstNet
Kenny Mack	AT&T
Kevin McCormick	Public Sector, Sprint
Brook Thomson	VP External Affairs, ATT/FirstNet
Federal Partners	
Tom Butrym	Radio Frequency (RF) Technician, Maynard Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS)
Michael Caiafa	FCC
Walker Canfield	General Services Administration (GSA)
Matt Carty	US Coast Guard D1
Robert Clair	Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
Kevin Coen	FEMA DECD Supervisor
Philip Dow	TSA
Emmanuel Domkam	Engineer, Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
John Driscoll	TSA

Name	Role or Agency
Mark Dyberg	Information Technology (IT) Manager, Maynard MERS
Nicole Firelli	FEMA DECD Supervisor
Bruce Fitzgerald	FirstNet Authority
Grant Fournier	Telecommunications Specialist, FEMA Region 1
Mark Gallagher	Response Division Director, FEMA Region 1
Scott Hansen	Chief, Communications Integration Branch (CIB), FEMA DEC
Scott Jackson	NTIA
Peter Koutrouba	Chief, Maynard MERS
John Lombardo	Communications, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
John MacClean	DHS CISA NCC
Sathya G. Maruti	FCC
Dan McElhinney	FEMA Region 1, Deputy Regional Administrator (Acting)
Marty McLain	Regional Coordinator, Office of Emergency Communications (OEC)
Timothy Perrier	FCC
Mike Pettis	Communications, FBI
Tom Quigley	Communications Support, United States Coast Guard (USCG) Boston
Michael Schmidt	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)
David Schafer	United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACoE)
Chris Tuttle	OEC Regional Coordinator, Regions 2 and 3
Michael Varney	Regional Coordinator, FirstNet
Keith Vetreno	United States Department of Interior (DOI)
Leonard Willette	Operations Manager, Maynard MERS

CY 2021 RECCWG ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND 2022 PRIORITIES

The Region 1 RECCWG made impressive strides towards improving local, state, and regional communications systems in 2021 despite travel and engagement restrictions due to COVID 19. These efforts are detailed below.

Statutory Duty 1

Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

Accomplishment 1: Shared best practices amongst membership regarding sanitation, staff rotation, and mobile operations for Public Service Answering Points (PSAPs)

In 2021, The Region 1 RECCWG members assessed the survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of emergency communications systems while dealing with COVID-19 mass vaccination operations and severe impact to public safety staffing. PSAPs were particularly hard hit with staffing shortages due to sickness and challenges in keeping staff safe due to COVID cases in their workspaces. Best practices regarding sanitation practices, backup facility usage, staff rotation, and remote working with emerging portable dispatching technology were shared with other RECCWG members to help the region get through staffing shortfalls.

Priority 1: Update R1 RECCWG Charter, recruit Co-Chair, and increase representation from key members and partners

The Region 1 RECCWG Charter was last updated in 2011. Membership will actively recruit a new Co-Chair and review the Charter to ensure it remains up to the task of guiding the body. Region 1 RECCWG members and partners actively coordinate with several disciplines across the region that are not yet heavily represented in the RECCWG. Specifically, partners from the Auxiliary Communications and Civil Air Patrol (CAP) communities. These core disciplines have proven to be resilient when other forms of communications have failed. They are often called upon in an ad hoc fashion during major response operations and planned events. By working to identify potential candidates for RECCWG membership within their states, RECCWG members will expand their efforts in 2022 to extend resources and gain representation by the Region's AuxComm and CAP partners. The RECCWG will also actively pursue additional Tribal members to ensure the interests of the Tribal community are well represented across Region 1.

Priority 2: Re-engage regional Power Associations to further enhance coordination between the communications and power sectors to improve response during major disasters and reduce the time for restoration of power and communications

The Region 1 RECCWG had engaged New England power associations before COVID-19 impacted operations and engagement for most of society. The productive exchange of ideas and best practices were interrupted in the last several years. The Region 1 RECCWG will contact the Power Associations they had been working with and begin the process of continuing to build working relationships to improve operational coordination during the restoration process following an incident in New England.

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications

Accomplishment 2: Coordinated collaboration between RECCWG partners to address the regional COVID-19 pandemic response

Region 1 continued to coordinate with RECCWG partners to address the COVID-19 pandemic across state lines. The RECCWG members utilized their virtual platforms for smooth and reliable response communications in New England throughout 2021. The rapidly shifting response structure in various states made travel and mutual aid restrictive and difficult to manage. The relationships between states allowed for open communications between members and resulted in no instances of communications failures or degradation for response efforts. Members and partners shared best practices for communication operability and interoperability while they also worked Emergency Mutual Assistance Compact (EMAC) requests.

Accomplishment 3: Successfully utilized Mutual Link to connect the Region 1 Incident Response (IR) Land Mobile Radio (LMR) network to Region 2 LMR networks during Hurricane Henri response operations

FEMA Region 1 was able to successfully link the Region 1 IR LMR Network to the FEMA Region 2 LMR network via Mutual Link during response and recovery operations for Hurricane Henri. This marks the first time that FEMA Regions 1 and 2 have been able to connect via LMR during a

disaster. Communication staff form both regions will work together with their respective states to determine if there are way to expand the connectivity as a back-up means of communications when the internet is available but other normal modes of communications are degraded.

Priority 3: Create PACE plan for lines of communications between every State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and the Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) and expand the FNARS monthly testing and SHARES programs to be more inclusive of all Region 1 states
The Region 1 RECCWG will engage across the region to create an effective Primary-Alternate-Contingency-Emergency (PACE) Communications plan that includes (HF) FEMA National Radio System (FNARS) and Share Resources (SHARES) high frequency (HF) radio programs. PACE planning is critical for communicating in disaster response scenarios and contingency modes of communications are very relevant in the high-risk cyber-attack or sever solar weather scenarios that may impact primary and alternate modes of communications. Improving the reliability and proficiency of operators with contingent and emergency communication modes will help mitigate challenges for critical communication in those situations.

Priority 4: Increase awareness of Region 1 states, tribes, and partners of the Waze and Google Maps application capabilities to provide alternate routing and hazard information to the public during disasters
Region 1 RECCWG hosted a presentation during their December Plenary by a representative from Waze who share a capability to provide public safety officials with real time data on alternate routing due to hazards and traffic such as evacuations or bridge damage when disasters strike. Both Waze and Google are working with Departments of Transportation, State Police/Highway Patrol, and Emergency Management officials to broadcast hazard information over their applications during disasters. Both services concluded that it is in the public interest to do so and are working with state governments to expand and improve coordination. The Region 1 RECCWG hopes to increase awareness of members and partners to this emerging capability.

Statutory Duty 3

Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made

Accomplishment 4: First successful operational use of the New England Incident Response (IR) Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Network
Region 1 stakeholders refined, tested, and operationalized the New England IR LMR network in 2021. During Tropical Storm Henri, Region 1 states had the first operational use of the IR Network. Deploying repeaters to incident response bases and were able to communicate via portable radio with the RRCC, IMAT, and LNO's. This was the first level 1 response effort since Hurricane Sandy in Region 1. Showcasing the work that the Region 1 RECCWG did with the IR Network.

Accomplishment 5: Enhanced cross-border communications by sharing interoperability lessons learned across boundaries and exploring international communications exercise opportunities in 2022
The Region 1 RECCWG members are working closely with Region 2 RECCWG members on sharing interoperability communications lessons learned. Additionally, Maine has been working with

Canada for several years to improve communications across borders and in 2021 signed an MOU with Nova Scotia allowing them to tie into the state system. Similarly, Rhode Island is working with other Region 1 states, Connecticut and Massachusetts on border interoperability utilizing Critical Connect. Planning and completing a communications exercise in the summer of 2022 between Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Maine to test their tied communications systems.

Priority 5: Expand LMR connectivity between FEMA Region 1, FEMA Region 2 and their states
Region 1 and Region 2 hope to expand their success in finding ways to connect to their respective NRCCs and SEOCs via the Region 1 IR LMR network to additional connections using LMR, HF, and/or satellite connectivity to expand their capability to contact each other during disaster response and recovery operations when normal means of communications are degraded or inoperable. Staff from Regions 1 and 2 along with state and federal members will work together to find additional methods of connectivity in the future and exercise those potential lines of communication.

CY 2021 RECCWG ACTIVITIES

Region 1 RECCWG members have supported various events and disaster response efforts in 2021, which are detailed below.

2021 RECCWG Meetings

- 1 teleconference & 1 virtual plenary -
- Discussions and briefings regarding developments, challenges, and efforts in Emergency Management Communications in Region 1 states. States also briefed on COVID-19 lessons learned, current state guidelines, and future RECCWG planning. Topical presentations on: DIRS, Hurricane season, Nashville bombing lessons learned, and Alert & Warning TA for August sessions.

2021 RECCWG Initiatives and Activities

- Subcommittee meetings
  - R1 RECCWG does not maintain subcommittees or sub-working groups
- AuxComm nets/check-ins
  - Region 1 is in the process of forming amateur radio partners
- Exercise participation
  - States were unable to hold normal exercise activity in 2021 due to COVID restirctions throgout New England
- Webinars, training, workshops
  - Limited training was conducted via webinars and remote learning processes due to sever restrictions from COVID

2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members

- Disasters
- Connecticut - Tropical Storm Isaias (4580-DR-CT), Hurricane Henri (3564-EM-CT) Remnants of Hurricane Ida (4629-DR-CT)
- Maine - COVID-19 Pandemic (DR-4522-ME)
- Massachusetts - COVID-19 Pandemic (DR-4496-MA)
- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe - Tropical Storm Henri (3566-EM-Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe)
- New Hampshire - Severe Storm and Flooding (4624-DR-NH) and (4622-DR-NH)
- Rhode Island - Hurricane Henri (3563-EM-RI)
- Vermont - Severe Storm/Flooding (4621-DR-VT), Tropical Storm Henri (3567-EM-VT)

Special events

- Cross-state/regional collaboration conducted during response/recovery operations throughut the Region 1
- Rhode Island deployed communciations equipment for festival season

Figure 5: CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

LOOKING FORWARD

Region 1 RECCWG conducted most of their engagement and interaction during a busy 2021 response year while establishing and operating mass COVID Community Vaccination Centers (CVCs) and supporting their populace during a very busy hurricane season with residual storms and flooding throughout the northeast. Despite this high level of activity, they also met on two occasions to discuss incidents that occurred in other parts of the nation in order to be more prepared to respond in their area of responsibility.

Region 1 RECCWG:

- Held a presentation on FCC DIRS reporting for states during the July teleconference
- Held a presentation on the hurricane season outlook for Region 1 during the July teleconference
- Held a presentation on the Nashville Bombing focused on communications lessons learned during the July teleconference
- Held a presentation on National Warning System (NAWAS) in their December teleconference
- Held a presentation of the use of WAZE to notify the public of traffic hazards during their December teleconference
- Received a briefing from CISA on Cyber-security and Denial of Service attacks

Region 1 RECCWG plans to re-engage more frequently and regain previous levels of activity in 2022 when COVID restrictions are lifted. They look forward to face to face meetings, exercises, and collaboration on interoperability and emergency communications that lie ahead to find ways to deliver support and public service to their communities.

REGION 2

DHS/FEMA Region 2
Jacob K. Javits Federal Office Building
26 Federal Plaza
New York, New York 10278

FEMA

August 15, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: John Rabin
                    Assistant Administrator
                    Response Directorate

FROM: David Warrington
                    Regional Administrator FEMA
                    Region 2

DAVID S
WARRINGTON

Digitally signed by DAVID S
WARRINGTON
Date: 2022.08.16 08:58:01 -04'00'

SUBJECT: FEMA Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications
                    Coordination Working Group 2021 Annual Report

As required by Title XVIII, Section 1805 of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2007, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The annual report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in Title XVIII.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 2 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined calendar year (CY) 2021 RECCWG Annual Report that will be distributed to the Director for the Office of Emergency Communications, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce. The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below.

Appendix A: Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan

Appendix B: Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements

Appendix C: Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters

The annual report reflects the accomplishments of the Region 2 RECCWG and details how the group's efforts satisfied the intent of the statute.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG provides as a venue for Federal, State, local, and Tribal agencies to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region. The accompanying annual report provides important insight on how emergency communications-related efforts are moving forward in this Whole Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.

Enclosed: Region 2 summary for the CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report

www.fema.gov

REGION 2

REGIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION WORKING GROUP (RECCWG)

CY 2021 OVERVIEW

Comprised of the States of New Jersey and New York, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Territory of the Virgin Islands, the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group worked diligently throughout 2021 alongside its State. Local, Tribal, Territorial, Federal and private sector partners, auxiliary communications volunteers, and a host of enthusiastic professionals to advance communications interoperability across the Region. New response missions, ongoing long-term recovery operations, scheduled events, trainings, exercises, and other initiatives collectively bolstered relationships across the Working Group while increasing capabilities of member organizations. Entities took on new roles and responsibilities during the response to the COVID-19 Pandemic as many routine, day to day activities were paused with new priorities emerging including lifesaving and life sustaining missions.

Region 2 received Presidential Declarations for Emergency Declarations and Major Disaster Declarations as a result of the hurricanes, remnants of tropical storms and severe winter storms while numerous other disasters in all states remain open and active requiring continued support. The majority of large-scale special events that regularly occur in all states necessitating coordination and interoperable communications amongst responders from multiple agencies and across all levels of government were cancelled or postponed amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group members responded to numerous incidents that required interoperability among field personnel, command centers, volunteer organizations, and local agencies. Each incident posed a unique set of challenges that responders and officials, many of whom are members of the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group. Additionally, it should be noted that members were assigned with a variety of different roles and responsibilities responding to the pandemic, some related to communications and others supporting other realms of operations, however, collectively, were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the region and across the country based upon preestablished relationships ties to the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group.

As a diverse yet cohesive team, the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group tackled many new challenges to interoperability in the region as new initiatives progressed across all levels of government. The year's events also underscored the criticality of well-functioning and universally compatible alert and warning systems to ensure swift, reliable, and effective communications could occur without notice. The technological advances of 2020 and 2021, to include a drastic and sudden shift in the private and public sectors to a new "virtual standard of operations" made it clear the collective expertise of communications professionals as a singular body is increasingly effective in shaping the future of interoperability among systems, both technologically and legislatively.

Highlights of the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group accomplishments in 2021 are documented in this report and serve as examples of the

advancements made within Region 2 and through the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group program nationally.

For additional information regarding the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 2 Telecommunications Specialist, Josh Green, at Josh.Green@fema.dhs.gov or (202) 957- 4165.

Table 3: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

Name	Role or Agency
RECCWG Leadership	
Dale McShine (A) (January 2021 – August 2021) Chad Gorman (A) (September 2021 I December 2021)	RECCWG Chair/FEMA Region 2 Regional Administrator (RA)
Vacant - Pending Appointment	RECCWG Co-Chair
Bryan Krane (January 2021 – May 2021) Vacant (June 2021 – December 2021)	Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), FEMA Region 2
New Jersey (NJ) Representatives	
John Miller	SWIC/New Jersey Office of Information Technology
Christopher Campbell	New Jersey State Police
Craig Reiner	New Jersey Office of Technology
Andy Schwartz	New Jersey Transit
Ed Velez	New Jersey Transit
State (NY) Representatives	
Michael Sprague (January 2021 – July 2021) Vacant (August 2021 – December 2021)	SWIC/New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
Bradley Becker	New York State Police
Peter Bojmal	New York City Emergency Management
Anthony Catalanato	City of New York Fire Department
Brett Chellis	New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
Matt Delaney	New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
Toby Dusha	New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
David Fields	City of New York Fire Department
Larissa Guedko	New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

Name	Role or Agency
Steve Harte	City of New York Fire Department
PJ Higgitt	New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
John Howard	City of New York Police Department
Henry Jackson	New York City Emergency Management
Laura Stockstill	New York City Emergency Management
Paul Lucido	City of New York Police Department
Michael O'Neil	New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
Gilbert Saez	New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
Luis Valcarel	New York State Courts
Puerto Rico (PR) Representatives	
Felix Garcia	SWIC/Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency
Anthony Yrimia Herrera	Puerto Rico Telecommunications Board
Miguel Quiles	Puerto Rico Telecommunications Board
Waldo Acavado	Puerto Rico Innovation & Technology Service
Virgin Islands (USVI) Representatives	
David Parris	SWIC/Virgin Islands Bureau of Information Technology
Adelle Williams	Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency
Tribal Representatives	
Mike Gates	Seneca Nation
Clint Halfgun	Cayuga Nation
Darwin Hill	Tonawanda Band of Seneca
Beverly Jensen	Shinnecock Nation
Art John	Seneca Nation
Edward Koorse	Seneca Nation
Neil Patterson, Jr.	Tuscarora Nation
Terry Winslow	Oneida Nation
Federal Partners	
Josh Green	Federal Emergency Management Agency
David Cucchi	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Joseph Hodge	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Sabdiel Rivera	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Luis Torres-Colon	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Christopher Tuttle	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
Jeremy Johnson	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
Peter Kim	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
Murad Raheem	United States Department of Health and Human Services
Andrew Chen	United States Department of Health and Human Services
Peter Koutrouba	FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Support - Maynard

Name	Role or Agency
Lawrence Lavigne	FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Support - Maynard
Derek Vieira	FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Support - Maynard
David Adsit	Federal Emergency Management Agency – Office of Chief Information Officer
Kenneth Link	Department of Justice
Brian Falvey	United States Secret Service
Mark Grabow	United States Secret Service
Run Li	Defense Coordinating Element
Eric Panketh	Federal Communications Commission
Roberto Mussenden	Federal Communications Commission
Al Knerr	Federal Communications Commission
Paul Coburn	Federal Communications Commission
Justin Cain	Federal Communications Commission
Shawn Cochran	Federal Communications Commission
John Healy	Federal Communications Commission
Jaime Rivas	Federal Communications Commission
Scott Jackson	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Greg Melz	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Ronnie Snider	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Lawrence Kidd	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Anthony Ruiz	United States Customs & Border Protection
Gaetano Rumore	General Services Administration
Luis Salazar	Federal Communications Commission
Michael Schmidt	United States Department of Justice
Donald Shanly	Federal Bureau of Investigation
Steve Veader	National Telecommunications and Information Administration

CY 2021 RECCWG ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Statutory Duty 1: Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

> **Accomplishment 1: Continue to cultivate relationships with existing state and territorial coordinating bodies and hold at least one Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group meeting in New York or New Jersey and in Puerto Rico or Virgin Islands.**

During 2021, Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Working Group members continued to cultivate relationships through area, state, and local interoperability working groups and real-world responses. Members participated in their respective working groups as they are the quintessential forums for interoperability in the local geographic areas. Most of the meetings were held virtually due to the ongoing pandemic amid increasing health and safety concerns. These

working groups included the New Jersey Regional Communications Working Group and the New York Statewide Communications Working Group, both with multiple smaller regional sub committees. Additional forums members engaged in included the New York City Interoperable Communications Committee comprised of representatives from the Tri-State area and the New York Statewide Citizen Alerting Working Group. Relationships forged and strengthened through these settings have been paramount to the success of recent response operations across all divisions of Region 2.

The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group anticipated to be hosted with the Regional Interagency Steering Committee and Regional Advisory Committee meetings were cancelled in 2021. The ongoing responses to the pandemic, inability to safely gather while protecting our workforces and limited availability of staff to support a Plenary session were the primary reasons for this cancellation.

The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group's Rally in the New York City area was also cancelled due to the pandemic in 2021 and is being planned for 2023. This event, expected to be held semiannually, requires extensive planning and commitments from resources for participation. Agencies enacted strict travel requirements, most not permitting travel beyond state borders or outside of specific mileage zones, would not have permitted the resources to be on site. Additionally, many of the communications assets were deployed to support real-world events to include command and control functions for the pandemic at Emergency Operations Centers, testing sites, emergency field hospitals and other locations.

The Region 2 Regional Communications Coordination Working Group will endeavor to host in person engagements in 2022 when safe to do so in coordination with other similar Regional events and will continue to host virtual sessions with members in the interim to cultivate relationships, provide training, share best practices and plan for future response scenarios.

> ➢ **Accomplishment 2: Members participated in preparedness efforts including training, technical assistance, and exercises to advance emergency communication capabilities to be executed during incidents and events.**

Throughout the course of 2021, nearly all routine and non-emergency activities were paused due to COVID-19. Not only were gatherings unsafe and banned in most locations, but the majority of personnel were assigned to support response operations. Subsequently preparedness efforts routinely conducted by members from various components of the Region 2 Regional Communications Coordination Working Group to increase individual, agency level and whole community capabilities were limited. Most formal in person training was not permitted and although programs began to prepare for virtual deliveries, courses needed to be updated, platforms established, and trainers instructed on delivery methods so therefore opportunities were limited. In Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, however, in person deliveries were hosted for personnel to include on the Incident Command System, Emergency Operations Center Operations, situational awareness reporting, planning and a variety of other topics. Additionally, informal training occurred through presentations, discussions, and mentoring engagements to increase professional knowledge, build relationships, and enhance capabilities, with the majority via online platforms. It should be noted and recognized as a best practice that training on topics

beyond communications has proven invaluable for communications sector responders to have a greater understanding of the relationship of their role and associated responsibilities to that of others executing different missions.

Technical assistance, both formal and informal, continued to be delivered to Region 2 states in 2021 in support of communications missions albeit primarily virtually. Federal agencies provided funding and personnel to increase capabilities in specific mission sets as requested by State level officials through yearly technical assistance programs. Additionally, technical assistance continues to be provided to Commonwealth and Territorial partners to rebuild and enhance infrastructure post Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Subject matter experts deploy regularly to engage directly with key stakeholders to work towards delivering new capabilities as outlined in Senior Leadership guiding documents as well as projects requested by the States. Examples include the building of mobile emergency operations center vehicles, the development of new land mobile radio networks, the establishment of a data center, the design of new Public Safety Answering Points and the creation of new alert and warning systems to notify the public in the event of a pending or just occurred emergency. Furthermore, subject matter experts reviewed deliberate plans, provided input and restructured documents to correlate into a defined planning hierarchy to assist in preparing for future response operations. Although many of these are long term projects, they highlight the importance of relationships and the cooperative efforts of Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group members to reach common goals, often outside of their home area of operations.

Preparedness efforts will remain a priority in 2022 and it is anticipated that activities will continue virtually, whenever feasible and practical, and will resume in person when gathering, travel and other restrictions are lifted.

> ➢ **Accomplishment 3: Conduct an assessment to document baseline communications interoperability capabilities in all Region 2 states to identify best practices for interoperability, coordination and communication during future responses involving multiple jurisdictions and levels of government.**

Due to the limited availability of personnel and other implications of the pandemic, a concerted and collaborative State, Tribal, Territorial, Local and Federal effort to identify, validate and document communication capabilities at all levels was not able to be executed in 2021. It is expected that this initiative will be conducted in 2022, pending the availability of State and Federal partners, the ability to travel and eased pandemic related restrictions. Components to be assessed include land mobile radio, satellite communications, internet-based technologies, terrestrial services, and other capabilities in use and / or available to first responder agencies organically. Through a shared understanding of capabilities, more effective response plans can be developed. Additionally, the intent is to develop more efficient processes for the sharing of best practices across all levels of government and beyond jurisdictional boundaries to include areas for sustainment and areas for improvement for execution during periods of preparedness, response, and recovery.

Statutory Duty 2: Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.

> ➢ **Accomplishment 4: Continue and increase coordination with bordering FEMA Regions 2, 3, and 4 through expanded use of emergency management and public safety mutual aid agreements, exercise participation and participation in each other RECCWG meetings and forums.**

With the close geographic boundaries that New York and New Jersey share with neighboring Region 1, and 3 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group members, it has been identified that increasing engagement and interaction with those partner entities would be a natural and efficient use of valuable time and resources. The Region 1, 2 and 3 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups bring valuable experience in dealing with recent disasters and high-profile events while Region 2 has recently learned numerous lessons learned from Hurricanes Sandy, Irma and Maria and its own numerous high-level events such as New Year's Day celebrations, United Nations General Assembly meetings and major sporting events. Likewise, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are still recovering from an unprecedented hurricane season in which numerous resources from Gulf Coast states deployed to assist in response and recovery operations. In 2020, a Joint Plenary Session to include multiple Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups from across the country to build relationships, share best practices and develop opportunities for future coordination was planned. However, this large-scale meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic to include limitations on gatherings and limited availability of personnel. It is anticipated that a similar event will be scheduled once safe to do so and the pandemic is declared over by the appropriate officials.

In 2022, developing relationships with states in adjacent regions and entities nearby will remain a priority to increase support capabilities, expand available resource pools and potentially decrease response times for future events and incidents.

> ➢ **Accomplishment 5: Planning and implementation of integrated emergency communications innovations**

The 2021 Calendar Year was a successful year in Region 2 as it relates to the rollout of new communications initiatives for use during steady state and to support future responses. Subsequent to lessons learned from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, it was evident that additional capabilities need to be acquired for use during the immediate response operations phases before, during and after an incident occurs. Satellite voice, satellite radio, satellite data, land mobile radio and internet-based platforms were subsequently installed in several locations in Region 2. Furthermore, the requirement to be able operate virtually thrusted the emergency communications community into a process to rapidly identify, source, and roll out new options for steady state and response scenarios.

To support the requirement for a potential surge in land mobile radio requirements, additional caches of equipment were developed and staged in critical locations in Region 2. VHF and UHF radio devices, primarily for use on interoperability channels, were secured and are now available

for immediate use post incident impact.

As evident during the 2017 Hurricane Season and documented in the 2019 Annual Report, a reliable platform for efficient push to talk communications across wide areas is required in the immediate aftermath of a catastrophic incident. The utilization of Mobile Satellite Radio technology proved effective and has since become a best practice across Region 2. Devices have been installed at all Region 2 Steady State Facilities including the Regional Watch Center and the Regional Response Coordination Center to ensure communications with field level personnel. To date, equipment has been installed in Emergency Operations Centers in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands with the roll out anticipated to possibly continue in 2021 to New Jersey and New York locations. Numerous transportable kits are available for immediate deployment in the days preceding an incident or immediately thereafter. The overall intent upon completion of the deployment plan for the Region 2 Mobile Satellite Radio Network is for all primary Federal and State initial Emergency Operation Centers to possess the ability to communicate with command and control units in the field responding to the disaster. This equipment proved highly valuable during response operations to the earthquakes in Puerto Rico in addition to the tropical storms that impacted Region 2. Regular testing continued throughout hurricane season and will resume in 2022 at sites where services are available.

With restrictions effected across the Region in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, government offices were only able to operate with limited numbers of personnel in person and many facilities were required to be closed. Subsequently, it became quickly evident that a new method of conducting business needed to be identified to permit effective and efficient coordination via virtual means. The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group members quickly identified, sourced, and rolled out options in support of their respective entities to ensure required capabilities were delivered, continuity of operations and continuity of government. A variety of platforms became the norm including MSTeams, Zoom and Adobe Connect, while others were leveraged for mission specific requirements. The quick and dedicated work conducted by the communications sector along with the sharing of lessons learned proved invaluable as the majority of government employees transitioned to a telework type program with limited impacts to essential services. It is anticipated that this will remain the primary means of engagement in 2022 as the COVID-19 pandemic continues with long term plans unknown at the time of this report.

The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group endeavors to remain at the forefront of emergency communications and posturing properly for future incidents and events will remain a priority in 2022. Research may be conducted on new technologies, planning executed with membership organizations and the private sector, equipment tested for capabilities and budgeting for future purchases all to occur in the next calendar year. Region 2 is the prone to a variety of natural hazards as well as the high potential
for technological incidents or man-made attacks and therefore will continue to identify, socialize, and utilize integrated emergency communications innovations.

> **Accomplishment 6: Advance the integration of the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group with established State and Regional level Working Groups for increased efficiency in coordination.**

Over the past several years, the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group has established an effective means of communications with stakeholders through a combination of dedicated Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group events and by leveraging meetings, conferences and other similar engagements hosted by partner entities. It was documented in the 2019 Yearly Report that in 2020, in addition to the annual Plenary Session in Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands, a Communications Rally would be hosted by the members of the working group. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this event was cancelled due to operational requirements, travel restrictions and mandates on gatherings.

This will remain a priority for 2022 and dependent on the aforementioned factors, the Region 2 Regional Communications Coordination Working Group will strive to schedule a Public Safety Communications Rally, similar to what was hosted in 2018, in addition to the Plenary Session. This will provide an additional opportunity for increased coordination amongst those in the communications industry and other critical infrastructure sectors.

Statutory Duty 3: Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

> **Accomplishment 7: Implement and share best practices and lessons learned from After Action Reports (AARs) and Quick Look Reports (QLRs) written following response operations across the Region.**

It is imperative that lessons learned are examined so there can be a path towards implementing mechanisms to address issues by updating plans, policies and operational strategies that account for the latest feedback from the field. While exercises are an important step to prepare for disasters, they cannot fully simulate the personnel dynamics, expansive infrastructure damage, resource limitations, capability deficits, coordination difficulties and logistical impediments that often occur during catastrophic disasters.

The 2020 and 2021 Calendar Years brought new and unexpected challenges to the emergency communications community. The sudden transition from in person engagement to virtual sessions became an overnight requirement across all levels of government and nearly all mission areas. Health and safety was paramount, however, equally important was ensuring the continued availability of critical services including telecommunications. Furthermore, with the move to virtual meetings, learning and other sessions, the reliance increased on telecommunications drastically to include services, equipment, and technical support.

The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group members led the charge to ensure government staff had the capabilities required to perform their duties in support of their respective agency's mission essential functions. Lessons were learned by all involved with subsequent sharing across a variety of formal and informal channels. Members coordinated frequently through established relationships to identify courses of action, determine best methods for execution and to plan for future operations in the virtual world, an arena new for many in the

emergency communications field.

The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group will work to ensure a priority is evident by all for the active sharing of lessons learned, both areas for improvement and areas of sustainment, across disciplines, echelons of government and beyond borders. It is anticipated that when travel restrictions are rescinded, gathering limits are repealed and it is safe for congregating, Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups members will deliver formal and informal training sessions through various forums to offer insight through the sharing of lessons learned at both Region 2 and joint Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups Plenary Sessions with other Regions.

> **Accomplishment 8: Facilitate accurate situational awareness and effective coordination during real-world events through the implementation of the Lifelines Toolkit at the State level.**

The establishment of a common operating picture and the sharing of situational awareness is a known requirement for the successful response to an event or incident. Effective processes begin with training efforts during steady state, lead to the refinement of processes followed by the exercising of capabilities and eventual real-world execution. In 2021 all of these steps were completed beginning with training that was provided to State partners on the FEMA Lifelines initiative in all Region 2 states. This reporting and operations mechanism is intended to aid in situational awareness sharing, increase operational coordination and to better inform Senior Leadership to support critical decision making. Training during steady state was delivered from Federal to State personnel in both formal and informal deliveries across New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands to increase alignment with the FEMA program. Senior Leadership Briefings, Coordination Calls and Situation Reporting in these three States are now more closely aligned with the Federal Interagency process thus providing greater visibility and increased ease in information sharing. Additionally, real-world coordination during the pandemic between the FEMA Incident Management Assistance – Advance teams deployed to all States were focused on lifelines and reporting through this structure. Reports were due daily to the Regional Response Coordination Center along with often multiple briefings daily centered on situational awareness to inform leadership to aid in the decision-making process. This resulted in effective and efficient Federal support to state requirements to include lifesaving and life sustaining actions in response to the pandemic. Furthermore, during responses to the in 2021, the doctrinally established lifeline processes were executed and proved invaluable to mission success. Lessons learned continue to be documented and shared, however, with agencies utilizing similar reporting platforms, quick looks indicate that these areas for sustainment and improvement can be more effectively reviewed, analyzed, and adapted, as appropriate, to enhance capabilities for future responses beyond those which occurred in 2021.

Reporting of situational awareness quickly and accurately through a structure mechanism will remain a priority of the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group in 2022. Trainings will continue virtually and in person, as safe and appropriate, to further enhance the capabilities of membership organizations as it relates to this critically important task. Lessons learned from previous real-world scenarios and exercise evolutions will be examined and shared accordingly to afford the greatest positive impacts to preparedness for future responses.

> ➢ **Accomplishment 9: Continue to develop and promote the availability and utilization of cross border communications interoperability platforms during steady state through planning, training, and exercising initiatives for use during the response to real world incidents and events.**

It was anticipated that in partnership with members from other Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups, in 2021 increased collaboration would occur through scheduled trainings and exercises. Additionally, a multi-Regional Plenary session was scheduled to bring leadership and partner agencies together from various entities across the country. The intent was that, and continues to be, when the aforementioned are coupled together with the sharing of information virtually beyond borders between meetings, an increase in awareness should occur on capabilities of other States to be leveraged during response and recovery operations to include those to save lives, property, and the environment. This includes cross border communications interoperability, the sharing of limited yet high demand resources to be allocated during large scale responses and the ability to provide seamless support to meet day to day surge requirements, as required by State, Tribal, Territorial, Local and Federal agencies. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, all formal, in person cross border engagements were cancelled because of travel restrictions, ongoing high priority mission requirements for personnel and limitations on social gatherings.

Cross border communications interoperability planning and executing will remain a priority for Calendar Year 2022 with in person engagements expected to resume when safe and appropriate. The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group may look to engage virtually with other similar entities in the interim when personnel become available and are released from emerging response missions. The Region 2 body will engage and provide support to this initiative and looks forward to the resumption of coordination efforts for this critical priority in the next year.

REGION 2 RECCWG CY 2021 ACTIVITIES

The table below lists trainings, exercises, briefings, subcommittee activities, and other events hosted or promoted by the Region 2 RECCWG.

Date	Event Name	Participants (Federal agencies, States, private/ nonprofit sector, etc.)	Descriptions / Topics and Outcomes
Monthly	National RECCWG Co-Chairs Calls	10 RECCWG Co-Chairs, FEMA DEC Staff and RECCs	Topics of interest and concern on interoperability, governance, technology, and procedures of national interest. Sharing of information on ongoing initiatives in each RECCWG as well as lessons learned and after-action reports (AAR) from exercises and real-world events. *Held virtually as most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*
Quarterly	New Jersey Regional Communications Working Group	New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania State Agencies New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania Local Agencies Federal Agencies FEMA Region 2 Other RECCWG Members	Meetings of various agencies to discuss frequency usage, interoperability, training, interference, system development, funding, cross jurisdictional projects, and other communications related matters. *Held virtually as most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*
Quarterly	New York Statewide Communications Working Group	New York, New Jersey, Connecticut State Agencies New York, New Jersey, Connecticut Local Agencies Federal Agencies FEMA Region 2 Other RECCWG Members	Meetings of various agencies to discuss frequency usage, interoperability, training, interference, system development, funding, cross jurisdictional projects, and other communications related matters. *Held virtually as most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*
Quarterly	New York Statewide Citizen Alerting Working Group	New York, New Jersey, Connecticut State Agencies New York, New Jersey, Connecticut Local Agencies Federal Agencies FEMA Region 2 Other RECCWG Members	Meetings of various agencies to discuss emergency notification processes, systems, and technologies across New York State. *Held virtually as most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*

| Quarterly | NYC Interoperable Communications Committee Working Groups | New York City Agencies

New York, New Jersey, Connecticut State Agencies

New York, New Jersey, Connecticut Local Agencies

Federal Agencies | Meetings of various agencies to discuss frequency usage, interoperability, training, interference, system development, funding, cross jurisdictional projects, and other communications related matters.

Held virtually as most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic |

Date	Event Name	Participants (Federal agencies, States, private/ nonprofit sector, etc.)	Descriptions / Topics and Outcomes
		FEMA Region 2 Other RECCWG Members	
Calendar Year 2021	Regional Incident Management and Incident Support Trainings and Exercises	Puerto Rico Commonwealth Agencies Federal Agencies FEMA Region 2 Other RECCWG Members	Series of planned exercises and trainings of Puerto Rico emergency responders including RECCWG members in San Juan along with their Federal counterparts focused on incident management and incident support activities. Primary goals were to prepare Commonwealth and Federal personnel to respond to a future Hurricane impacting the Commonwealth. Communications was a prevalent topic throughout the series of activities due to expected impacts during future storms as evident during the recent real-world impacts realized in the Caribbean.
Calendar Year 2021	Regional Incident Management and Incident Support Exercise with Emergency Communications Workshop	Virgin Islands Territorial Agencies Federal Agencies FEMA Region 2 Other RECCWG Members	Series of planned exercises and trainings of Virgin Islands emergency responders including RECCWG members along with their Federal counterparts focused on incident management activities. Primary goals were to prepare Territorial and Federal personnel to respond to a future Hurricane impacting the Territory. Communications was a prevalent topic throughout the series of activities due to expected impacts during future storms as evident during the recent real-world impacts realized in the Caribbean.

CY2021 CROSS-STATE AND CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The following table lists Region 2 activities in which multiple states or regions worked together to coordinate strategies, collaborate on ideas, conduct training, or respond to real-world events.

Table 4: State Events

Title/Heading	Description	Outcomes
2021 Puerto Rico Training and Exercising	Deployment of personnel from multiple agencies and levels of government to deliver training and facilitate exercises for responders in Puerto Rico to increase operational response capabilities.	Provided basic and advanced training followed by the opportunity to exercise new skill sets to career and volunteer emergency management professionals, to include those in the Emergency Support Function #2 community, who will support future response operations.
2021 Virgin Islands Training and Exercising	Deployment of personnel from multiple agencies and levels of government to deliver training and facilitate exercises for responders in the Virgin Islands to increase operational response capabilities.	Provided basic and advanced training followed by the opportunity to exercise new skill sets to career and volunteer emergency management

Title/Heading	Description	Outcomes
		professionals, to include those in the Emergency Support Function #2 community, who will support future response operations.
2021 New York State Communications Symposium	Annual New York State Communications Symposium attended by communications personnel from State, Tribal, Local and Federal Agencies from within New York State and beyond.	Provided an opportunity for Emergency Support Function #2 and other emergency management and public safety professionals to network, collaborate, train and plan for future response requirements. *Held both in-person and virtually*
2021 New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Conference	Annual New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Conference attended by emergency management personnel from State, Tribal, Local and Federal Agencies from within New Jersey State and beyond.	Provided basic and advanced training followed by the opportunity to exercise new skill sets to career and volunteer emergency management professionals, to include those in the Emergency Support Function #2 community, who will support future response operations. *Scheduled but cancelled due to the pandemic*
2021 ESF #02 National Summit	Annual Federal ESF 2 Summit attended by communications personnel from State, Tribal, Local and Federal Agencies as well ss private sector industry from across the country.	Provided an opportunity for Emergency Support Function #2 and other emergency management and public safety professionals to network, collaborate, train and plan for future response requirements. *Held both in-person and virtually*
2021 Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator Summit	Annual Federal Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator Summit attended by Federal communications personnel from across the Department of Homeland Security representing all Regions.	Provided an opportunity for Emergency Support Function #2 and other emergency management and public safety professionals to network, collaborate, train and plan for future response requirements. *Held virtually due to the pandemic*
2021 Virgin Islands All Hazards Planning Conference	Annual Virgin Islands Planning Conference attended by emergency management personnel from Territorial, Local and Federal Agencies from within the Virgin Islands and beyond to include Department of Defense personnel representing multiple disciplines and National Guard Leadership from partner states.	Provided an opportunity for Emergency Support Function #2 and other emergency management and public safety professionals to network, collaborate, train and plan for future response requirements.

CY 2021 STATE ACTIVITIES

The table below lists trainings, exercises, briefings, real-life response incidents, and other events sponsored or hosted by a state where awareness, participation, and/or information sharing were coordinated through the Region 2 RECCWG.

Table 5: State Activities

State	Event Type	Title	Date	Event Description and Outcome
New Jersey	Real World Event	Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm	January, 2021	Major Declaration declared on April 28, 2021, for Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm (DR-4597-NJ). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New York	Planned Conference	2021 New York State Communications Symposium	April 2021	Hosting of annual New York State Communications Symposium attended by communications personnel from State, Tribal, Local and Federal Agencies from within New York State and beyond. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor. *Held both in person and virtually due to the pandemic*
New Jersey	Planned Conference	2021 New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Conference	May 2021	Hosting of annual New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Conference attended by emergency management personnel from State, Tribal, Local and Federal Agencies from within New Jersey State and beyond. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor. *Scheduled but cancelled due to the pandemic*
New York/New Jersey	Planned Special Event	Memorial Day Celebration	May 2021	Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor. *Most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*

State	Event Type	Title	Date	Event Description and Outcome
New York/New Jersey	Planned Special Event	Independence Day Celebration	July 2021	Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor. *Most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*
New York	Real World Event	Hurricane	August, 2021	Emergency Declaration declared on August 22, 2021 for Hurricane Henri (EM-3565-NY). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New Jersey	Real World Event	Remnants of Tropical Storm	September, 2021	Emergency Declaration declared on September 2, 2021 for Remnants of Tropical Storm Ida (EM-3573-NJ). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New York	Real World Event	Remnants of Tropical Storm	September, 2021	Emergency Declaration declared on September 2, 2021 for Remnants of Tropical Storm Ida (EM-3752-NY). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New York/New Jersey	Planned Special Event	Labor Day Celebration	September 2021	Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor. *Most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*
New Jersey	Real World Event	Remnants of Tropical Storm	September, 2021	Major Declaration declared on September 5, 2021 for Remnants of Tropical Storm Ida (DR-4614-NJ).

State	Event Type	Title	Date	Event Description and Outcome
				Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New Jersey	Real World Event	Remnants of Tropical Storm	September, 2021	Major Declaration declared on September 5, 2021 for Remnants of Tropical Storm Ida (DR-4615-NY). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New York	Planned Special Event	United Nations General Assembly	September 2021	Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor. *Most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*
New York	Real World Event	Remnants of Tropical Storm	October, 2021	Major Declaration declared on October 8, 2021 for Remnants of Tropical Storm Fred (DR-4625-NY). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New York	Planned Special Event	New York City Marathon Event	November 2021	Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New York	Planned Special Event	Thanksgiving Day Parade	November 2021	Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.

State	Event Type	Title	Date	Event Description and Outcome
				Most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic
New York/New Jersey	Planned Special Event	New Year's Eve Celebration	December 2021	Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor. *Most in person activities cancelled due to the pandemic*
Activities Continued from 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.				
Puerto Rico	Real World Event	Earthquakes	January, 2020	Emergency Declaration declared on January 7, 2020 for Earthquakes (FEMA-3426-EM-PR). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Puerto Rico	Real World Event	Earthquakes	January, 2020	Major Declaration declared on January 16, 2020 for Earthquakes (FEMA-4473-DR-PR). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New Jersey	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-3451-EM-NJ). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New York	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-3434-EM-NY). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.

State	Event Type	Title	Date	Event Description and Outcome
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-3504-EM). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Oneida Indian Nation	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-3557-EM). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Puerto Rico	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-3452-EM-PR). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Virgin Islands	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-3433-EM-VI). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New York	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Major Declaration declared on March 20, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-4480-DR-NY). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
New Jersey	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Major Declaration declared on March 25, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-4488-DR-NJ).

State	Event Type	Title	Date	Event Description and Outcome
				Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Puerto Rico	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	March, 2020	Major Declaration declared on March 27, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-4493-DR-PR). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Virgin Islands	Real World Event	COVID-19 Pandemic	April, 2020	Major Declaration declared on April 2, 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic (FEMA-4513-DR-VI). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Virgin Islands	Real-life Event	Hurricane Irma	September 2017	Emergency Declaration declared on September 5, 2017 for Hurricane Irma (FEMA-3383-EM-VI) Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan and long-term recovery planning. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Puerto Rico	Real-life Event	Hurricane Irma	September 2017	Emergency Declaration declared on September 5, 2017 for Hurricane Irma (FEMA-3384-EM-PR) Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan and long-term recovery planning. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Virgin Islands	Real-life Event	Hurricane Irma	September 2017	Major Declaration declared on September 7, 2017 for Hurricane Irma (FEMA-4335-DR-VI) Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan and long-term recovery planning.

State	Event Type	Title	Date	Event Description and Outcome
				Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Puerto Rico	Real-life Event	Hurricane Irma	September 2017	Major Disaster Declaration declared on September 10, 2017 for Hurricane Irma (FEMA-4336-DR-PR). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan and long-term recovery planning. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Virgin Islands	Real-life Event	Hurricane Maria	September 2017	Emergency Declaration declared on September 18, 2017 for Hurricane Maria (FEMA-3390-DR-VI). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan and long-term recovery planning. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Puerto Rico	Real-life Event	Hurricane Maria	September 2017	Emergency Declaration declared on September 18, 2017 for Hurricane Maria (FEMA-3391-EM-PR). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan and long-term recovery planning. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Puerto Rico	Real-life Event	Hurricane Maria	September 2017	Major Disaster Declaration declared on September 20, 2017 for Hurricane Maria (FEMA-4339-DR-PR). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan and long-term recovery planning. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.
Virgin Islands	Real-life Event	Hurricane Maria	September 2017	Major Disaster Declaration declared on September 20, 2017 for Hurricane Maria (FEMA-4340-DR-VI). Successful deployment and employment of integrated communication plan and long-term recovery planning. Note: This event was not hosted or coordinated by the RECCWG but is being included in this chart due to the number of RECCWG members that participated in the endeavor.

REGION 2 RECCWG CY 2022 PRIORITIES

Statutory Duty 1: Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

➢ **Priority 1: Continue to cultivate relationships with existing State, Tribal, Territorial, Local and Federal coordinating bodies and hold at least one Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group meeting in New York or New Jersey and in Puerto Rico or Virgin Islands.**

It is understood that continued collaboration through in person venues is critical to the establishment and maintenance of long-term relationships. Although cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, Region 2 will endeavor to host a Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group Plenary session together with stakeholders from local, state, tribal, territorial, Federal and private sector entities in coordination with the Regional Interagency Steering Committee and Regional Advisory Committee yearly meetings. In the event the aforementioned cannot be held in person due to restrictions, limitations and mandates associated with COVID-19, virtual opportunities for engagement may be explored.

➢ **Priority 2: Effect preparedness efforts including training, technical assistance, and exercises to advance emergency communication capabilities to be executed during incidents and events.**

Of critical importance to successful response operations is preparedness before an incident occurs as defined under the National Preparedness Goal, promulgated in the National Incident Management System series of doctrinal documents, and delivered through associated trainings. Collectively, the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group recognizes the importance of prevention, protecting, mitigating, responding, and recovering from all hazards incidents. The foundation for success relies on preparedness and efforts in 2022 will be concentrated on training, exercising and technical assistance in the field of emergency communications to ensure that mission essential functions and other critical capabilities can be executed and are available, when required. It is widely recognized that degraded communications severely hampers or can even halt response and recovery operations, therefore, members must be trained appropriately and provided the needed resources during pre-incident activities through planning, organizing, equipping, training, and exercising.

➢ **Priority 3: Conduct an assessment to document baseline communications interoperability capabilities in all Region 2 states to identify best practices for interoperability, coordination and communication during future responses involving multiple jurisdictions and levels of government.**

Through a collaborative State, Tribal, Territorial, Local and Federal effort, activities related to identifying, validating, and documenting communication capabilities at all levels of government across Region 2 will be conducted in 2022. Components to be assessed include land mobile radio, satellite communications, internet-based technologies, terrestrial services, and other capabilities in use and / or available organically to first responder agencies or other critical

mission essential entities. Through a shared understanding of capabilities, more effective response plans can be developed in future years at all echelons. Concurrently, the intent in 2022 is to develop more efficient processes for the sharing of best practices across all levels of government and beyond jurisdictional boundaries to include areas of sustainment and areas for improvement for execution during periods of preparedness, response, and recovery as it relates to interoperability, communications, and coordination.

Statutory Duty 2: Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.

➢ **Priority 4: Continue and increase coordination with bordering FEMA Regions 1, 3, 4 and 5 through expanded use of emergency management and public safety mutual aid agreements, exercise participation and participation in each other RECCWG meetings and forums.**

The easternmost Regions of the United States, as identified by FEMA, are each vastly different in many ways, however, share common threats and hazards as well as unique intertwined relationships and interdependencies. Regions 1, 3 and 4 each face significant threats of Tropical Storms and Hurricanes each season in addition to other similar weather hazards. Region 5 is the designated "back up Region" for Region 2 and all five Regions are home to major metropolitan areas with densely populated neighborhoods. Consequently, in addition to adjacent geographic borders, it will be mutually beneficial for the Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups to partner together for meetings, symposiums, trainings, and exercises in 2022. It is expected that a multi-Regional Plenary Session will be planned, however, details and execution are dependent on COVID-19 limitations as well as the ability for member entities to participate based upon operational availability. It is through cross border coordination that the emergency communications missions will expand beyond a single Region and promote increased knowledge, skills, and abilities of first responders in the communications sector to support future response requirements.

➢ **Priority 5: Planning and implementation of integrated emergency communications innovations**

The technological aspects of emergency communications continues to expand and rapidly evolve each and every year. For example, during the pandemic specifically, as the workforce transitioned from office settings to virtual platforms in early 2020 and throughout 2021, new emergency communications requirements arose which members of the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group needed to investigate and address within a very short time suspense. Furthermore, as proven during recent disasters, more reliance is being placed on caches and readily available emergency communications equipment to ensure that government entities are not late to need and can support critical life saving and life sustaining operations in the immediate wake of an incident or during an event. In 2021, based upon lessons learned in previous years including throughout the pandemic and other response scenarios, Region 2 will endeavor to identify new technologies to be shared across the membership for

procurement, as possible, and future use during real world, exercise, and testing scenarios. Planning for the implementation of new technologies in future years and for the expansion of current technologies may include, but is not limited to cellular, microwave, land mobile radio and satellite platforms. The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group remains at the forefront of the technology spear with services, equipment, supplies and personnel ready to respond at a moment's notice to provide command and control, contingency, or continuity communications capabilities within the Region and beyond its borders. The intent for 2022 will be to continue the aforementioned and ensure that all partnering entities are kept abreast of currently available and emerging innovations to support Local, State, Tribal, Territorial, and Federal response requirements.

> **Priority 6: Advance the integration of the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group with established State and Regional level Working Groups for increased efficiency in coordination.**

The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group has established an effective means of communications with stakeholders through a combination of dedicated Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group events and by leveraging meetings, conferences and other similar engagements hosted by partner entities. Recently and generally, primarily due to ongoing response and recovery operations, one Plenary session has been scheduled yearly, however, it is anticipated that an additional event, a Public Safety Communications Rally, similar to what was hosted in 2018, will be planned for execution in 2023 provided restrictions related to the pandemic have been released. This will provide an additional opportunity for increased coordination throughout 2022 during the planning stages and in 2023 when hosted amongst those in the communications industry and other critical infrastructure sectors. Continued engagements will occur, as scheduled, through State and Regional level events to ensure effective and efficient synchronization amongst members of the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group from State, Tribal, Territorial, Local and Federal entities as well as the private sector.

Statutory Duty 3: Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

> **Priority 7: Implement and share best practices and lessons learned from After Action Reports (AARs) and Quick Look Reports (QLRs) written following response operations across the Region.**

A critical component of the preparedness cycle is to identify lessons learned to include areas for improvement and areas of sustainment to best posture for future scenarios impacting an area, mission set or critical infrastructure sector. FEMA Region 2 has established a robust after action and reporting process in cooperation with FEMA Headquarters to not only identify lessons learned but also document them accordingly for sharing with applicable entities. Similarly, State, Local, Tribal and Territorial entities, as well as other Federal agencies, often have their own independent continuous improvement processes. The lessons learned, for example, from the 2017 Hurricane Season in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have resulted in numerous advances

in the field of emergency communications in Region 2 highlighting the importance of these initiatives. Briefings have occurred at Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group member organization hosted events and transformed the way some entities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, although still being collected at the time of this report, once shared will likely yield additional valuable impacts to the various response communities in not only emergency communications but emergency management as a whole. The Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group will make a concerted effort in Calendar Year 2022 to share After Action Reports (AARs) and Quick Look Reports (QLRs) virtually and through in person briefings to the greatest extent possible in furtherance of this endeavor. It is anticipated that recent events may likely set the stage for operations for years to come and the membership will be better postured for future incidents once having a greater understanding of areas of improvement and areas for sustainment as identified across the different disciplines, government echelons and geopolitical divisions of Region 2 and the rest of the country.

> ➢ **Priority 8: Facilitate accurate situational awareness and effective coordination during real- world events through the implementation of the Lifelines Toolkit at the State level.**

The lessons learned since the 2017 Hurricane Season to include the disasters impacting all Region 2 states in the subsequent years including tropical storms, earthquakes, snow storms and the pandemic highlight the importance of the sharing of accurate situational awareness before, during and after an incident. Situational awareness is critical to inform Senior Leadership to aid in decision making and also provides the foundation for the allocation of resources to execute tactical level operations. As the Lifelines Toolkit continues to expand and evolve, FEMA Region 2 will provide additional training to all applicable entities for use by their respective agencies during response scenarios. Furthermore, as the requirements increase for reporting, data usage will likely as well, thus necessitating additional bandwidth availability potentially during periods of surge usage or diminished capabilities due to incident impacts. Calendar Year 2021 has not only clearly demonstrated the importance of the sharing of information quickly, effectively, and efficiently through virtual platforms but has also proven the importance of accuracy, timeliness, and relevancy in reporting during response situations requiring emergent life saving measures. Subsequently, members of the Region 2 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group will examine different terrestrial, land mobile radio and satellite technologies available to support the emerging requirements and test new platforms, as possible, for feasibility in real world scenarios. Furthermore, the Working Group will look to expand internal situational awareness sharing capabilities in 2022 through the establishment of a virtual platform available to all member organizations to read, review and post not only situational awareness but also lessons learned, new technologies and upcoming events.

> ➤ **Priority 9: Continue to develop and promote the availability and utilization of cross border communications interoperability platforms during steady state through planning, training, and exercising initiatives for use during the response to real world incidents and events.**

In partnership with members from other Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups, pending the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, limitations, and mandates, in 2022 it is anticipated that increased collaboration will occur through scheduled trainings and exercises. It is expected, additionally, that a multi-Regional Plenary session will also be scheduled to bring leadership and partner agencies together from various entities across the country. When the aforementioned are coupled together with the sharing of information virtually beyond borders between meetings, an increase in awareness will likely occur on capabilities of other States to be leveraged during response and recovery operations to include those to save lives, property, and the environment. This includes cross border communications interoperability, the sharing of high value yet limited resources to be allocated during large scale responses and the ability to provide seamless support to meet day to day surge requirements, as required by State, Tribal, Territorial, Local and Federal agencies.

REGION 3

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 3
615 Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106

FEMA

DATE: May 23, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR:

        John Rabin
        Assistant Administrator
        Response Directorate

FROM: MaryAnn Tierney
        Regional Administrator

MARYANN E TIERNEY

Digitally signed by MARYANN E TIERNEY
Date: 2022.05.23 16:04:58 -04'00'

SUBJECT: FEMA Region 3 Regional Emergency Communications
        Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

www.fema.gov

As required by 6 U.S.C. 575, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The Annual Report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 3 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined RECCWG Annual Report for calendar year (CY) 2021, which will be distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

- Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
- Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.
- Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

The Annual Report reflects the accomplishments that the Region 3 RECCWG membership achieved to meet the intent of the statute. As such, no modifications were made by the FEMA Regional Office without the expressed approval of the RECCWG membership. The final report as attached wholly represents the RECCWG membership's input and does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the Region.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG has as a venue for federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, and the Whole Community to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region as shown through activities in this report. The accompanying Annual Report provides important insight on how emergency communications related efforts are moving forward in this Whole of Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.

Enclosed: Region 3 CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report   www.fema.gov

REGION 3 REGIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION WORKING GROUP

CY 2021 OVERVIEW

Region 3's Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG), continued to flourish despite the persisting challenges presented in 2021 by the COVID-19 pandemic. Region 3 RECCWG members include representatives from Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Region 3 RECCWG continued to strengthen relationships across the Region and to expand interoperability and coordination of communications resources within each of the five member states and Washington, DC. The Region 3 RECCWG worked diligently throughout 2021 alongside its Federal, State, local and private sector partners, auxiliary communications (AuxComm) volunteers, and a
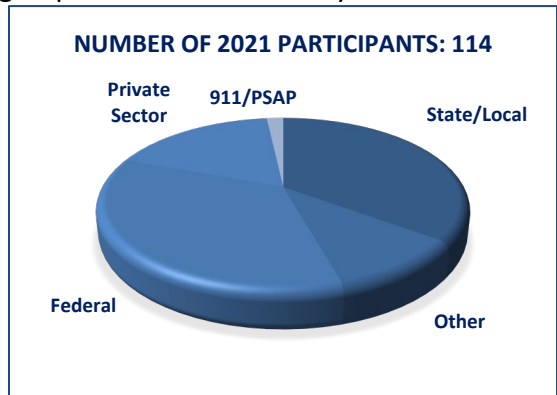
Figure 6: 2021 RECCWG Participation

Region 3 RECCWG Members received 7 Major Disaster Declarations, and 1 Emergency Declaration, in 2021

host of enthusiastic professionals who lent their time and expertise to advance communications interoperability across the Region. The need to adapt to the unique challenges imposed by COVID-19 within the Region resulted in increased innovation for new online collaboration tools, virtual learning environments, and the continued growth and expansion of existing voice and data tools. Region 3 RECCWG participation grew by 22% in 2021, which can be attributed to the RECCWG's progress in their goal of representing the whole community. RECCWG participation in 2021 is illustrated in **Figure 6**. The Region 3 RECCWG was also one of the few RECCWG Regions across the nation, to hold an in-

person Plenary session during 2021. This in-person Plenary session allowed RECCWG members to reconnect in a more personal setting, and to strengthen their relationships with other members across the Region.

In addition to the ongoing national response to the COVID-19, Region 3 also experienced the impact of the January 6th insurrection and its aftermath, the 59th Presidential Inauguration, and the effects of Hurricane Ida. Despite a reduced ability to travel and collaborate in-person due to national pandemic response, RECCWG members responded to and reported on numerous incidents and planned events that required interoperability among field personnel, command centers, volunteer organizations, and local agencies. Every event posed a unique set of challenges that responders and officials (many of whom are members of the RECCWG) were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the Region and across the country which can be seen in **Figure 7**.

2021 Region 3 RECCWG Regional Events

Category	Count
Disaster/Emergency Response	7
Cross-Border Initiatives	2
Meetings	13
Planning Efforts	4
Special Event Support	4
Other	3
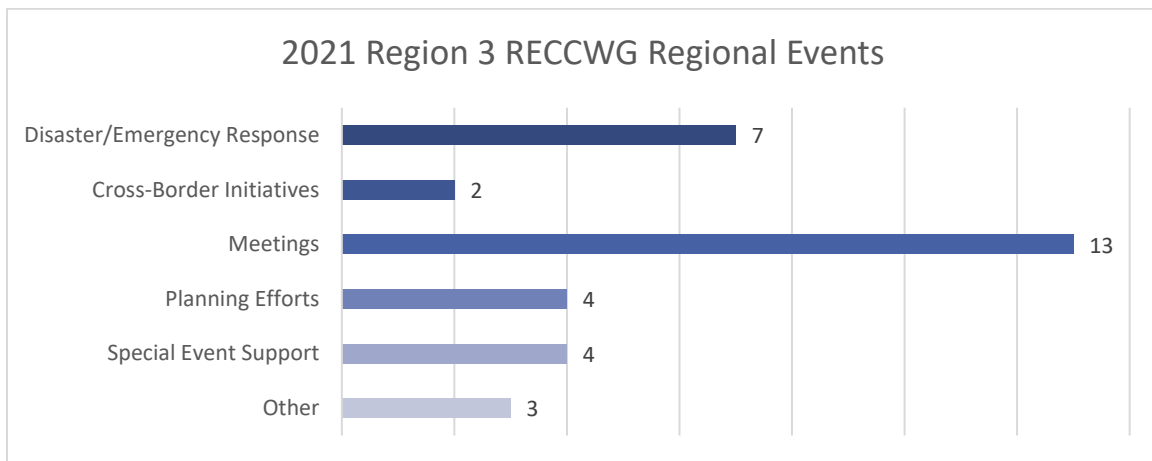
Figure 7: Regional Events

As a diverse yet cohesive team, the RECCWG addressed interoperability challenges in the Region as the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) continued to increase Band-14 coverage and next-generation 911 (NG911) initiatives progressed. The year's events also underscored the criticality of well-functioning and universally compatible alert and warning systems, especially considering natural disasters, the continuing COVID-19 pandemic response,

The Region 3 RECCWG increased membership, developed training and exercise opportunities in virtual and in-person environments, supported each other during real world events, and increased communications interoperability between the States, Commonwealths, the District, Federal Government Agencies, and Private Industry Partners across the Region.

and the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capital. The technological advances of 2021 made it clear the collective expertise of communications professionals as a singular body is increasingly

effective in shaping the future of interoperability among systems, both technologically and legislatively. Highlights of the RECCWG's accomplishments in 2021 are documented in this report and serve as examples of the advancements made within Region 3 and through the RECCWG program nationally. Similarly, priorities for 2022 have been set to leverage the extensive professional experience, comprehensive conversations and research, and close collaboration among member agencies within the Region.

For additional information regarding the Region 3 RECCWG, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 3 Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), Jorge Vidal, at jorge.vidal@fema.dhs.gov or 202-664-3966.

Table 6: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
RECCWG LEADERSHIP	
MaryAnn Tierney	Region 3 RECCWG Chair, Regional Administrator
Charlie Guddemi	Region 3 RECCWG Co-Chair, District of Columbia Statewide Interoperability Coordinator
Jorge Vidal	Region 3 Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator
DELEWARE (DE) REPRESENTATIVES	
Robbie Hunt	SWIC, Delaware State Division of Communications (DivComm)
Carolyn Henry	DivComm Deputy Director Division of Communication
Tom Kadunce	DivComm
Eric Wagner	DivComm, FirstNet SPOC
LTC Garland Pennington	Delaware Air National Guard (DEARNG)
LTC Joseph Cooke	DEARNG
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (DC) REPRESENTATIVES	
Col. Jonathan Ebbert	District of Columbia National Guard
Alexandria Tepper	DCHSEMA NCR Watch Office
Darrin Bovia	DC Watch Desk
Naadira Ali	*(Agency Unknown)*
Heather McGaffin	*(Agency Unknown)*
Selena MacArthur	DC OUC
Rick Christ	DC HSEMA
James Farley	DC HSEMA
Frederick Goldsmith	DC HSEMA
Robert Sneed	DC HSEMA
MARYLAND (MD) REPRESENTATIVES	
Bud Frank	MD SWIC
Ross Coates	Department of Emergency Services, Harford County/911 Director
Jack Markey	Division of Emergency Management, Frederick County

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Kenneth Maloney	MEMA
John Freeburger	Montgomery County
Matt Houck	Montgomery County
Gary Zamerski	Maryland State Police
PENNSYLVANIA (PA) REPRESENTATIVES	
Mark Wrightstone	PA SWIC
Tim Baldwin	County of Lancaster PA 911, Deputy Director
Susan Singer	PEMA Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) Coordinator
David Holl	Lower Allen Township, Director of Public Safety
Maj. Victor Yartz	PA National Guard, Acting Deputy G6 / DCSIM & 2IBCT S-6
Maj. Sean Georgia	Pennsylvania State Police
Michael Kelly	*(Agency Unknown)*
Daniel Miller	*(Agency Unknown)*
Franklin Moore	PA Asst. SWIC/ PA STARNet – SRND: Comms Spec.
Charles Thorp	Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency / Radio Telecom Supervisor
VIRGINIA (VA) REPRESENTATIVES	
Michael Keefe	VDEM Operations Division
Gabe Elias	VA SWIC
Lt. Col Mark Widener	JFHQ-VA J6/Knowledge Management Officer
Charlie Locke	Interoperability Coordinator, Fairfax County, VA
David Mulholland	Administrator, Arlington County VA Emergency Communications Center
Jeffery Holmes	Fairfax County
Michael Pittman	VA National Guard
WEST VIRGINIA (WV) REPRESENTATIVES	
David Neal	WV SWIC
GE McCabe	Director, WV Division of Emergency Management
R.C. Faulk	West Virginia Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN)
	WV Division of Emergency Management, Asst. SWIC
Steve Vititoe	Cabell County EMS, Director of Logistics
MSG Daniel Kirby	WVNG
PRIVATE INDUSTRY PARTNERS	
Rodney Cooper	T-Mobile/Sprint Emergency Response Team
David Haddad	T-Mobile
Casey Muilenberg	T-Mobile

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Michael Kessler	AT&T
Greg Lawlor	AT&T
Jim Mullen	AT&T
Robert Komoroski	AT&T FirstNet
Rodger Pulley	AT&T FirstNet
Keli Page	AT&T FirstNet
Nieama Booker	Client Partner, Mobility, Verizon
Andrew Ayers	Client Partner, Connected Solutions, Verizon
Jeremy Bruso	Verizon Region 3
Tetoya Gibson	Verizon
Andrew Fusco	Verizon Response Team
Bob Galvin	Mutualink
Mark Anderko	Mutualink
Tina Chester	Mutualink
Robbie Hill	Mutualink
Dan Willingham	Mutualink
Steve Carney	Mutualink
NONGOVERMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	
Harriet Rennie-Brown	Executive Director, National Association of State 911 Administrators
FEDERAL PARTNERS	
Mark O'Hanlon	Region 3 Operational Planning and Response Branch Chief
David Cucchi	FEMA Region 2
Josh Green	FEMA Region 2
Joe Husnay	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Justin Cain	FCC
Brian Luu	FCC
Sathya Maruthl	FCC
Lori Stone	First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)
Bruce Fitzgerald	FirstNet
Robert Holgate	FirstNet
Nicole Ugarte	FirstNet
Scott Jackson	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Bill Segarra	DEA – Saint Louis, MO
John MacLean	DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
Marty McLain	CISA Emergency Communications Division (ECD)

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Kathy Blasco	CISA
Vernon Mosley	DHS
James Crafty	DHS
Tom Gagnon	ECD Sector Coordinator (VA, WV, DC)
Bruce Belt	ECD Sector Coordinator (MD, PA, DE)
Mike Varney	FirstNet, Northeast Area Director
Pat Casey	FEMA, Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) Frederick, Chief
Jim Miller	FEMA MERS Frederick
Patrick Kiser	FEMA MERS Frederick, RF Manager
Bill Bishop	FEMA MERS Frederick
Craig Johnson	FEMA ONCRC
Homero Ruiz	FEMA Spectrum Manager
Karen McCurdy	FEMA Region 3, Defense Coordinating Element (DCE)
Wes Rogers	FEMA
Eric Main	DEC Group Supervisor
John Latek	DEC Group Supervisor
Nicole Firelli	DEC Group Supervisor
Mathew Hall	DEC Group Supervisor
Larry Harkleroad	FEMA DEC HQ
Scott Hansen	FEMA DEC HQ
Kelly Wolslayer	FEMA Region 3 Response Division Director
Dennis Cribben	FEMA Region 3
Maria Arena	FEMA Region 3 Operational Planning and Response Branch
Ian Costello	FEMA Region 3
Richard Auletta	FEMA Region 3
OTHER PARTICIPANTS	
Jeffery Clemens	FEMA DEC Support Team
Mike Molnia	FEMA DEC Support Team
Brent Rydel	FEMA DEC Support Team
Gregory Bearce	FEMA DEC Support Team

CY 2021 RECCWG ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND 2022 PRIORITIES

As evidenced during 2021's challenges with COVID-19 and other natural disasters, the Region 3 RECCWG has become both an essential body of knowledge and a platform for action. This forum for Region 3 members has become especially vital during a time that calls for widespread virtual participation and remote collaboration. The accomplishments listed below illustrate a cross-

section of the many strides that Region 3 members have made in 2021 in fulfilling their duties as prescribed by the NECP.

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Statutory Duty 1

Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan

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Accomplishment #1: Interagency planning for the 59th Presidential Inauguration and response to the attack on the U.S. Capital January 6, 2021.

Planning for the 59th Presidential Inauguration National Security Special Event (NSSE) started in the Fall of 2020 and continued through the beginning of January 2021. The planning effort led to the development of the 59th Presidential Inauguration Interagency Consequence Management Plan (ICMP), which was a comprehensive Federal, state, local and private partner plan and playbook, for the sequences of the Inauguration which included a large

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</table>

amount of Region 3 RECCWG members. The contributors involved in the preparation and execution crossed jurisdictional boundaries, allowing for additional planning, testing, and lessons learned to increase systems interoperability. Law enforcement agencies and National Guard units attended from across the country, to provide increased staffing and capabilities for the event.

On January 6, 2021, when the U.S. Capital was attacked, the planning period and execution shifted to focus on the events unfolding there. Extensive communications coordination was required to balance communications interoperability for all responding agencies and for the support force that would stay behind after the assault. DC HSEMA played a crucial role in coordination and execution of the response and follow-on actions.

Accomplishment #2: Improved Communication Infrastructure and System Capabilities

All RECCWG members in Region 3 made upgrades in communication capabilities or infrastructure in 2021.

- D.C. upgraded its LMR system adding 10 new radio sites across the district, providing first responders better coverage. Lessons learned from events in 2021 have led to solutions to increase interoperability with neighboring jurisdictions and agencies, which will continue into 2022.
- Delaware made upgrades to its state radio system in 2021. This is year five of an eight-year upgrade and roll out cycle. Recent upgrades will allow for better encryption on state radios and improves cross border communications interoperability with Maryland and Pennsylvania state systems.
- Maryland finished rolling out the MDFIRST communication system. The upgrades in MDFIRST allow for more communications capability and interoperability with neighboring states, D.C., and incudes maritime zones for the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. The capacity of the MDFIRST radio system has increased from five communication zones to 100.
- Pennsylvania installed a new P25 system, PA-STARNet. The new 150 site, state managed system is the largest non-commercial microwave network in the country, covering 42,000 square miles. PA-STARNet is installed in every PSAP and allows for communication with local, federal and energy providers in the state. A statewide

communication exercise was conducted September 15, 2021 and provided the opportunity to test the new P25 equipment, deployables and FirstNet equipment for functionality in response.

- Virginia made upgrades to its STARS radio system and is contracting currently to replace it starting in 2022. Interoperability challenges were overcome when gaps were discovered during the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capital. D.C. radio frequencies were added to the STARS system to fix this.

- West Virginia continued to build out and finish the State Interoperability Radio Network (SIRN) P25 upgrade project. The system is managed by the state of WV and is available in all areas of the state and allows for greater interoperability with local, state, federal and neighboring states. Upgrades to the microwave network to increase the capability to 1GHZ speed are in the planning stages with field deployment scheduled to begin in Spring and Summer of 2022.

Priority #1: Accurately capture communications capabilities and procedures in Region 3's states, commonwealths, and the District of Columbia

RECCWG members have maintained their momentum in actively reporting on technology upgrades and other changes in the operational and political landscapes of their respective States and localities. Although system upgrades are well documented in RECCWG meeting summaries and state reports, it is also important that FEMA and other Federal agencies have a clear picture of communications operations in each State and in Region 3 as a whole. Communications officials in State and local agencies, many of whom are also RECCWG members, will be instrumental in updating the Region 3 Regional Emergency Communications Plan, through their participation in State Communications Annex updates. In 2021, West Virginia completed their State Communications Annex. Multiple states updated their Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP) including Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia.

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications

Accomplishment #3: Continued Ongoing COVID-19 Response and Mass Vaccination Sites

The challenges of COVID-19 remain, and the continuing response evolved across Region 3 in 2021, turning from testing sites to mass vaccination sites. Each State, Commonwealth, and the district, supported by FEMA and private industry partners, established mass vaccination sites in designated areas to help slow the spread of COVID-19. As the year progressed and more vaccination doses were made available, testing locations and resources were re-allocated to mass vaccination sites, which were staffed and open until the Summer of 2021. Coordination with private industry partners was crucial to building out communications capabilities quickly in areas that lacked cellular coverage. Capabilities and best practices were shared in RECCWG meetings to aid members across the Region, to ensure effective communications at each site.

Priority #2: Promote Awareness of the importance of the SWIC Postion

As a central coordination point for each State's, Commonwealth's, and the District's interoperability efforts, SWICs are responsible for working with State, local, Tribal, Territorial and Federal agencies to implement a strategy that ensures all responding entities can communicate with each other during operations. In Region 3, and across the country, SWIC-related duties have been dispersed among several public safety officials. It is critical that cabinet-level officials in each State and Commonwealth as well as the District understand the increasingly important role that SWICs must fill to meet the public safety needs of a technology-based population. With the continued support from other influential bodies such as the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) and National Governors Association (NGA), the RECCWG will continue to promote the SWIC role through collaborative outreach in 2022.

Statutory Duty 3

Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made

Accomplishment #4: Continued Build Out of Next Generation 911 Systems

Region 3 States, Commonwealths, and the District, continued to develop and upgrade their 911 systems to next generation systems, in collaboration with partners of the National Association of State 911 Administrators. Maryland recently upgraded their Next Gen 911 system and has successfully conducted interoperability testing in 21 out 24 counties. Virginia continued to increase 911 interoperability, increasing the capability to re-route calls between emergency communications centers around the state, leading to a more resilient system. In 2021, Delaware also added functionality allowing text messages to be sent to its smart 911 system.

Priority #3: Continue to develop Regional interoperability solutions

Region 3 States, Commonwealths, and the District, continue to support and encourage interoperability in their planning initiatives and exercises that are conducted each year. With the additions and upgrades of new radio systems across the Region, cross-jurisdiction communication issues are being identified and mitigated to prevent known and future unknown issues. Washington, D.C conducted the Third Annual Interoperability Summit in September 2021. The theme of the Summit was to observe the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks to look back and highlight interoperability communications successes and challenges faced by first responders during their response activities, following the attacks. More than 500 federal, state and local agency representatives participated during the Summit.

Priority #4: Build relationships between MSAT-owning agencies

Each Region 3 State, Commonwealth, and the District, along with multiple supporting agencies, use satellite phones as part of their contingency planning efforts. The collaborative efforts of the RECCWG have helped build better relationships amongst members and increased interagency cooperation. RECCWG members will continue to identify opportunities to work together in real-world events and multi-jurisdiction exercises across the Region in 2022.

CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

RECCWG members collaborated throughout 2021 on various activities included in the tables below.

2021 RECCWG Meetings
- Plenary - Annville PA, 3 - 4 Nov 2021
  - State, Federal and private industry updates
  - Surfside Condo Collapse Emergency Communication After Action Presentation
- Teleconferences - 11 Monthly virtual RECCWG meetings were held focusing on Regional, State, Federal, and private industry updates

2021 RECCWG Initiatives and Activities
- 2021 DC Interoperability Summit
- West Virginina Communication Annex Update
- Region 3 Communications TTX-ECD ECC, 4 Nov 2021
- Maryland Updates to SCIP
- Delaware Updates to SCIP and TICP
- Virginia Updates to SCIP

2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members
- COVID-19 Mass Testing and Vaccination Sites
- Hurricane/ Tropical Storm Ida response
- 59th Presidential Inaguration
- January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol

Figure 8: CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

Looking Forward

In 2021, with COVID-19 travel restrictions and the threat of weather-related events, planning to hold an in-person RECCWG Plenary session was a challenge, but we were able to conduct the Fall RECCWG as a hybrid event. Looking forward to 2022, the Region 3 RECCWG will continue its momentum to strengthen communications interoperability between the States and the RECCWG partners' agencies. In 2022 the drive to hold more hybrid events will continue as the Region prepares to hold Spring and Fall Plenary sessions.

Exercises are also on the horizon this year for the members of the RECCWG. SWICs from each of the six Region 3 RECCWG member states, have expressed interest in larger scale exercises between members and their jurisdictions, on a more frequent basis. Planning and discussions are currently under way for a multi-state event later in 2022. A tabletop exercise was held in Fall 2021 at the in-person RECCWG Plenary Session in Pennsylvania, and it was a huge success. Building on this and moving forward is a top priority for the RECCWG. Future events will include more federal, state, local and private industry partners for increased realism and success.

Lastly, several of the state Emergency Communications Annexes are scheduled for a refresh. Maryland is the first state in the Region to receive an Annex update in 2022. Keeping with the theme of momentum moving forward, both Virginia and Delaware have also expressed interest in refreshing their Annexes, and will be scheduled as time allows this year, and into 2023.

Maintaining current and accurate Emergency Communications Annexes and keeping the Region 3 RECP updated, are critical for strengthening the resilience of emergency communications in this Region.

REGION 4

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 4
3005 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, GA 30341

FEMA

DATE: May 11, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR:
                              John Rabin
                              Assistant Administrator
                              Response Directorate

FROM: Gracia B. Szczech
                              Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: FEMA Region 04 (R4) Regional Emergency Communications
                              Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

As required by 6 U.S.C. 575, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The Annual Report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 4 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined RECCWG Annual Report for calendar year (CY) 2021, which will be distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

- Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
- Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.
- Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

The Annual Report reflects the accomplishments that the Region 4 RECCWG membership achieved to meet the intent of the statute. As such, no modifications were made by the FEMA Regional Office without the expressed approval of the RECCWG membership. The final report as attached wholly represents the RECCWG membership's input and does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the Region.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG has as a venue for federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, and the Whole Community to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region as shown through activities in this report. The accompanying Annual Report provides important insight on how emergency communications related efforts are moving forward in this Whole of Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.

Enclosed: Region 4 CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report   www.fema.gov

REGION 4 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION WORKING GROUP
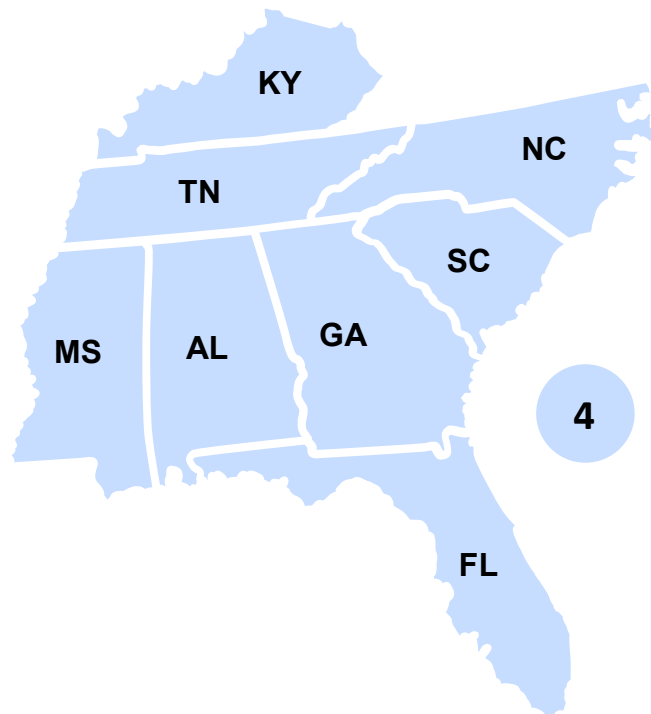
CY 2021 OVERVIEW

Composed of the Tribal Nations of Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Tribe of Florida, the States of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, the Region 4 Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) worked diligently throughout 2021 alongside its state, tribal, Federal and private sector partners, auxiliary communications (AuxComm) volunteers, and a host of enthusiastic professionals who lent their time and expertise to advance communications interoperability across the region. The RECCWG community helped Region 4 partners form alliances that proved useful in the many disasters they encounter. Over the past year, RECCWG members demonstrated the value of tools and methods created by and shared among RECCWG members to support response and recovery operations during the deadly Surfside building collapse in Florida; the wind, rain, and storm surge from Hurricane Ida; the deadly tornadoes in Kentucky and Tennessee; and the telecommunication systems impacted from a human-caused explosion in Tennessee.

As a diverse yet cohesive team, the RECCWG also tackled many new challenges to interoperability in the region including key initiatives such as integrating the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) and advancing the next-generation 911 (NG911) project. The year's disaster response events further underscored the criticality of well-functioning and universally compatible alert and warning systems. The technological advances of 2021 made it clear the collective

expertise of communications professionals as a singular body is increasingly effective in shaping the future of interoperability among systems, both technologically and legislatively. Highlights of the RECCWG's accomplishments in 2021 are documented in this report and serve as examples of the advancements made within Region 4 and through the RECCWG program nationally. Similarly, priorities for 2022 and beyond are set to leverage the extensive professional experience, comprehensive conversations and research, and close collaboration among member agencies within the region.

Supporting Disaster Operations

The States and Tribal Nations in Region 4 are home to about 20% of the US population and are among the most disaster-prone. Since the last report, Region 4 experienced 15 major disasters in seven of its eight states from severe weather events including several tropical storms and hurricanes, all while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 7 provides the complete list of Presidentially declared disasters for this period.

> Region 4 had 15 Major Disaster Declarations in 2021

Region 4 members also responded to several no-notice incidents during this reporting period, ranging from the Nashville explosion in late 2020 to the Surfside building collapse in Florida, and concluding 2021 with the worst tornado outbreak in Kentucky's history. Sharing online information, leveraging existing relationships among members, and utilizing information gained from prior RECCWG sessions enabled effective response and recovery operations in each of these events. Collaboration helped guarantee communications were rebuilt and maintained before, during, and after these disasters.

State/Tribe	Disaster Declaration/Emergency Response
Alabama	DR-4596 Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds & Tornadoes DR-4632 Severe Storms & Flooding
Poarch Band of Creek Indians	DR-4591 COVID-19 Pandemic
Florida	EM-3560 Surfside Building Collapse EM-3561 Tropical Storm Elsa EM-3562 Tropical Storm Fred
Georgia	DR-4579 Tropical Storm Zeta DR-4600 Severe Storms & Tornadoes
Kentucky	DR-4592 Severe Winter Storms, Landslides & Mudslides DR-4595 Severe Storms, Flooding, Landslides & Mudslides EM-3575 Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds, Flooding & Tornadoes DR-4630 Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds, Flooding & Tornadoes
Mississippi	DR-4598 Severe Winter Storms EM-3569 Hurricane Ida DR-4626 Hurricane Ida
North Carolina	DR-4588 Tropical Storm Eta DR-4617 Remnants of Tropical Storm Fred

Tennessee	EM-3552 Explosion DR-4594 Severe Winter Storms DR-4601 Severe Storms, Tornadoes & Flooding DR-4609 Severe Storms & Flooding EM-3576 Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds & Tornadoes

Table 7: 2021 Presidentially Declared Disasters

In addition to natural disasters, RECCWG members responded to and reported on numerous incidents and planned events that required interoperability among field personnel, command centers, volunteer organizations, and local agencies. Each event posed a unique set of challenges that responders and officials, many of whom are RECCWG members, were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the region and across the country. **Figure 9** provides a snapshot of regional events, such as incident responses, planning activities, trainings, exercises, and communications coordination efforts, that required support from Region 4 RECCWG members.
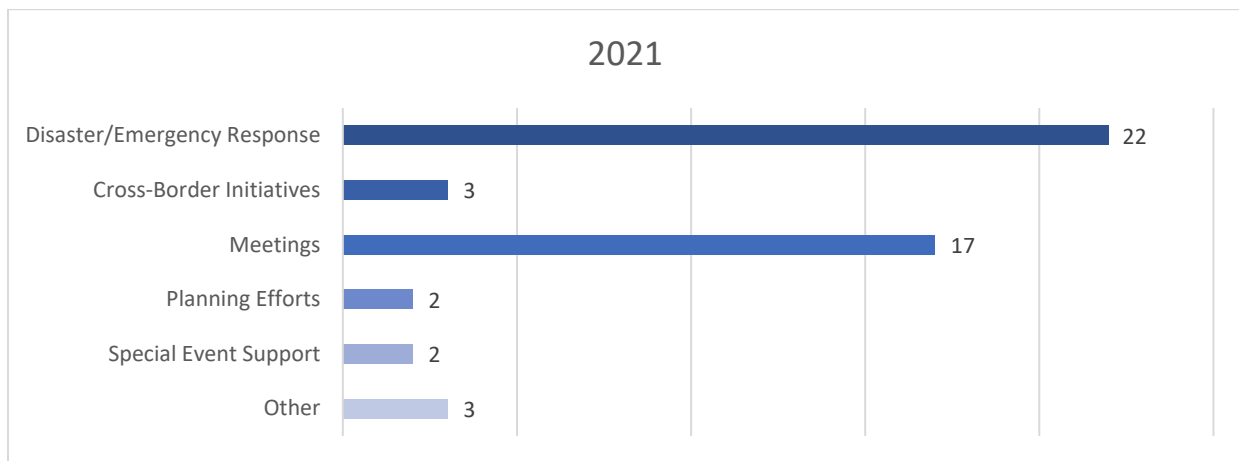
Figure 9: Regional Events

RECCWG Organizational Development

The RECCWG active membership grew by 23% in 2021. Adding private sector partners and increasing
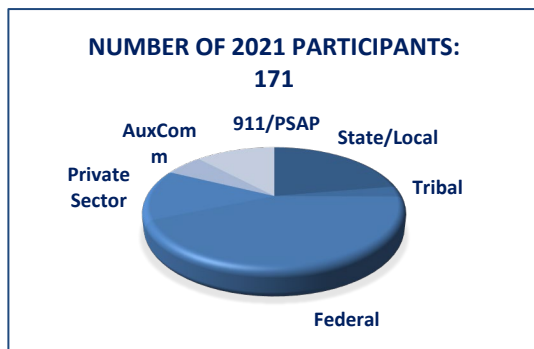
Figure 10: 2021 RECCWG Participation

representation from the AuxComm community, 911/PSAP (Public Safety Answering Points) communities, and the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). The notable growth in participation is attributed to the RECCWG's mission of representing the whole community and strengthening emergency communications before, during, and after disasters. All RECCWG members play a significant role in sustaining and saving lives during incidents and contribute tremendously during the response and recovery phase efforts. Through training, technical assistance, testing, and exercises, as well as supporting COVID-19 in 2021, they improved emergency communications interoperability throughout the region by leveraging new and existing relationships. All members collaborated to achieve the RECCWG objectives. The 2021 RECCWG

participation by sector is shown in Figure 10 and Table 8 provides the complete roster of active RECCWG members.

Table 8: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

Name	Role or Agency
RECCWG Leadership	
Garcia B. Szczech	RECCWG Chair, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 4 Regional Administrator
Dent Guynes	RECCWG Vice Co-Chair/Mississippi Wireless Communications Commission (WCC)
Edwin Whitworth	RECCWG Co-Chair/GA Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) Emergency Support Function (ESF)-2
Donnie Monette	FEMA Region 4, Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), ESF-2 Lead
Jo Robichaud	FEMA Region 4, Deputy RECC, Telecommunications Specialist - DEC
Alabama (AL) Representatives	
George Grabryan Jr.	Director, Florence-Lauderdale County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)/9-1-1
Jeb Hargrove	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)/Communications Director/ Information Technology (IT) Section Chief, Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)
Bill Mayfield	University of Alabama Health System, Emergency Preparedness Manager
Westly Martin	Telecommunications Specialist, AEMA
Greg Sarratt	Southeast Division, American Radio Relay League (ARRL)
Jason Smith	Disaster Emergency Communications Unit Leader, ESF-2, AEMA
Florida (FL) Representatives	
Denise Adkins	State of Florida Dept of Management Services, ESF-2
Laura Leigh Avery	Orange County Fire Rescue, Chief
Bobby Brown	City of Fort Lauderdale - Telecommunications Coordinator
Cindy Cast	Radio Systems Manager, Miami Dade County
Greg Holcomb	Lake County Public Safety/9-1-1 Coordinator – Director
Gwen Keenan	FEMA Region 4 – Florida FEMA Integration Team (FIT)
Robert Little	IT, Florida Division of Emergency Management
Roger Lord	SWIC/Telecommunications Administrator, FDEM
Chuck Mims	State of Florida DMS, ESF-2
Jennifer Moreen	State of Florida DMS, ESF-2
John Mulhall	State of Florida DMS, ESF-2
Rick Palm	Florida ARRL
Hank Stephens	State of Florida - Department of Management Services (DMS) - Division of Telecommunications (DIVTEL)– ESF-2 Lead
Robin Terrill	ARRL Emergency Coordinator, Broward County
Georgia (GA) Representatives	
Jason Donley	Cherokee County Sheriff's Office – Lieutenant
Jim Hadder	Georgia ARRL
Robert "Bob" Johnston	Amateur Radio Emergency Service / Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (ARES /RACES) Emergency Coordinator, Cherokee County
Jonathan Jones	GEMA, Emergency Communications Field Coordinator
Michael Nix	SWIC, Executive Director of the Georgia Emergency Communications Authority, GEMA
Aleisha Rucker-Wright	GEMA, Georgia Emergency Communications Authority
Greg Smith	GEMA – State Warning Officer

Name	Role or Agency
Kelly Towe	Georgia Forestry Service – Land Mobile Radio Communications Manager
Chris Woodard	Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms - Atlanta Division
Kentucky (KY) Representatives	
David Barker	Communications Directorate J6 - Kentucky National Guard
Andrew Bertl	Kentucky FEMA Integration Team (FIT)
Drew Chandler	Woodford County Emergency Management, Director
Cathy Dawson	Kentucky State Police
James Duke	Ohio County Emergency Management Service - Communications Administrator
Brandon Marshall	SWIC, Kentucky State Police – Chief Engineer
Curtis Nail	Kentucky State Police, ESF2, Program Manager, Education and Outreach
Mississippi (MS) Representatives	
Gil Bailey	Deputy Director, Harrison County Emergency Communications
Scott Davis	Director, Communications Branch, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
Shane Gerard	Director, Warren County 9-1-1
Bobby Graves	AuxComm - KB5HAV | Hurricane Watch Net - National Hurricane Center
Dent Guynes	Deputy SWIC / Mississippi Wireless Communication Commission (MS WCC) - Systems Administrator
Vicki Helfrich	SWIC/MS WCC
Donald Loper	Mississippi Highway Patrol, Department of Public Safety
North Carolina (NC) Representatives	
Jason Boggs	Deputy Fire Marshal, Catawba County Emergency Services
David Coviello, Jr	Bandys Fire Department - Firefighter & Emergency Management Technician (EMT)
Red Grasso	NC Dept of Information Technologies; Program Director, First Responder Emerging Technologies (FirstTech)
Greg Hauser	SWIC, North Carolina Emergency Management ESF-2 Lead
Jonathan Horn	Charlotte Fire Department - Communications Superintendent
Doug Logan	Granville County Emergency Management Agency
Mike Montague	ESF-2, Information Technology, North Carolina Division of Emergency Management (NCEM)
Dominick Nutter	Emergency Communications Director, Raleigh-Wake County 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)
South Carolina (SC) Representatives	
Derrec Becker	Public Information Director, South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD)
Randy Childress	South Carolina Department of Administration, ESF-2
Dennison Coomer	Coordinator, Public Safety and Emergency Communications, South Carolina Department of Administration (SCDA)
Matthew Littleton	Captain, City of Easley Fire Department
Lloyd Mitchell	South Carolina Forestry Commission, Communications Coordinator
Roger Mull	South Carolina AuxComm
James Bradford "Stew"	South Carolina Army National Guard, SFC Commo Chief
Gabe Turner	Communications Manager, SCEMD
Richard Weaver	Spectrum Manager, South Carolina, ESF-2
Tennessee (TN) Representatives	
Jody Clinard	Radio System Manager, Nashville Metro Radio Communications
Ehrin Ehlert	Tennessee FirstNet Coordinator

Name	Role or Agency
Jimmy Floyd	TEMA Communications Technician
Randy Gowler	Tennessee Department of Health - Communications Coordinator
Mike Gregory	Director, Emergency Management Services, University of Tennessee
Jesse Griggs	Gibson County Kenton City Hall - Communications Planner / Fire Commissioner / Region 39 700/800 MHz Planning Committee
Mike Harris	Deputy SWIC, ESF-2 Manager, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) - Communications Section Manager
Randy Hicks	Tennessee Dept. of Corrections - Communications Program Coordinator
Todd Horton	Williamson County Emergency Management Agency, Director
Bill Jorgensen	Williamson County Office of Public Safety, Director
Peter Rogers	SWIC, TN Highway Patrol – TN Advanced Communications Network
Patrick Rollins	Director of Mobile Communications Services - City of Chattanooga, Systems Manager & Regional Interoperability Coordinator TN Valley Regional Communications Systems
Charles Shannon	Administrator, Operations and Communications, TEMA
Jim Snyder	Knoxville-Knox County EMA - Auxiliary Communications Coordinator
Howard Thompson	Germantown Fire Department
Steve Waterman	Coordinator, TEMA AuxComm Emergency Service, SHARES
Tribal Representatives	
Jeff Kozdron	Public Safety Communications Engineer, Seminole Tribe of Florida (STOF)
Chris McGhee	Training Officer, Poarch Band of Creek Indians
April Sells	Fire/EMA Director, Poarch Band of Creek Indians
Chris Simpson	Planning/Communications Manager, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MSCI)
Michael A. Wiedeman	Emergency Analyst, Poarch Band of Creek Indians
Private Industry Partners	
Lisa Glenn	Southern Linc
Jay Blessing	Senior Disaster Recovery Manager National Operations, T-Mobile
Nieama Booker	Verizon Business Group, Verizon Wireless
Jos Bowmaster	Verizon Crisis Response Team (VCRT), Verizon Wireless
Mike Jacobs	Vice President Regulatory Affairs, America's Communications Association
Rodney W. Cooper	East Emergency Response Team, T-Mobile
Robert Gordon	AT&T
Robert Komoroski	AT&T / FirstNet
John Larregui	Verizon Wireless
John Lutenbacher	Southern Linc
Kenny Mack	National Security Preparedness, AT&T
Trent Griggs	Response Team, Verizon
Greg Martin	Market Team, Verizon Wireless
Rosalie Mata	Market Team, Verizon Wireless
Casey Muilenburg	T-Mobile
Tony Patino	Senior Disaster Recovery Manager National Operations, T-Mobile
Stephen Roccia	Account Manager, Verizon Wireless
Charlene Ruple	Market Sales Coordinator, Southern Linc
Chris Sanders	Verizon Response Team
Vondrelle Smith	Federal Account Manager, Verizon Wireless
Earl Struble	Verizon Wireless

Name	Role or Agency
John Szejda	Response Team, Verizon
Matt Wood	Tactical Operations Coordinator, CISCO
Federal Partners	
Desi Alexander	Audio Visual (AV) Communications Technician, Center for Disease Control (CDC)
Karl Arriola	FEMA Region 5 RECC
Noel Gniada-Banford	Chief, Ops Integration Branch Response Division, FEMA Region 4
Joshua Black	Deployable Communications Support Force Officer, United States Coast Guard (USCG)
Kathy Blasco	NCC Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
Calvin Bowditch	National Communications Center (NCC)
Jan Chilson	Director, Emergency Management, SW FLANT Kings Bay Naval Base (NAVY)
Harriet Rennie Brown	National 9-1-1 Coordinator
Paul Coburn	Agent/Coordinator, Project Roll Call, Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Kevin Coen	FEMA HQ DECD
Eric K. Conklin	Field Coordinator, Department of Justice (DOJ)
Chris Essid	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
Nicole Firelli	FEMA HQ DEC Group Supervisor
Bruce Fitzgerald	FirstNet Authority, Florida
Eric Flannery	FirstNet, Kentucky
Billy Freeman	FirstNet, Liaison to Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
Mike Foster	FEMA Region 7 RECC
Crystal Greene	Information Technology Operations, FEMA Region 4
Jim Gulsby	FEMA MERS
Mathew Hall	FEMA HQ Disaster Emergency Communications (DEC)
Scott Hansen	FEMA HQ DECD
Larry Harkleroad	FEMQ HQ DECD
Gail Heard	Army Emergency Operations Center (ARMY)
Doug Howard	ESF-2, Network Services Division, General Services Administration (GSA)
Joe Husnay	Regional Response & Special Event Coordinator, FCC
Scott Jackson	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
John Healy	FCC
John Hunt	911/Emergency Communications, FirstNet
Al Kenyon	FEMA HQ Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS)
Joel Katz	Deputy Chief of Staff, A6 Communications, Southeastern Regional Civil Air Patrol (CAP)
Lloyd Kimball	FEMA DEC Region 10 Telecommunications Specialist
Al Knerr	Commercial Mobile Radio Service, FCC
Keith LaPlant	Telecommunications Specialist, 7th District, USCG
John Latek	FEMA HQ DECD
Jason Lee	General Service Administration (GSA)
Eric Main	FEMA HQ DECD
Mark MacAlester	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
John MacLean	Region 4 Rep, National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC)
Pam Montanari	Southeast Coordinator (FL, GA, NC, SC), Emergency Communications Division (CISA ECD)
Chuck Murph	Region 4 Lead, FirstNet
Derek Nesselrode	Southeast Coordinator (TN, AL, MS, KY), Emergency Communications Division (CISA ECD)
John O'Connor	National Communications Center (NCC)

Name	Role or Agency
Greg Paquette	Telecommunications Manager, Thomasville Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS)
Tim Perrier	Emergency Management Specialist, FCC
Marty Pittinger	FEMA HQ OCFO
Paul Reid	National Headquarters, Civil Air Patrol (CAP)
Tom Olley	FEMA MERS, Telecommunications Specialist
Gerald Risner	FirstNet, Liaison to GA, NC, SC
Homero Ruiz	FEMA Spectrum Manager
Glen Sachtleben	FEMA Region 4 Deputy Director for Response Division
Frederick Scalers	FirstNet, South Carolina
Jessica Stillwell	FEMA MERS
Robert Tabet	FEMA MERS
Aislynn Turner	FirstNet, Georgia
Chris Tuttle	CISA Emergency Communications Division (ECD)
Jorge Vidal	FEMA Region 3 DEC
Pam Wallace	FEMA HQ Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS)
Sunny Westcott	National Communications Center (NCC)
Chris White	FEMA Region 10 DEC
Phil Workman	RECC, FEMA Region 3
Colleen Wright	CISA Emergency Communications Division (ECD)
Guest Participants	
Jim Wilkinson	Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC)

CY 2021 RECCWG ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND 2022 PRIORITIES

The Region 4 RECCWG is an essential body of knowledge and a platform for action as demonstrated throughout the year's events and acknowledged by Federal, state, local, tribal, and community officials at all levels of government, telecommunications professionals, and public safety representatives across the county. The accomplishments listed below illustrate a record of the many advances the RECCWG made in 2021 toward fulfilling its duties. The RECCWG's achievements in 2021 demonstrated top priorities for CY 2022.

Statutory Duty 1

Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan

Priority 1: Increase RECCWG membership, especially among state, local, tribal, and private partners

Legislation requires RECCWG membership to include Federal, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies, and emergency response organizations representative of the region. RECCWG members drive the focus and direction of RECCWG meetings, webinars, collaboration, and aid. Increasing the RECCWG membership is the natural first step for bringing together new ideas and perspectives, thus fortifying the collaboration between all emergency communications partners. State, local, tribal, and private sector partners are invaluable to the engagement efforts

within the Region 4 RECCWG because each provides perspectives that may be otherwise overlooked at the Federal level.

Accomplishment 1.1: RECCWG Membership Growth

In 2021, the Region 4 RECCWG membership increased by 23%. New members represent private sector organizations, AuxComm volunteers, public safety organizations, and Federal agencies.

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications

Priority 2: Increase participation on region-wide emergency communication capabilities

The Region 4 RECCWG discussed, trained, and exercised various systems and emergency communications platforms between all member states. Every state emergency operations center (SEOC) identified its primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency (PACE) nodes of communications to ensure the resiliency and interoperability of its communications systems with other states or agencies in the event of a catastrophic event. The RECCWG focused on enforcing measures to ensure every Region 4 state can communicate using the various modes of emergency communications by conducting exercises during its plenary sessions. In the past year, the RECCWG tested the capabilities of every statewide radio system: FNARS, MSAT G2, NAWAS, and SHARES. As areas of improvement are identified, the RECCWG collaborates to find solutions to ensure all emergency communications nodes are functional. The focus of this coming year is to expand these to include WinLink and HF capabilities. This priority will encourage future coordination, testing, and exercising among all Region 4 RECCWG partners and strengthen the region-wide relationships that are necessary to carry out multifaceted response in the event of a disaster.

Accomplishment 2.1: Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians joined MSWIN

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians joined the Mississippi Wireless Information Network (MSWIN), adding over 700 users to the state land mobile radio network system. The Tribe built three RF MSWIN sites across tribal lands. Both the NECP and the RECCWG strive to bring interoperable communications to all communities, especially those who may experience challenges reaching a reliable network. Active participation in the R4 RECCWG helped the State of Mississippi and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians work toward full membership of MSWIN, expand capabilities, and bring all tribal entities on a single radio system statewide.

Accomplishment 2.2: Expansion of the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Interoperability

The Seminole Tribe of Florida collaborated extensively with the Region 4 RECCWG throughout 2021 to expand its reach with emergency communications assets and infrastructure. The Tribe operated the first 700 MHz radio system at a casino, and it plans to expand this project to six other Seminole reservations in the State. The Tribe also received 50 Sonim phones to integrate with the surrounding agencies. Through collaboration and planning, the RECCWG lent its support to the Seminole Tribe of Florida to bolster its relationship within public safety and strengthen resilient communications.

Through this initiative, the Seminole Tribe of Florida received four new 48' Type 1 MCOVs with two dispatch positions including law enforcement and fire services frequencies on the statewide system.

Accomplishment 2.3: Florida's Communications Strike Team

In 2020, Hurricane Sally knocked out Escambia County's communications. In response, Florida deployed an improvised team of experts to restore the system; they successfully reestablished the network within three days. In 2021, this experience was revisited to review lessons learned for those in emergency communications. This led to the creation of a Communications Strike Team whose mission is to restore communications within short notice of a natural disaster within its state and the region. To further expand its capability, the team anticipates acquiring a portable tower and other communications equipment that will allow it to restore communications and address other critical human needs faster than ever after future disasters.

Statutory Duty 3

Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, Local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

Priority 3: Continue to collaborate, share ideas, conduct gap analyses, and identify best practices

Everything the Region 4 RECCWG accomplished in 2021 was due to the working group's collaborative nature and expertise solving real-world problems. In 2021, the Region 4 RECCWG held 11 meetings and one two-day plenary session to discuss a variety of emergency communications and public safety topics. During cross-regional incidents, such as Hurricane Ida, Region 4 collaborated with other regions to coordinate response efforts, particularly as it related to mutual aid and restoring damaged communications. Moving forward, the Region 4 RECCWG will continue this collaboration and discuss innovative topics in future meetings. Topics will include emergency communications grant opportunities, emerging communications technology, lessons learned from 2021, and collaboration with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners.

Accomplishment 3.1: Collaboration with the RATPAC

The Radio Amateur Training Planning and Activities Committee (RATPAC) was established in several Regions to create a series of webinars on the effective use of amateur radio in emergency communications. Various agencies from across the United States presented how each utilizes volunteer resources for emergency communications and what its expectations are from those who agree to serve. State agencies from Region 4 had a dominating presence in the RATPAC and included North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. These webinars aided the RECCWG's sustainability by instructing participants on how to better utilize volunteer resources, particularly amateur radio users, for emergency communications and interoperability.

Accomplishment 3.2: Utilizing Bridge 4 Public Safety

Bridge 4 Public Safety (B4PS) is a secure collaborative tool meant to provide concepts for public safety use. The South Carolina COMU used B4PS to provide situational reports for first responders in the field. Both North Carolina and South Carolina are unique in the way each uses the system across the

country and participation for B4PS grows each month. States in Region 4 are pushing to allow private NGO partners and commercial carriers to communicate with the impacted customers and first responders in the field. Using this tool within the RECCWG increased coordination between states and regions through direct messaging and sharing photos and videos.
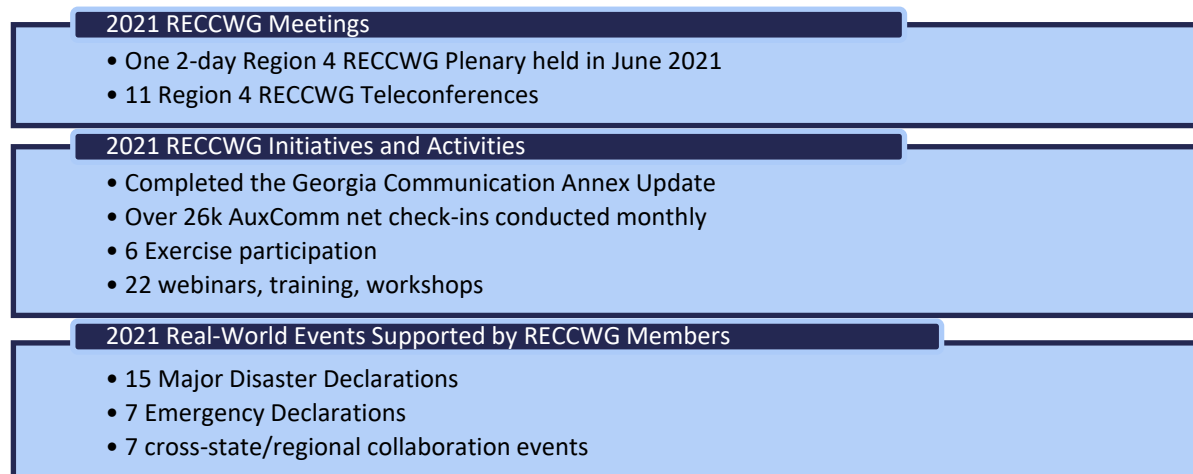
Accomplishment 3.3: RECCWG Annual Plenary Exercise

The Region 4 RECCWG Annual Plenary took place in June 2021 - a date that was strategically selected for the beginning of Hurricane Season. A tabletop exercise took place on the second day of the plenary session that simulated two simultaneous hurricanes: one in the Gulf of Mexico and one in the Atlantic Ocean. Participating Region 4 states, Federal agencies, industry partners, and Tribes described each course of action for 120 hours, 96 hours, 72 hours, 48 hours, 24 hours, and 12 hours before landfall and up to 24 hours following landfall. Common themes throughout the exercise highlighted the importance of public messaging, hardening critical communications infrastructure, MCOV inventory and preparation, testing communications assets, and protecting the lives of emergency communications personnel in the field. This exercise coordinated RECCWG partners on all levels to address the critical needs leading up to a potentially catastrophic disaster.

Priority 4: Establish PACE plan for communications between state warning points and the Region 4 Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC)

The RECCWG continued to work on interconnectivity of statewide land mobile radio networks, HF radio options, satellite communication platforms, and use of alert and warning networks to establish a regional plan for connectivity during major response and recovery operations. This priority will continue in 2022 as the partners work to formalize plans for interoperable, survivable communications networks.

CY 2021 RECCWG ACTIVITIES

2021 RECCWG Meetings
- One 2-day Region 4 RECCWG Plenary held in June 2021
- 11 Region 4 RECCWG Teleconferences

2021 RECCWG Initiatives and Activities
- Completed the Georgia Communication Annex Update
- Over 26k AuxComm net check-ins conducted monthly
- 6 Exercise participation
- 22 webinars, training, workshops

2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members
- 15 Major Disaster Declarations
- 7 Emergency Declarations
- 7 cross-state/regional collaboration events

Figure 11: CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

LOOKING FORWARD

The Region 4 RECCWG will continue to coordinate and collaborate disaster emergency communications in order to save and sustain lives in the event of a disaster. To ensure interoperability, RECCWG members will continue to train and exercise communication systems and platforms across the region and states. Maintain and support the Radio Amateur Training Planning and Activities Committee (RATPAC) webinars. Members will continue to collaborate, share ideas, conduct gap analyses, and identify best practices to improve emergency communications between states, local governments, tribal governments, and private sector partners. The Region 4 Regional Emergency Communications Coordination will establish a PACE plan to facilitate communication between state warning points and the Region 4 Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC).

Long Term Objectives: Continue to grow the RECCWG Membership;
Establish Communications Exercise Working Group;
Conduct Annual Communication Exercise; and
Share Disaster Emergency Communications Best Practices.

For additional information regarding the Region 4 RECCWG, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 4 Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), Donnie Monette, at Donnie.Monette@fema.dhs.gov or 404-938-7961.

REGION 5

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 5
536 South Clark Street, Suite 6
Chicago, IL 60605

FEMA

DATE: May 27, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: John Rabin
Assistant Administrator
Response Directorate

FROM: Thomas C. Sivak
Regional Administrator

THOMAS C SIVAK
Digitally signed by
THOMAS C SIVAK
Date: 2022.05.27
11:57:20 -05'00'

SUBJECT: FEMA Region 5 Regional Emergency Communications
Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

As required by 6 U.S.C. 575, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The Annual Report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 5 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined RECCWG Annual Report for calendar year (CY) 2021, which will be distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

- Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
- Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.
- Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

The Annual Report reflects the accomplishments that the Region 5 RECCWG membership achieved to meet the intent of the statute. As such, no modifications were made by the FEMA Regional Office without the expressed approval of the RECCWG membership. The final report as attached wholly represents the RECCWG membership's input and does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the Region.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG has as a venue for federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, and the Whole Community to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region as shown through activities in this report. The accompanying Annual Report provides important insight on how emergency communications related efforts are moving forward in this Whole of Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.

Enclosed: Region 5 CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report   www.fema.gov

REGION 5 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION WORKING GROUP

CY 2021 OVERVIEW

Composed of members from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, the Region 5 Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) continued to gain influence and momentum in the region throughout 2021 alongside its federal and private sector partners, auxiliary communications (AuxComm) volunteers, and subject matter experts who contributed their time and expertise to advance communications interoperability across the region. The RECCWG continued to thrive in a post-pandemic environment. Public safety agencies' focus began to shift from the previous year's COVID-19 testing, mass vaccination, shortages in equipment and personnel, and restrictions to onsite work. They resumed projects that were postponed by pandemic restrictions and began looking toward future priorities of strengthening their communications posture in the region.

Many RECCWG members began the year by attending ESF #2 coordination calls in support of vaccination sites and held planning meetings for the region's first tabletop communications exercise. They supported each other through the RECCWG and participated in monthly meetings where they shared state and local concerns of regional significance, listened to topical presentations, and discussed preparations for an eventual return to in-
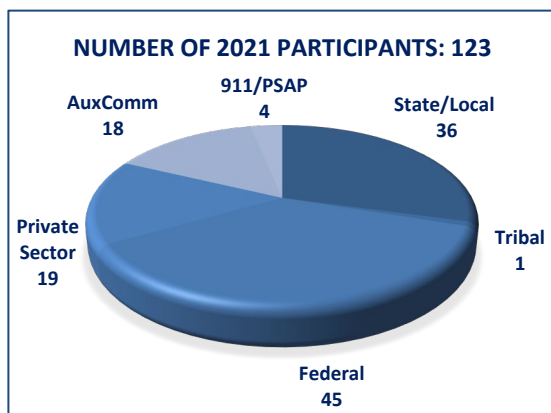
Figure 12: 2021 RECCWG Participation

person engagements. The RECCWG's membership continued to grow in several areas, most notably in amateur radio participation. Its subcommittees took an active role in executing several of the region's initiatives and supported the greater RECCWG body by helping shape its priorities for 2022. RECCWG participation in 2021 is shown in **Figure 12**.

Although Region 5 had only one major disaster declaration in 2021, RECCWG members supported several emergency responses and events during the year. Through monthly RECCWG meetings, they reported to their peers on their respective states' emergency communications developments, challenges, and solutions. **Figure 13** provides a snapshot of regional events, such as incident responses, planning activities, trainings, exercises, and communications coordination efforts, that have required support from RECCWG members in Region 5. The year concluded with a set of clear goals the RECCWG intends to execute in 2022 in pursuit of enhanced communications interoperability across the region.

> RECCWG members planned and executed the region's first-ever communications tabletop exercise.
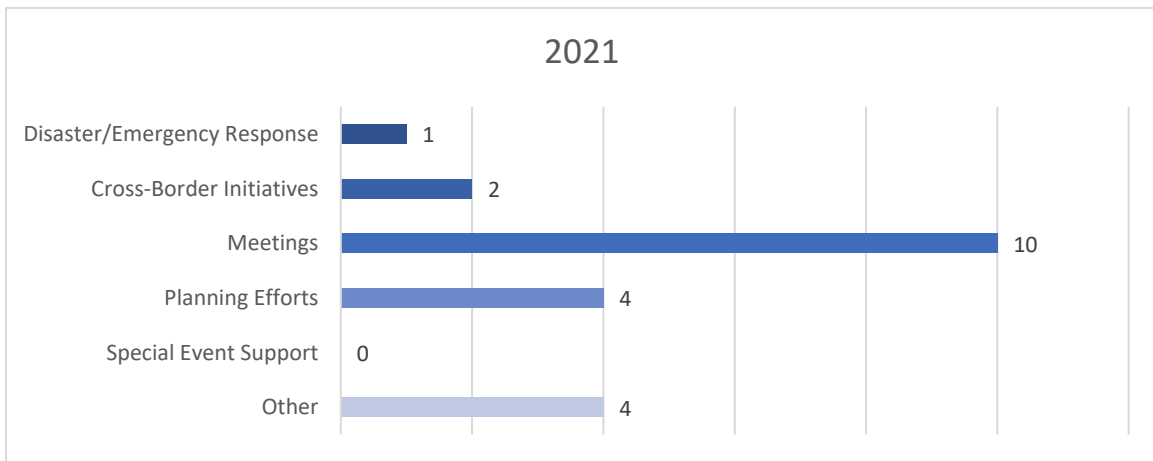
Figure 13: Regional Events

Highlights of the RECCWG's accomplishments in 2021 are documented in this report and serve as examples of the advancements made within Region 5 and through the RECCWG program nationally. Similarly, priorities for 2022 have been set to leverage the extensive professional experience, comprehensive conversations and research, and close collaboration among member agencies within the region.

For additional information regarding the Region 5 RECCWG, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 5 Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), Karl Arriola, at karl.arriola@fema.dhs.gov or 312-408-4418. **Table 9** lists the names and roles of RECCWG members in 2021.

Table 9: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
RECCWG LEADERSHIP	
Moises Dugan	Region 5 RECCWG Chair, FEMA Region 5 Administrator (A)
Brad Stoddard	Region 5 RECCWG Co-Chair, Michigan Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)
John Dooley	Region 5 RECCWG Vice-Chair, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Emergency Communications Network (DPS, ECN), IPAWS Program Manager
Karl Arriola	Region 5 Emergency Communications Coordinator
ILLINOIS	
Cindy Barbera-Brelle	Coordinator, Illinois State 911
Aaron Bishop	Macoupin County, IL
Dan Casey	Deputy Director, Public Safety Information Technology (PSIT), Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC)
Paul Maplethorpe	Chief Emeritus, Greater Round Lake Fire Protection District
Matthew Miller	IEMA
Colin Vasconcelles	IEMA
Randy Williams	State Emergency Operations Center ESF #2 Lead
INDIANA	
John Asher	Field Support Manager, Indiana Integrated Public Safety Commission (IPSC)
Andi Baughn	Outreach Coordinator, Indiana IPSC
Tyler Clements	Field Services Coordinator, Indiana IPSC
Sally Fay	SWIC, Indiana IPSC
Lewis Hartman	Communications Manager, Indiana Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Ed Reuter	Director, Indiana State 911
Brent Skidmore	Response Communications Coordinator
Michael Watkins	Training Manager, Indiana IPSC
MICHIGAN	
Jaclyn Barcroft	Emergency Communications Specialist, Michigan State Police, Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD)
Sgt. Ron Bush	Assistant Coordinator, Berrien County Sheriff's Office, Office of Emergency Management / Homeland Security
Matt Cook	Michigan Critical Incident Management System (MI CIMS) Coordinator, Michigan State Police, Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD), R5 WebEOC Committee Chair
Joni Harvey	State 911 Administrator
Bryce Tracy	Coordinator, Mackinac County 911
Randy Williams	Michigan's Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS), MI Dept of Technology, Management, and Budget
MINNESOTA	
Cathy Clark	SWIC
Melinda Miller	FirstNet Program Manager—Deputy SWIC, Minnesota DPS, ECN
Dana Wahlberg	Director, Minnesota DPS, ECN

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Brad Winger	Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM), IPAWS
OHIO	
Brian Castner	Telecommunications Branch Supervisor, Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA)
Rob Jackson	Coordinator, State of Ohio 911
Rick Schmahl	Program Director and SWIC, Multi-Agency Radio Communication System (MARCS)
WISCONSIN	
Eric Viel	Director and SWIC, Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs, Office of Emergency Communications (DMA, OEC)
Paul Hughes	Communications and Warning Officer, Wisconsin DMA, Emergency Management (EM)
Doug Lofreddo	Assistant Communications and Warning Officer, Wisconsin DMA, EM
Jennifer Lord	Radio Communication Specialist, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
Gary Timm	Broadcast Chair, Wisconsin Emergency Alert System (EAS)
Jim Westover	Spectrum Manager, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT)
Margaret Zieke	WI EOC Public Safety Broadband Program Manager
TRIBAL MEMBERS	
Jim Zoss	Tribal Emergency Manager, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi
FEDERAL MEMBERS	
Noah Apata	FEMA Region 5 IMAT
Tonya Aragon	Acting RECC, FEMA Region 8
Zach Baker	FEMA Region 5
Mark Beecroft	Telecommunications Manager, Denver MERS
Jason Blum	FEMA Region 5
Paul Casault	Telecommunications Specialist, FEMA Region 5
Troy Christensen	FEMA Region 5 Tribal Liaison
Kevin Coen	IMCORE, FEMA DEC HQ
Tom Cross	Chief, Communications Management Branch, FEMA
Lemorris Graham	Branch Chief, FEMA Region 5 Watch Office
Scott Hansen	Chief (Acting), Communications Integration Branch (CIB), DHS FEMA Disaster Emergency Communications (DEC)
Larry Harkleroad	IMCORE, FEMA DEC HQ
Scott Jackson	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
James Jarvis	Regional Coordinator, Emergency Communications Division (ECD), DHS, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
Jessica Kaputa	Federal Communications Programs, CISA
Lloyd Kimball	FEMA Integration Team (FIT), WA
Al Knerr	FCC
Eric Main	IMCORE, FEMA DEC HQ
John McClain	Industry Liaison, DHS, National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), Cybersecurity and Communications (CS&C), National Coordination Center (NCC)
Charles McCobb	Director, Continuity Communications Division, FEMA

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Mark McConnaughey	GSA, R5
Joe Miller	FEMA Region 5
John Peterson	DHS, ECD
Tim Pierce	Region 5 Consultation/Outreach Lead, First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)
Daniel Pratt	Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CWO2)/Communications Officer, DHS United States Coast Guard District 09
Paul Preusse	Response Division Director, DHS FEMA Region 5
Brian Proa	GSA
Kyle Richardson	NTIA, FirstNet Authority
Daniel Roberts	Radio Frequency (RF) Communications Manager, DHS FEMA DEC Denver Mobile Emergency Resource Support (MERS)
Scott Stemmen	Regional Manager, General Services Administration (GSA), Emergency Support Function (ESF)-2
Jim Stromberg	CISA
Michael Vannier	USCG Auxiliary
Dennis White	Federal Communications Commission
Ric Wilhelm	FEMA Integration Team, Region 10
Gus Wulfkuhle	OPB Chief, Response Division, DHS FEMA Region 5
PRIVATE INDUSTRY PARTNERS	
Bill Barr	Verizon Wireless
Nieama Booker	Client Partner, Mobility, Verizon
Brian Buening	Verizon Wireless
John Chambers	AT&T FirstNet
Rodney Cooper	T-Mobile
Jennifer Corrado	AT&T FirstNet
Rick Cox	T-Mobile
Joel Daniels	Verizon Wireless
Bob Desiato	AT&T Wireless
Jason Fillebrown	IP Access International
Danielle Galloway	Verizon Wireless
Anthony Isla	Verizon Wireless
Rob Komoroski	AT&T, FirstNet Response Operations Group (ROG), Eastern Region
Don Matker	T-Mobile
Kristi Meyers	AT&T / FirstNet Ohio
Thomas Nicolette	AT&T ROG
Tony Patino	T-Mobile
Harriet Rennie-Brown	Executive Director, NASNA
Earl Struble	Verizon Wireless
SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS	
John Cheney	Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)
Bill Springer	FirstNet System Architect, Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS)

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
AUXCOMM	
Dan Anderson	Minnesota AuxComm
Fritz Bock	Illinois ARES
Mark Breckenridge	Michigan Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES)
Stan Broadway	Ohio AuxComm
Rick George	AF MARS
Sonny Hirsch	Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS), Region 5
David Lattan	AuxComm Working Group
Andrew LaVenture	Minnesota ARES
Ryc Lyden	Minnesota AuxComm
Mike Ostlund	Minnesota AuxComm
Gary Paschke	Indiana AuxComm
Jim Pitchford	Illinois RACES
Joe Reinemann	Minnesota ARES
Skip Sharpe	Wisconsin RACES
Max Schneider	Michigan ARES, Section Emergency Coordinator, R5 AuxComm Committee Chair
Steve Waterman	CISA SHARES
David Lattan	AuxComm Working Group
CIVIL AIR PATROL	
Lt. Col. Jim Bartel	FEMA Region 5 Liaison, Illinois, CAP
1Lt. Troy Blair	Ohio, CAP
Lt. Col. Bill Carlson	Great Lakes Region Communications Director, CAP
Lt. Col. Richard King	Homeland Security Liaison, Great Lakes Region, CAP
Lt. Col. Ron MacCarthy	Director of Communications, Minnesota, CAP
Lt. Col. Tom Myers	Director of Communications, Indiana, CAP
NATIONAL GUARD	
MSG Jeromie Golab	Michigan NG G6
SFC Tom Simota	Michigan NG

CY 2021 RECCWG ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND 2022 PRIORITIES

The accomplishments listed below illustrate a cross-section of the many strides that Region 5 RECCWG members have made in 2021 in fulfilling their duties as prescribed by the NECP and the DHS Appropriations Act of 2007. The RECCWG exceeded its statutory duties to improve operable and interoperable emergency communications in the region by executing several initiatives that brought together the six states of Region 5 and key partners from multiple disciplines. This section also describes the continuing ambitions of RECCWG and its priorities for CY 2022 to maintain momentum, foster growth, and increase recognition of the RECCWG program in the region.

Statutory Duty 1
Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan

Accomplishment 1: Conducted a tabletop communications exercise

The RECCWG worked with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to acquire technical assistance in developing a communications-focused exercise. In March of 2021, RECCWG members from each of the region's states participated in the 2-day event, called Operation Frostbite, to assess their primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency (PACE) communications capabilities. Participants from 62 agencies, organizations, and private companies took part in the exercise and subsequent discussions. They recognized both successes and vulnerabilities within their respective states' communications structures, systems, and plans, which were captured in a comprehensive after-action report (AAR). The RECCWG's Training and Exercise subcommittee developed an 8-point Improvement Plan to address common communications challenges across the region, including amateur radio awareness, CISA Shared Resources (SHARES) and FEMA National Radio System (FNARS) testing and proficiency, government-to-public communications during 911 outages, Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) awareness and training, and several other aspects of PACE communications.

Priority 1: Plan and execute a full-scale exercise (FSE)

The RECCWG will apply lessons learned from Operation Frostbite during a planned FSE, dubbed Operation Highwater. The exercise will test communications platforms at every level of the PACE model, including land mobile radio (LMR) systems, auxiliary communications (AuxComm), satellite phones, SHARES, and bridging equipment. The exercise will be supported by the FEMA Region 5 Watch Office and will include a component for the regional Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) to test interoperability among regional networks and responders. In preparation for the FSE, RECCWG has secured funding for a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) development meeting in January in DuPage county, Illinois, where ten RECCWG members will work with exercise experts to develop scenarios for the event that will target specific communications capabilities.

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications

Accomplishment 2: Supported COVID-19 vaccination operations across the region

State and local communications leaders used the RECCWG forum to collaborate on best practices and regional challenges as community vaccination sites (CVC) became a nationwide focus. As both government and private industry personnel performed communications-specific site surveys and began building temporary mass-vaccination sites, RECCWG members attended coordination meetings where they shared challenges they faced and learned about those of their counterparts in other states, such as network capacity, virtual private network issues, and the increased need for mobile communications solutions. They continued to meet regularly until CVC operations stabilized and eventually demobilized. Additionally, the growth of private industry participation in the RECCWG paid dividends when CVCs needed supplemental equipment and network support. RECCWG members engaged telecommunications providers, who in many cases augmented CVC networks at no charge to the government.

Priority 2: Engage tribal entities in regional interoperability efforts

Pandemic restrictions that carried over from 2020 continued to delay in-person tribal engagements. Efforts to increase RECCWG participation among the region's 34 tribal nations were postponed as emergency management agencies, public safety answering points (PSAP), and other federal, state, local, and tribal entities experienced personnel shortages and other emerging priorities. In December, RECCWG members resumed tribal planning meetings with the expectation that tribal outreach efforts and in-person engagements will recommence in 2022.

Accomplishment 3: Executed outreach across the region to encourage expansion of IPAWS

R5 IPAWS Working Group held a best practices and lessons learned session in the fourth quarter of 2021. The working group partnered with the FEMA Field Integration Team and Minnesota subject matter experts to share best practices in several region 5 states with states hoping to expand participation. The working group was well attended and spurred momentum for growth and engagement in 2022.

Priority 3: Expand the number of IPAWS Alerting Authorities and proficiency of existing and future operators

Region 5 IPAWS Working Group will expand engagement with IPAWS alerting authorities throughout the region and potential alerting authorities to build on momentum from 2021 to create a regional SOP for IPAWS in order to expand the effectiveness and use of IPAWS by creating more awareness and capability by increasing familiarity with the system.

Statutory Duty 3

Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism,

Accomplishment 3: Advanced AuxComm initiatives and activities across the region

Amateur radio provides several modes of analog and digital communication when commercial means such as cellular networks are degraded or unavailable. The RECCWG's growing AuxComm group, which includes Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS), Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), and other volunteers has been active across the region and beyond its borders, welcoming new participants and conducting net check-ins to maintain operator proficiency.
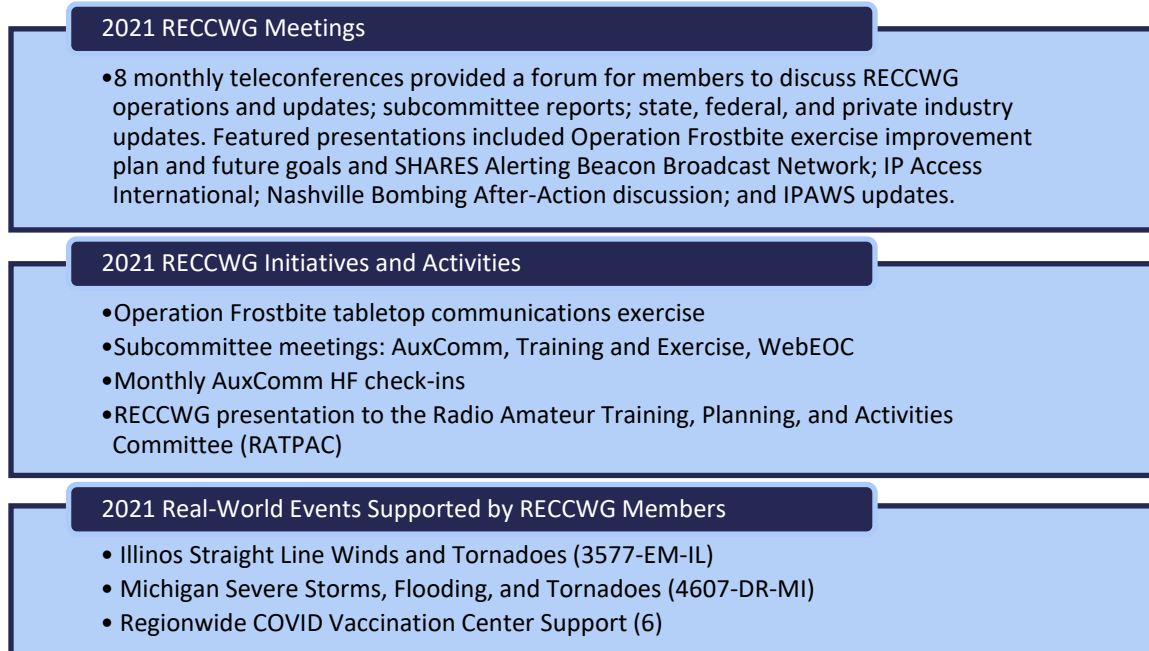
Some of the AuxComm subcommittee members provide volunteer services to their respective states and counties, offering subject matter expertise and unique skillsets that allow them to operate on multiple frequencies, including high-frequency (HF) bands which can propagate signals over great distances. The SHARES program allows operators to use existing HF radio resources of government, critical infrastructure, and disaster response organizations to coordinate and transmit emergency messages in a structured manner. RECCWG members in Region 5 who are SHARES operators have advanced the program by adding new SHARES stations and participating in scheduled testing in both the regional net and the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) net, which spans 18 states from Region 3 to Region 7. Among the new SHARES stations added in Region 5 are an HF beacon alerting station, part of an "always on" emergency network, and tribal station that belongs to the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of The Potawatomi in Michigan.

Priority 3: Develop standard operating procedure (SOP) for Region 5 PACE communications

The Operation Frostbite AAR and Improvement Plan identified region-wide, actionable items that will enhance PACE communications, and the RECCWG will actively work to meet these challenges in 2022. This will include standardizing operating procedures related to activating contingency and emergency networks, equipment, and personnel resources. These may include AuxComm volunteers, SHARES, FNARS, and satellite phones. RECCWG will work toward developing an SOP template that states can use to document their assets and procedures in a uniform manner.

CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

RECCWG members collaborated on several projects, supported regional communications events, and hosted meetings and presentations that advanced interoperability across all six of the Region 5 states. **Figure 14** provides a snapshot of RECCWG events throughout the year.

2021 RECCWG Meetings

- 8 monthly teleconferences provided a forum for members to discuss RECCWG operations and updates; subcommittee reports; state, federal, and private industry updates. Featured presentations included Operation Frostbite exercise improvement plan and future goals and SHARES Alerting Beacon Broadcast Network; IP Access International; Nashville Bombing After-Action discussion; and IPAWS updates.

2021 RECCWG Initiatives and Activities

- Operation Frostbite tabletop communications exercise
- Subcommittee meetings: AuxComm, Training and Exercise, WebEOC
- Monthly AuxComm HF check-ins
- RECCWG presentation to the Radio Amateur Training, Planning, and Activities Committee (RATPAC)

2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members

- Illinos Straight Line Winds and Tornadoes (3577-EM-IL)
- Michigan Severe Storms, Flooding, and Tornadoes (4607-DR-MI)
- Regionwide COVID Vaccination Center Support (6)

Figure 14: CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

Looking Forward

The Region 5 RECCWG will continue building on the momentum created by the group's 2021 events and initiatives. Many of the priority projects noted in this report are already underway, thanks to the expertise and dedication of the RECCWG members. Projects include After Action activities and Improvement Plan Development from TTX Operation Frostbite; execution of a full scale exercise to evaluate the Regional Improvement Plan; development of a Regional Satellite Phone Directory and SOP for use in case of a major disaster with severe impact to critical communications infrastructure; expanding SHARES in both numbers of operators and proficiency through regular training; and expansion of IPAWS engagement through the use of best practice sharing and assistance in signing up additional alerting authorities with improved best-practice guidance/training for messaging substance and execution. The RECCWG's continuing growth and ambitious goal setting will help ensure that public safety communications remain operable and interoperable across the region.

REGION 6

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 6
800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76801

FEMA

DATE: August 11, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR:

John Rabin
Assistant Administrator
Response Directorate

FROM: George A. Robinson
                        Regional Administrator

GEORGE A ROBINSON

Digitally signed by
GEORGE A ROBINSON
Date: 2022.08.11
09:33:57 -05'00'

SUBJECT: FEMA Region 6 Regional Emergency Communications
                        Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

www.fema.gov

As required by 6 U.S.C. 575, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The Annual Report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 6 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined RECCWG Annual Report for calendar year (CY) 2021, which will be distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

- Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
- Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.
- Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

The Annual Report reflects the accomplishments that the Region 6 RECCWG membership achieved to meet the intent of the statute. As such, no modifications were made by the FEMA Regional Office without the expressed approval of the RECCWG membership. The final report as attached wholly represents the RECCWG membership's input and does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the Region.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG has as a venue for federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, and the Whole Community to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region as shown through activities in this report. The accompanying Annual Report provides important insight on how emergency communications related efforts are moving forward in this Whole of Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.
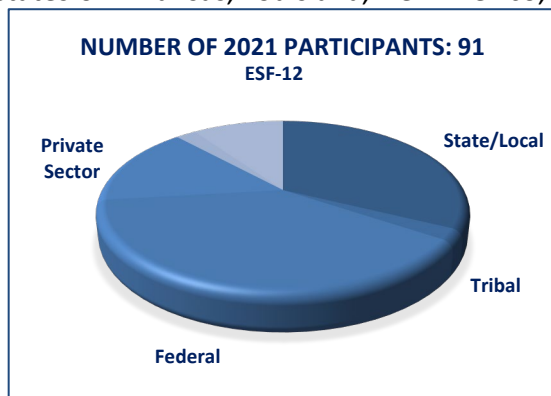
Enclosed: Region 6 CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report   www.fema.gov

REGION 6 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION WORKING GROUP
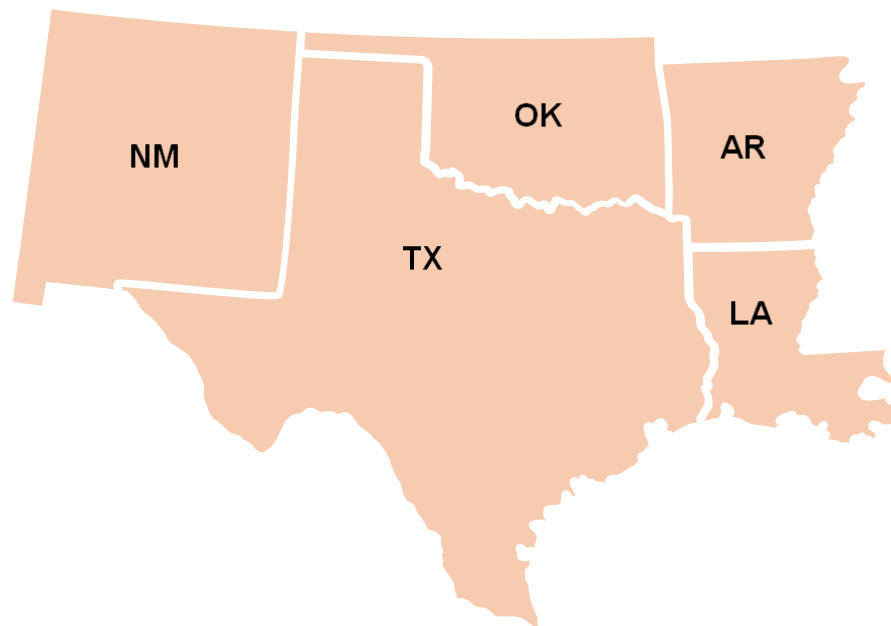
CY 2021 OVERVIEW

The Region 6 Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) includes the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. In 2021, the Region 6 RECCWG continued to diversify its membership base and welcomed new participants from local, state, and federal levels of government, as well as private sector entities across the first responder and telecommunications industries. For example, they added new partners and increased representation with ESF-12 electricity sector professionals and Tribal participants. The notable growth in participation is attributed to the RECCWG's goal of representing the whole community. RECCWG participation in 2021 is shown in **Figure 15.**

Figure 15: 2021 RECCWG Participation

In 2021, Region 6 experienced major disasters in 4 of its 5 states including weather events Hurricane Zeta, Hurricane Ida, and Tropical Storm Nicholas, as well as winter storm Yuri, all the while maneuvering around the many COVID-19 restrictions. Severe weather events, which may include flooding, high winds, or tornadoes, made up the majority of major incidents in the region. In addition to natural disasters, RECCWG members

> The Region 6 RECCWG grew by 33% in 2021 including nine members from the ESF-12 community

responded to and reported on numerous incidents and planned events that required communications interoperability among field personnel, command centers, volunteer organizations, and local agencies while continuing to work in a COVID-19 pandemic disaster response environment. Each event posed a unique set of challenges that responders and officials, many of whom are members of the RECCWG, were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the region and across the country. **Figure 16** provides a snapshot of regional events, such as incident responses, planning activities, trainings, exercises, and communications coordination efforts, that have required support from RECCWG members in Region 6.
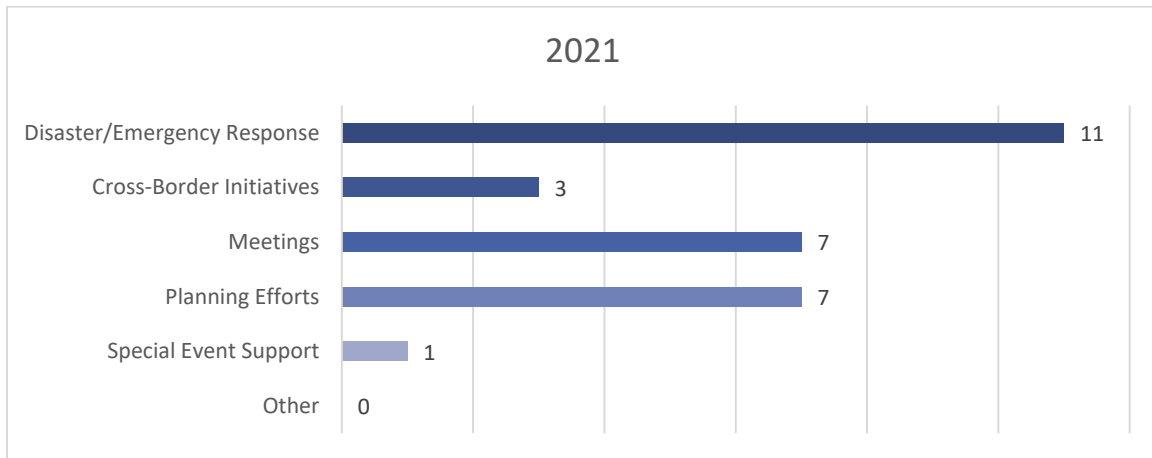
Figure 16: Regional Events

Highlights of the RECCWG's accomplishments in 2021 are documented in this report and serve as examples of the advancements made within Region 6 and through the RECCWG program nationally. Similarly, priorities for 2022 have been set to leverage the extensive professional experience, comprehensive conversations and research, and close collaboration among member agencies within the region.

The Region 6 RECCWG coordinated the largest Federal ESF-2 response in a state after an incident during Hurricane Ida.

For additional information regarding the Region 6 RECCWG, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 6 Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), Joe Garcia, at Joe.Garcia@fema.dhs.gov or 940-898-5239 or 940-465-4963.

Table 10: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
RECCWG LEADERSHIP	
Tony Robinson	Regional Administrator
Wynn Brannin	RECCWG Co-Chair/New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Aaron Miller	RECCWG Vice Chair/Office of Homeland Security, City of New Orleans

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Joe Garcia	FEMA Region 6 RECC
ARKANSAS (AR) REPRESENTATIVES	
Franklin Andrews	Arkansas Wireless Information Network
Penny Rubow	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)/Director, Arkansas Wireless Information Network
Justin Vint	Director, Communications and Support Division, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management
Marshall Watson	Administrator, Public Safety, Benton County
LOUISIANA (LA) REPRESENTATIVES	
George Brown	Section Chief, Communications/Information Technology (IT), Office of Homeland Security, City of New Orleans
Travis Johnson	Interoperability Program Manager, Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (GOHSEP), SWIC
Kevin James	SWIC
Andress Knox	Regional Coordinator, Hospital Preparedness, Louisiana Region 7
NEW MEXICO (NM) REPRESENTATIVES	
Gary Surad	New Mexico Department of Homeland Security (DHS) & Emergency Manager (EM)
OKLAHOMA (OK) REPRESENTATIVES	
Nikki Cassingham	Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security/SWIC
Donald Lynch	Emergency Manager, Shawnee/Pottawatomie County
Jamie Ott	Director, Broken Arrow Emergency Management
Putnam Reiter	IT Officer, Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (DEM)
Matt Stillwell	Director, Central Communications and Emergency Management, City of Edmond
TEXAS (TX) REPRESENTATIVES	
David Abernathy	Texas Forest Service (Retired)
COL Bill Heiser, II	Director, J6 Command & Control Communications, Texas Military Department
1LT Jared Reinhardt	Chief of Emergency Communications, Texas Military Department
Lee Cooper	Section Manager, American Radio Relay League (ARRL), South Texas Section (Amateur Radio)
Steve Dyson	Radio Frequency/Technical Services Coordinator. Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Todd Early	SWIC/Assistant Chief, Infrastructure Operations Division, Texas DPS
Eric Gildersleeve	Emergency Management Coordinator, Denton County, Texas
Thomas Gonzalez	Communications Unit Manager, Texas DPS
Mike Hardwick	District Radio Manager, Texas DOT
C.J. Holt	Radio Communications Manager, City of Dallas
Karla Jurrens	SWIC, Texas DPS
Kevin Lemon	Technical Operations Specialist, ESF-2 Lead, Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM)
Gerald Richmond	Statewide Radio Coordinator, Texas Department of Transportation (DOT)
Bart Thom	Tactical Communications Specialist, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
Mike Simpson	Program Services Manager, IT, Wireless Communications, City of Austin
Mike Simpson	Communications Coordinator/Radio Systems Manager, Palo Pinto County Emergency Management
Eddie Wilson	Director, Vehicle and Technical Services, Texas DPS
TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES	

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Bobby Howard	Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Jeff Thrasher	Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
PRIVATE INDUSTRY PARTNERS	
Nancy Anderson	State of Texas, Sprint
Dave Bezzant	Sr. National Director, Government Mobility Solutions, T-Mobile
Bill Barr	Verizon Crisis Response, Texas and Oklahoma
Nieama Booker	Verizon
Chris Desmond	Verizon Wireless
Tony Graf	T-Mobile
Andrew Harris	Verizon
Nicole Hudnet	Emergency Response Team (ERT), T-Mobile
Brian Kassa	Erickson, Texas
Tony Patino	T-Mobile
Earl Struble	Verizon Response Team
Martha Duggan	Senior Director, Regulatory Affairs National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)
Rob Gross	ESF-12 Lead FEMA Region 6
Alex Hoffman	Vice President of Technical and Operational Services, American Public Power Association (APPA)
Wally Mealiea	Director, Preparedness & Recovery Policy Edison Electric Institute (EEI)
Jason Miller	Louisiana
Sam Rozenberg	Senior Director, Security & Resilience American Public Power Association (APPA)
Darryl Schriver	Tri-County Electric Cooperative (Texas)
Giacomo Wray	American Public Power Association (APPA)
FEDERAL PARTNERS	
Dave Adsit	Spectrum Manager, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Leah Anderson	FEMA R6 Private Sector Liaison
Victor Camacho	Denton Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS)
Larry Clutts	Priority Telecommunications, Office of Emergency Communications (OEC)
Al Kenyon	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)
Gerald "Jay" English	Regional Liaison, Region 6, National Communications System (NCS)
Paul English	Department of Defense (DoD) Military Aux Radio System (MARS)
Scott Hansen	National RECCWG Chair
Larry Harkleroad	FEMA HQ
Scott Jackson	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Al Knerr	FCC Gettysburg
Johnny Le	FCC
J.R. Marshal	OSS2, New Orleans, United States Coast Guard (USCG)
Eric Main	FEMA DEC HQ
John McClain	CISA, NCC Comms Liaison, covers Regions 1-4
John O'Connor	NCC

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Tim Perrier	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Leif Purcell	FEMA DEC
Thomas Randal	FirstNet (TX, OK, NM)
Harriet Rennie-Brown	Executive Director, National Association of State 9-1-1 Administrators (NASNA)
Juan Silva	FCC
Jacque Miller-Waring	Consultation Lead, FirstNet Region 6
Nicole Ugarte	FirstNet (AK, LA)
Colleen Wright	Regional Coordinator, FEMA Region 6, OEC, Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
OTHER PARTICIPANTS	
Kevin Coen	DECD Group Supervisor
Paul Gilbert	Director of Emergency Management, Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL); KE5ZW
Joe Hillis	ITDRC
Archie Salters	Operations Specialist, Operations Integration Branch, FEMA Region 6
Adrian Valenzuela	Verizon
David Villyard	CISA
Rodney Warner	US Army
James Williams	LABEOC
Sunny Wescott	CISA ERO Meteorologist

CY 2021 RECCWG Accomplishments and 2022 Priorities

The accomplishments below document the achievements the Region 6 RECCWG accomplished to improve preparedness and emergency response communications capabilities in 2021.

Statutory Duty 1

Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

Accomplishment 1: The RECCWG utilized relationships with federal partners for situational awareness on issues identified after Hurricane Ida

During Hurricane Ida, Louisiana identified several issues with the use of 3-digit dialing and cellular call roaming issues. Louisiana utilizes 211 as a statewide network for their citizens to request assistance and promoted it's use during Ida. It was quickly realized that individual agreements had to be made with each commercial cellular carrier to ensure that 211 would work. Similarly, there was a need to open up roaming services on all commercial cellular networks. Utilizing the forum set by the Region 6 RECC's daily coordination call, RECCWG members were able to immediately offer support when Louisiana shared that they had identified these communications issues. By bringing this issue to the RECCWG, they were able to coordinate with the commercial carriers regarding the cellular roaming issue and involve the FCC who was able to immediately start working to find solutions. The FCC provided solutions that can

be set in place prior to a disaster to avoid delaying mitigation of the identified communications gaps.

Accomplishment 2: Revitalized relationships with federal/private partners and identified future priorities for natural disasters

During Hurricane Ida, Louisiana had numerous critical communications infrastructure and many local critical facilities without communications. With all the destruction, there was no infrastructure that could immediately be repaired to bring those facilities back up and running with internet access. The affected states in the region brought the communications gaps to the other RECCWG members. From the relationships built within the RECCWG, they were able to mitigate this issue by finding a quick deployable satellite solution that was easy to setup. Space X supplied the affected states with Starlink satellite communications systems that provided voice and data service. Louisiana deployed two at hospitals, several EOC's around the state, and PSAP sites in certain hard-hit parishes. The Louisiana National Guard connected the Starlink system to a VoIP telephone network that allowed their network to get back up and running with a turnkey phone solution. Motorola was able to connect LWIN sites to a Starlink mobile trailer to use as a backup tower site for the LWIN system. To enable the state to be better prepared for future outages, they anticipate making a purchase of 25 systems from Space X after this disaster season. The RECCWG forum allowed for collaboration on best practices and lessons learned on deploying this new technology throughout the response and recovery effort.

Priority 1: Create and utilize subcomittees addressing areas of interest within the Region

Region 6 RECCWG has identified LMR Interference and Auxiliary Communications (AuxCom) as areas of interest that need further exploration and focus on within the RECCWG. The LMR Interference group is working with New Mexico, Texas, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to identify the locations that channel assignments issued by FCC still causing issues because they are being used for primary, not secondary communications. The region is wanting to explore the various amateur groups in the region and their capabilities, as well as incorporating them into response communications. For these areas, the RECCWG is establishing sub-committees and assigning each a subcommittee Chair/Co-Chair and RECCWG members who have expertise in the subject matter. The Region 6 RECCWG subcommittees will expand discussion on survivability, sustainability, and interoperability within the region in reference to the identified matters.

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public

Accomplishment 3: Coordinated multi-agency emergency communications networks during natural disasters

Louisiana utilized relationships built within the RECCWG to mirror the structure set up by the Texas Communications Coordination Group (CCG) for disaster response coordination during Hurricane Ida. The CCG is made up of federal, state/local, and industry partners. Texas provided valuable documentation and insight for the development of the Region 6 CCG. Subsequently, the Region 6 RECCWG decided that the CCG is something that they would like to continue to implement into all incident responses in Region 6 states.

Accomplishment 4: The reporting and information provided by the Region 6 RECCWG members led to more effective coodination of federal support for response and recovery efforts following Hurricane Ida

During Hurricane Ida, FEMA DECD deployed personnel including the Region 6 RECC and DEC Group Supervisors (DGS) to coordinate efforts on the ground to support emergency communications restoration and recovery efforts. Similarly, Denton MERS was able to coordinate teams throughout the affected areas, by attending daily RECCWG coordination calls with ESF-12 partners, debris removal teams, and other ESF-2 personnel on the ground. Using the information from the various RECCWG coordinated reports and updates, MERS was able to move their assets more efficiently. All in all, MERS was able to supply emergency communications to 40 different locations throughout Louisiana after Hurricane Ida.

Accomplishment 5: Created and utilized virtual platforms to coordinate emergency communications during pandemic and disaster response efforts

Utilizing new technologies and virtual platforms has increased FEMA Region 6 situational awareness methods. The RECCWG served as a think tank for identifying gaps and obtaining solutions during incident responses throughout the region. Region 6 specifically used regularly scheduled teleconferences, pre-disaster season and ESF-2 coordination calls, and information sharing via the Regional Adobe Connect page, which is a standing collaboration space used for meetings, document sharing, and during all disaster incidents. These virtual platforms amplified response and recovery efforts and resulted in rapid identification of requirements and suitable resources to fill temporary capabilities in incident areas until restoration efforts could be executed.

Priority 2: Finalize the policy and procedures for setting up a CCG utilized by RECCWG during incident response in Region 6

In previous years hurricane response, the R6 RECCWG was able to coordinate efforts with ESF-2 (Communications), ESF-12 (Energy), and ESF-15 (External Affairs) working group to accomplish restoration efforts. This year with Hurricane Ida and all the critical infrastructure damage, the working group was inundated with requests and prioritization issues to the point they needed another avenue to accomplish all the critical tasks. Leveraging the RECCWG membership, the RECC and Louisiana SWIC called on their Texas counterparts who had successfully implemented a Communications Coordination Group (CCG). With documentation and SOPs provided, Louisiana

was able to implement this program quickly to better facilitate the coordination of restoration efforts. During the AAR for Ida, the State of Louisiana saw the benefit of having a CCG and are collaborating with CISA and LSU for technical support on creating the CCG.

Priority 3: Region 6 RECCWG will reimagine the use of the IPAWS system due to new capabilities and attempt to increase alerting authorities in it's regions States

COVID caused an increase for the need to send public alerts to citizens throughout the region. With this increase it was made apparent that many of the states needed updated information on the use and messaging types for IPAWS notifications to the public. The states were unaware of what information could be passed with IPAWS notifications. The RECCWG coordinated with IPAWS and National Preparedness to create an IPAWS 101 Awareness Training to fill in the knowledge gaps.

Priority 4: Create a Regional communications exercise framework and participate in a multi-regional plenary meeting in 2022

The RECCWG plans on creating the framework for establishing a Region 6 communications exercise program (CommEx) to ensure policy and procedures are coordinated throughout the region. Additionally, they plan to coordinate with other FEMA regions to plan a multi-regional plenary and communications exercise, which was previously scheduled for 2020, but like many of the past few years' important events, it was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. By bringing in multiple FEMA regions, like Region 7, the goal is to expand engagement beyond the regions, learn and share best practices, and build relationships with other states, regions, and tribal nations. The RECCWG continues to pursue these objectives to convene representatives from several agencies and disciplines that support public safety and hold a multi-region plenary that promotes professional networking, hosts presentations on contemporary issues, and exercises their communications platforms and proficiency.

Statutory Duty 3

Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

Accomplishment 6: The inclusion of the whole RECCWG during incident responses created a successful forum for EMAC requests and collaboration between states and agencies in the region

During the Hurricane Ida response in Louisiana, CISA representatives worked EMAC requests on the ground, which was a cumbersome process. There were several delays in getting the requests processed. Fortunately, CISA is a RECCWG partner and included in the Region 6 daily coordination call. Through this forum, the RECCWG was able provide details of Louisiana's resources requested and still needed. The state would set their priorities and the RECCWG assisted by moving those EMAC requests to CISA faster than the normal request process they were utilizing. This is a great example of the benefits of sharing information between neighboring states which aided recovery and response processes because of the RECCWG.

Accomplishment 7: Increased RECCWG membership in the energy sector

After the 2020 Hurricane Season, the Region 6 RECCWG addressed the importance of telecommunications (ESF-2) and the energy sector's (ESF-12) partnerships during disaster restoration efforts and worked to identify power provider candidates for memberships within

their respective states. Nine new ESF-12 (Energy) partners joined the RECCWG. Before the 2021 Hurricane Season, the energy sector partners facilitated electricity sector knowledge throughout the region by presenting to the entire RECCWG on ESF-12 electricity sector operation plans. The relationship and coordination efforts were bolstered during Winter Storm Uri, when ESF-2 provided communications assistance to the energy companies, who were without a way to communicate and coordinate their restoration efforts. The region quickly realized the importance of coordinating these two efforts, as power is needed for communications and communications are critical for energy providers to respond.

Priority 5: Increase RECCWG membership in under-represented communities with a focus on more regional and local representation

Although membership increased in 2021, there are still communities that are under-represented. After this year's disaster season, Region 6's RECCWG recognized the importance of telecommunications across several of these communities. Examples of two disciplines the Region 6 RECCWG would like to increase membership in is the AuxComm and Civil Air Patrol (CAP) communities, which offer considerable communications capabilities and expertise that can be leveraged to support the contingent and emergency phases of the PACE (primary, alternate, contingent, emergency) model. By working to identify potential candidates at the regional and local levels within their respective states, RECCWG members will continue their AuxComm and CAP engagement efforts in 2022. The RECCWG plans on gaining Amateur Radio and CAP representation by extending RECCWG resources and membership to these communities. They plan on doing this by including FNARS and SHARES during training, exercises, and radio tests. By focusing on increasing representation in these areas, the RECCWG would increase diversity in the membership, which allows for the identification of communications gaps and propose solutions from their perspective.

Priority 6: Improve on ESF-2 (Communications), ESF-12 (Energy), and ESF-15 (External Affairs) relationships by identifying best practices during incident response

In 2021, the Region 6 RECCWG worked diligently to solidify the relationship between ESF-2 (Communications) and ESF-12 (Energy) during incident response. By doing so, communication restoration was more coordinated and efficient than in previous years. However, efforts were plagued with fiber cuts by restoration crews or citizens in the community during the debris clearing and restoration processes. It was quickly realized, that messaging to the public needed to be created and pushed out at every level within the affected communities. This called for the inclusion of ESF-15 (External Affairs) to distribute messaging out to the public in a concise and expediated manner. The Region 6 RECCWG plans on expanding on this relationship in 2022 for the States that have not implemented a CCG.

CY 2021 RECCWG ACTIVITIES

RECCWG members in Region 6 collaborated on several trainings and workshops to support Emergency Communications expertise and growth. The region held 6 teleconferences and 1 plenary meeting while supporting Emergency Communications during disaster season.

2021 RECCWG Meetings

- 1 Plenary - Discussions and briefings regarding State updates; Federal updates by FEMA DECD HQ, FCC, CISA, and Priority Services; and open discussion on 2022 RECCWG priorities
- 6 teleconferences - Discussions and briefings regarding lessons learned following Hurricane Ida response efforts, presentations regarding ESF-12 sector, briefings on upcoming and current weather forecasts, regional challenges, concerns, and efforts in Emergency Management Disaster Response

2021 RECCWG Initiatives and Activities

- AuxComm nets/check-ins
- Exercise participation
- Webinars, training, workshops
- April 2021- Texas hosted a virtual Regional Communications Plan workshops and virtual SCIP workshop
- August 2021 COML in Oklahoma
- October 2021 AuxComm class in Oklahoma
- October 2021 INTD in Oklahoma
- November 2021 COML in Texas
- December 2021 COMT in Texas

2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members

- 11 disasters
- Louisiana Hurricane Zeta (DR-4577-LA), Louisiana Severe Winter Storm (EM-3556-LA), Oklahoma Severe Winter Storm (DR-4587-OK), Oklahoma Severe Winter Storm (EM-3555-OK),Texas Severe Winter Storms (DR-4586-TX), Louisiana Severe Winter Storms (DR-4590-LA), New Mexico Three Rivers Fire (FM-5386-NM), Louisiana Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (4606-DR-LA), Louisiana Hurricane Ida (4611-DR-LA), Louisiana Tropical Storm Nicholas (3574-EM-LA)
- Special events
- Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in October, with over 600 hot air balloons and a few hundred thousand people. NM DHSEM supported the 10-day event.
- Cross-state/regional collaboration
- February 2021 - New Mexico to work on updating the shared border communications with Texas and Arizona
- October 2021 - FEMA Regional Interagency Steering Committee (RISC)
- SWBCWG

Figure 17: CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

LOOKING FORWARD

The Region 6 RECCWG will continue to coordinate and collaborate disaster emergency communications in order to save and sustain lives in the event of a disaster. To ensure interoperability, RECCWG members will continue to improve AuxComm engagement during regional responses and exercises, work to improve monthly FNARS testing participation for the purpose of maintaining FEMA's line of emergency communications with state governments, and continue training and outreach in regard to IPAWS and grant programs within the region. Region 6 RECCWG members will continue to share best practices to improve emergency communications between states, local governments, tribal governments, and private sector partners. Specifically, the RECCWG will coordinate with other RECCWG regions in planning joint regional plenary sessions to facilitate a strong working relationship with neighboring regions.

REGION 7

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 7
11224 Holmes Rd
Kansas City, MO 64131

FEMA

DATE: April 28, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR:

John Rabin
Assistant Administrator
Response Directorate

FROM: Andrea Spillars
Regional Administrator

ANDREA K SPILLARS

Digitally signed by
ANDREA K SPILLARS
Date: 2022.05.13
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SUBJECT: FEMA Region 7 Regional Emergency Communications
Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

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(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

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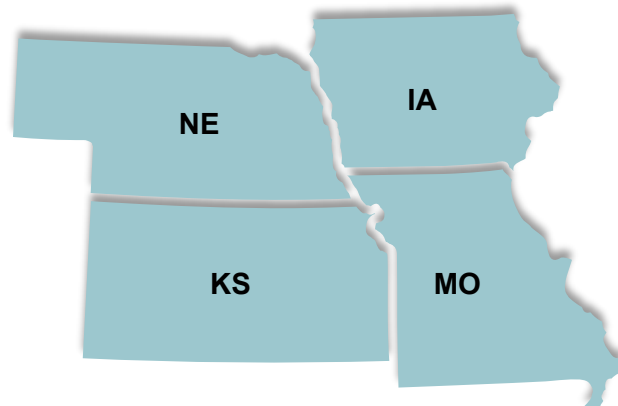
CY 2021 OVERVIEW

Composed of members from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, the Region 7 Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) worked diligently throughout 2021

Figure 18: 2021 RECCWG Participation

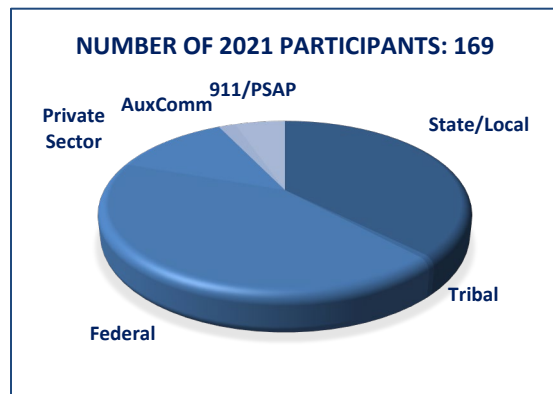alongside its federal and private sector partners, auxiliary communications (AuxComm) volunteers, and subject matter experts who contributed their time and expertise to advance communications interoperability across the region. The RECCWG continued to thrive in an ongoing pandemic environment as public safety agencies' focus began to shift from the previous year's COVID-19 testing support, mass vaccination site buildouts, equipment and personnel shortfalls, and restrictions to onsite work. They resumed projects that were postponed by pandemic limitations and began looking toward future priorities of strengthening their communications posture in the region.

Throughout the year, RECCWG members brought valuable insights into challenges, successes, and evolving priorities within their respective jurisdictions and continued to shape the future of communications interoperability in the region. Having gained a collective proficiency in leveraging virtual meetings during the previous year, members continued to surmount the challenges of the "new normal." The RECCWG held six virtual meetings where they discussed state, tribal, private industry, and federal updates, and had several focused discussions on topics of regional significance. During a 2-day virtual plenary, the RECCWG hosted several subject matter experts who gave presentations on Communications Lifeline training, the National RECCWG program, space weather effects on communications, and interoperability platforms available to public safety agencies. In October,

> The Region 7 RECCWG held a communications-focused tabletop exercise in October 2021

RECCWG members participated in a communications-focused tabletop exercise that simulated an earthquake along the New Madrid Seismic Zone, where they examined communications redundancy and interoperability in the region.

Region 7 experienced major disasters in two of its states due to severe storms, winds, and flooding, and RECCWG members in every state responded to incidents and supported planned events that required interoperable communications among field personnel, command centers, volunteer organizations, and local agencies. These events each posed unique challenges that responders and officials, many of whom are members of the RECCWG, were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the region and across the country. **Figure 19** provides a snapshot of regional events, such as incident responses, planning activities, trainings, exercises, and communications coordination efforts, that have required support from RECCWG members in Region 7.
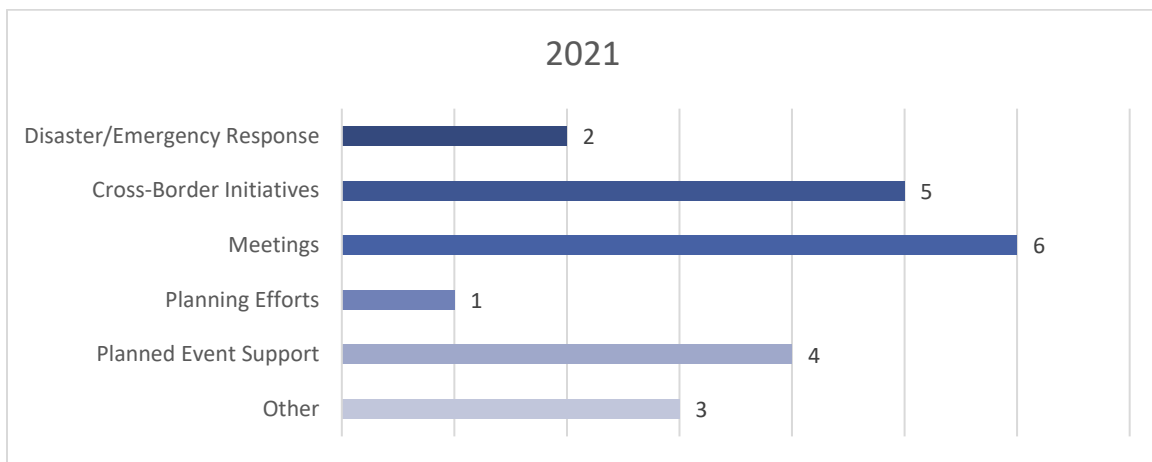
Figure 19: Regional Events

While the year's events underscored the criticality of being able to operate in virtual environments, cross-border initiatives remained a top priority. Multi-state collaboration among the RECCWG's sub-working groups and multi-regional coordination with other RECCWG members across the country are documented in this report.

For additional information regarding the Region 7 RECCWG, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 7 Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), Michael Foster, at Michael.Foster@fema.dhs.gov or 816-283-7090.

Table 11: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2020

NAME	ROLE AND AGENCY
RECCWG LEADERSHIP	
Kathy Fields	Chair, Deputy Regional Administrator (RA) of FEMA – Region 7
Michael Foster	FEMA Region 7 Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC)
Matthew May	Co-Chair, Winnebago Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
IOWA (IA) REPRESENTATIVES	
Ben Montour	Civil Air Patrol (CAP), Iowa Wing, Assistant Communications Director
Blake DeRouchey	911 Manager, State of Iowa
Chris Maiers	Iowa Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), Iowa Department of Public Safety (IDPS)
Curtis "Wally" Walser	Cedar Rapids Fire Department Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) Task Force 1, Manager
Dave Donovan	Scott County, Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director
Dave Wilson	Johnson County EMA, Coordinator
John Hawkinson	U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 33-06 (Iowa)
Keith Morgan	Story County EMA, Coordinator
Lorie Glover	Black Hawk County EMA, Coordinator
Marty Smith	Iowa Department of Health, Health Alert Network (HAN) Program Coordinator
Melvina "Mel" Burton	Ringgold County Emergency Management (EM) & 911 Coordinator
Paul Cowley	Emergency Coordinator (EC), District 1 ARES, Iowa
Thomas Reis	Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications Systems Board (ISICSB), Iowa Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) Officer
Tracey Bearden	Polk County EMA, 911 Coordinator
KANSAS (KS) REPRESENTATIVES	
Adam Chriss	Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM)
David Marshall	Kansas Criminal Justice Information Systems Committee, Director
Doug Barlet	Linn County, Emergency Management Coordinator
Dustin Nichols	Shawnee County EMA, Director
Elora Forshee	Sedgwick County Emergency Communications, Director
Jason Bryant	Kansas Adjutant General's Department—Kansas Office of Emergency Communications (KOEC), SWIC
JD Spradling	Kansas RACES
Jeffrey Welshans	Kansas Adjutant General's Department—KDEM, Kansas City Metro/NE Regional Coordinator Missouri
Jim Leftwich	Kansas Adjutant General's Department—KDEM, South Central Regional Coordinator
Jimmy (JL) Ellis	KDEM
John Stradal	Assistant Director; Cowley County, KS
John Tracy	Sumner County 911
Marie Athearn	Johnson County EM and Communications—Operations and Communications Services, Deputy Director
Mark Lahan	Kansas Wing CAP
Nelson E. Casteel	Ambulance Compliance Officer & Operations Section Chief, Shawnee County EM
Patrick Collins	Riley County

NAME	ROLE AND AGENCY
Randy Roberts	Douglas County Sheriff's Office—Emergency Communications (911), Director
Scott Ekberg	KOEC, State 911 Liaison
Stephanie Goodman	KDEM, Watch Officer
Stephen Harsha	KDEM, Public Assistance
MISSOURI (MO) REPRESENTATIVES	
Brian Marler	St. Louis Area Regional Response System (STARRS)
Brad Ziegler	Eureka Fire Protection District
Bryan Courtney	DPS—Missouri Interoperability Center, Director/SWIC
Corey Chaney	Missouri State Highway Patrol—Communications Division, Assistant Director
Dr. L. Corey Sloan	NTA Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
Dan Busse	Communications Specialist, Eureka Fire Protection District
Daniel Stumpf	St. Louis County Police Department
David Bagge	Missouri State EMA, Planner
David Sterman	DPS—Missouri Interoperability Center, Missouri Statewide Interoperable Network (MOSWIN) Radio Technician
Eric Winebrenner	Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), Public Safety Director
Greg Carrell	Missouri Division of Fire, Acting State Fire Marshal
Joe Moore	Missouri Department of Transportation (DOT), Traffic Communications Specialist
John Elmore	Greene County EMA
Jonathan Ayres	Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Network Systems Administrator
Lori Bielawski	Missouri State Highway Patrol, Chief Operator
Mark Diedrich	Saint Louis County OEM, Director
Mark Skornia	EM Director, City of Washington, MO
Matt Gabrian	St. Louis County Police Department, OEM, Communications Coordinator
Michael Hall	Marion County 911
Michael Thayer	Missouri State EMA, Communications Officer
Roger Strope	Department of Public Safety (DPS)—Missouri Interoperability Center, Deputy Director
Sean McAleer	Director of Communications, Jefferson City, MO
Tara Hammer	Mercy EMS
Tom Hurley	Boone County OEM, Deputy Director
NEBRASKA (NE) REPRESENTATIVES	
Brandon Myers	Lincoln County EMA, Director
Dave Collett	Public Safety System Manager
Dave Sankey	Nebraska Public Service Commission—Next Generation 911 (NG911), Director
David Sleeter	Douglas County Emergency Communications Center
Ed Toner	CIO, State of Nebraska
James Davidsaver	Lincoln/Lancaster County EMA, Director
Lynn Marshall	Sarpy County EMA, Director
Neil Miller	Buffalo County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff

NAME	ROLE AND AGENCY
Pam Kemper	Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO), Systems Coordinator for Nebraska Statewide Radio System
Paul Johnson	Douglas County EMA, Director
Robert Tubbs	Buffalo County 911, Lieutenant
Sue Krogman	SWIC/FirstNet Single Point of Contact (SPOC), State of Nebraska
Tim Newman	Scottsbluff County EMA, Director
Troy Harris	NEMA, Radio Communications Systems Coordinator
Whitney Shipley	Douglas County EMA
TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES	
Rhiannon Clausen	Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Deputy Director of Tribal Affairs
MILITARY PARTNERS	
Bradley Dunsbergen	Iowa Army National Guard (ARNG) Joint Operations Center (JOC) Operations (OPS), Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO)
Charles Schlieder	MO ARNG, MO ARNG Tank-Automotive Command (TACOM)
Darin Huss	NE ARNG G3 Liaison
Dominik Chase	NE CERFP, OPS NCO
Ingrid Hawkins	MO ARNG
Jan Behn	NE National Guard (NG), NE FHQ, J3
Josh Heward	IA ARNG, 132 Civil Engineering Squadron
Kathleen Herrell	MO ARNG, Missouri Cyber Team, Cyber Operations Chief
Kevin Vitale	MO ARNG, MO HRF J6
Marie Dautenhahn	MO J3 JOC
Paul Leoni	MO ARNG Region VII HRF, OPS Officer
Rachel Albee	132D Wing Civil Engineering Squadron, EM
Robert Hedgepeth	IA ARNG, IAANG JPG
Scott Horne	KS Air National Guard (ANG) 190TH Air Refueling, EM
Scott Wolf	MO ARNG, HRF S6/KM Officer
Skylar Dickey	KS ANG 190th Air Refueling Wing, EM
SSG Eric Mercer	MO ARNG
Thomas Rodrigo	NE ARNG, NE JISSC
FEDERAL PARTNERS	
Al Kenyon	FEMA Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Project Management Office (PMO)
Bill Campbell	Iowa Liaison, Operations Integration Branch, FEMA Region 7
Billy Freeman	FirstNet
Brant Mitchell	NCC-MARC
Brian Landrum	FEMA Region 8 RECC
Charles McCobb	Director, Continuity Communications Division, National Continuity Programs (NCP), FEMA
Charles McPhatter	FEMA HQ, DECD
Chris White	Telecommunications Specialist, FEMA Region 10

NAME	ROLE AND AGENCY
Colleen Wright	CISA
Dale Moushon	DHS Priority Telecommunications Services Area Representative (PAR)
Dale Werle	Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
David Cucchi	Telecommunications Specialist, FEMA Region 2
David Teska	Region 7 Sector Outreach Coordinator (RSOC), DHS
Donnie Monette	FEMA Region 4 RECC
Eric Main	DGS, FEMA
Glen Johnson	Denton Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS)
Geoff Jenista	CISA, R7 Chief of Cybersecurity
Jeremy Johnson	CISA ECD
Jessica Kaputa	CISA ECD
Jim Stromberg	CISA ECD
Jo Robichaud	FEMA DECD Region 4 Telecommunications Specialist
Joe Husnay	FCC, Technical Operations
John Bissen	FEMA Region 7
John McClain	CISA-National Coordinating Center (NCC)
Jorge Vidal	FEMA Region 3 RECC Alternate (A)
Joseph Boyd	FEMA Region 7 Operations Branch
Joseph Hodge	FEMA Region 2
Josh Green	RECC (A), FEMA Region 2
Juan Silva	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Karl Arriola	FEMA Region 5 RECC
Kevin Coen	DGS, FEMA
Kevin Nida	FirstNet Authority
Khaalis Jackson	FEMA R7 Operations Integration Branch
Kyle Richardson	FirstNet
Larry Harkleroad	Disaster Emergency Communications Division (DECD) Group Supervisor (DGS), FEMA
Lesia Dickson	FirstNet
Lloyd Kimball	FEMA Region 10
Mark Jensen	North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) – U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)
Mark MacAlester	CISA
Mathew Hall	FEMA/DEC/CIB
Mike Eaton	Denton MERS
Nicole Firelli	DGS, FEMA
Nikki Shears	FCC (Denver)
Paul English	NETCOM-Military Auxiliary Radio Service (MARS) Program Manager
Randy Kerr	FirstNet
Ric Wilhelm	FEMA Region 10

NAME	ROLE AND AGENCY
Rob Reinke	FEMA Region 1
Scott Hansen	National RECCWG Coordinator
Scott Jackson	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Shane Corey	FBI (Omaha)
Thomas Kai	U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), C4IT Branch Chief, District 8
Tim Perrier	FCC
Todd Patton	FEMA Region 7
Tonya Aragon	FEMA Region 8 RECC
Tracey Murdock	FirstNet
Victor Camacho	Denton MERS Telecom Manager
NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES (NGOs)	
Harriet Rennie-Brown	Executive Director, National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA)
INDUSTRY PARTNERS	
Aaron Hughes	Sprint, Public Sector Account Manager
Beth Clay	Mutualink
Dan Willingham	Mutualink
David Haddad	T-Mobile
Jason Fillebrown	IP Access International
Jay English	Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO)
John Deering	Director of IT, Plum Laboratories
John Larregui	Verizon Enterprise Solutions
Lee Martin	JPS Interop Solutions
Matthew Brungardt	Verizon
Nicole Hudnet	T-Mobile Emergency Response Team (ERT)
Nieama Booker	Verizon, Client Partner
Nikki Papazoglakis	Bridge4PS, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Robert Desiato	AT&T, National Security Emergency Preparedness (NSEP) Manager
Rodney Cooper	T-Mobile
Scott Gray	JPS Interop Solutions
Sonia Richardson	Mutualink
Stephen Devine	AT&T, FirstNet Program Assistant Director
Steve Carney	Mutualink
Tim Russ	L3Harris
Tina Chester	Mutualink
Tony Patino	T-Mobile

CY 2021 RECCWG Accomplishments and 2022 Priorities

Highlights of the RECCWG's accomplishments in 2021 serve as examples of the advancements made within Region 7 and through the RECCWG program nationally. Similarly, priorities for 2022 have been set to leverage the extensive professional experience, comprehensive conversations and research, and close collaboration among member agencies within the region.

Statutory Duty 1

Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

Accomplishment 1: Conducted a regional communications tabletop exercise

The Region 7 members leveraged the RECCWG forum to execute a communications-focused tabletop exercise based on a 7.0-magnitude earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone. It tested their knowledge of state and local communications systems and allowed for group discussions of primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency communications capabilities that they could be activated in times of disaster. Individual groups convened after each portion of the exercise to summarize their discussions for the RECCWG. The exercise scenario involved widespread power and cellular outages, civil unrest, the diminished ability for public safety answering points (PSAP) to answer 911 calls, and many other aspects of emergency communications. Participants considered how their reporting mechanisms would function, both to connect with the public and to request resources and support from outside the affected areas. The discussions resulting from this multi-jurisdictional exercise continue to enhance the region's readiness posture and reinforce the value of the Region 7 RECCWG.

Priority 1: Develop a regional exercise and training program

Building on the RECCWG's tabletop exercise will be a top priority for members of the Training and Exercise sub-working group and the RECCWG. One of their objectives will be to develop a regional exercise training plan that outlines members' collective goals for communications training in the region. Members are working to develop a regional training catalog that can be made available to their respective organizations and shared with counterparts in other states and regions. The RECCWG's future goals also include hosting an annual or biannual full-scale communications exercise.

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications

Accomplishment 2: Provided a forum for cross-state and cross-regional collaboration

Although travel restrictions were still in effect, Region 7 RECCWG members continued working with their peers to maintain momentum for their cross-regional initiatives. The RECCWG's Governance and Policy committee convened virtually to stay at the forefront of quickly changing national policy issues; the Training and Exercise committee met to plan for the RECCWG's tabletop communications exercise; and the AuxComm committee held a workshop to discuss the group's upcoming project to develop a regional AuxComm handbook, and to address current amateur radio issues such as maintaining proficiency and interest among younger generations. In each case, Region 7 RECCWG members from multiple states came together to tackle issues of significance to the entire region.

RECCWG members also participated inter-regional meetings and events, including a high-frequency (HF) exercise hosted by Region 5, where AuxComm members from the Region 7 RECCWG's states of Iowa and Missouri made radio contact with their counterparts to the east. RECCWG members from regions 2, 4, and 10 joined the Region 7 RECCWG's November meeting to provide their updates to the group. These cross-regional efforts illustrate the RECCWG's value in providing a platform for collaboration and problem solving at the national, state, tribal, and local levels.

Priority 2: Develop a regional communications resource database

RECCWG members at all levels of government, as well as the amateur radio community and other RECCWG partners, maintain an array of communications assets that they can share with their public safety partners across the region during emergencies or planned events. One of the challenges in sharing resources is developing a clearinghouse where information regarding available assets can be exchanged. The RECCWG will explore options for hosting such a database in 2022.

Statutory Duty 3

Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

Accomplishment 3: Implemented interoperable communications systems across the region

With a focus on developing a standard model for primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency (PACE) communications across the region, RECCWG members supported the development of new systems and the enhancement of existing ones. All four Region 7 states established mobile satellite (MSAT) services in their state emergency operations centers (SEOC) that allow for state-to-state and state-to-federal communication that is independent of terrestrial networks and can be used when traditional means of communication become overloaded or destroyed during a disaster.

Land mobile radio (LMR) systems remain the fastest and most reliable form of communication for public safety personnel, and Region 7 states have major 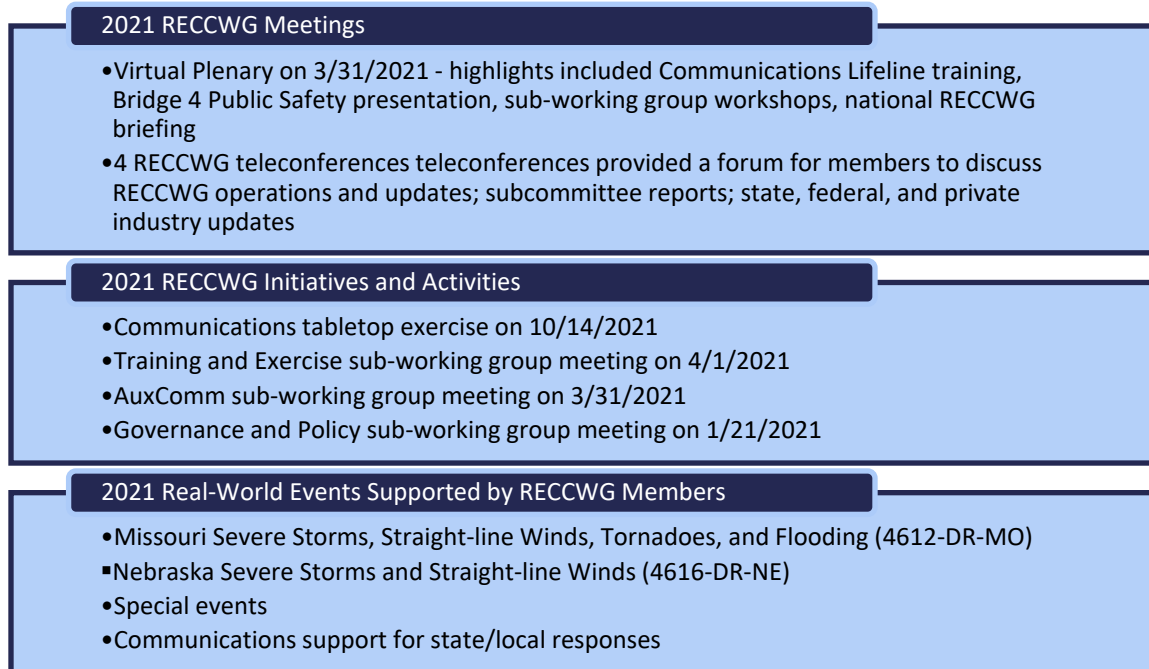projects underway to replace legacy LMR networks or enhance connectivity and interoperability. Throughout the year, members from Missouri and Nebraska provided updates to the RECCWG on the development of their statewide networks, challenges with encryption, bridging solutions, and memoranda of understanding (MOU) with non-state agencies. These reports promote interoperability across state lines and provide fellow RECCWG members with valuable information to consider for LMR projects within their respective areas of responsibility.

Priority 3: Create a Region 7 Communications Unit (COMU)

The COMU is a key supportive organization within the Incident Command System (ICS) that establishes a standardized approach to command, control, and coordination of on-scene incident management. COMU personnel are trained according to National Incident Management System (NIMS) ICS standards. They can deploy for both planned events and emergencies. Some states have a COMU program, but the number of trained personnel who are available for deployment varies widely. The Region 7 RECCWG intends to develop a COMU program that would offer its states communications personnel as a regional resource.

CY 2021 RECCWG ACTIVITIES

RECCWG members collaborated on several projects, supported regional communications events, and hosted meetings and presentations that advanced interoperability across all four of the Region 7 states. **Figure 20** provides a snapshot of RECCWG events throughout the year.

2021 RECCWG Meetings

- Virtual Plenary on 3/31/2021 - highlights included Communications Lifeline training, Bridge 4 Public Safety presentation, sub-working group workshops, national RECCWG briefing
- 4 RECCWG teleconferences teleconferences provided a forum for members to discuss RECCWG operations and updates; subcommittee reports; state, federal, and private industry updates

2021 RECCWG Initiatives and Activities

- Communications tabletop exercise on 10/14/2021
- Training and Exercise sub-working group meeting on 4/1/2021
- AuxComm sub-working group meeting on 3/31/2021
- Governance and Policy sub-working group meeting on 1/21/2021

2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members

- Missouri Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds, Tornadoes, and Flooding (4612-DR-MO)
- Nebraska Severe Storms and Straight-line Winds (4616-DR-NE)
- Special events
- Communications support for state/local responses

Figure 20: CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

LOOKING FORWARD

The Region 7 RECCWG will continue building on the momentum created by the group's 2021 events and initiatives. Many of the priority projects noted in this report are already underway, thanks to the expertise and dedication of the RECCWG members. The RECCWG's continuing growth and ambitious goal setting will help ensure that public safety communications remain operable and interoperable across the region.

REGION 8

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 8
Building 710, Box 25267
Denver, CO 80225-0267

FEMA

DATE: May 3, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR:
                                   John Rabin
                                   Assistant Administrator
                                   Response Directorate

FROM: Nancy J. Dragani
                                  Regional Administrator

NANCY J
DRAGANI

Digitally signed by NANCY J
DRAGANI
Date: 2022.05.04 17:27:46
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SUBJECT: FEMA Region 8 Regional Emergency Communications
                                   Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

www.fema.gov

As required by 6 U.S.C. 575, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The Annual Report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 8 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined RECCWG Annual Report for calendar year (CY) 2021, which will be distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

- Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
- Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.
- Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

The Annual Report reflects the accomplishments that the Region 8 RECCWG membership achieved to meet the intent of the statute. As such, no modifications were made by the FEMA Regional Office without the expressed approval of the RECCWG membership. The final report as attached wholly represents the RECCWG membership's input and does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the Region.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG has as a venue for federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, and the Whole Community to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region as shown through activities in this report. The accompanying Annual Report provides important insight on how emergency communications related efforts are moving forward in this Whole of Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.
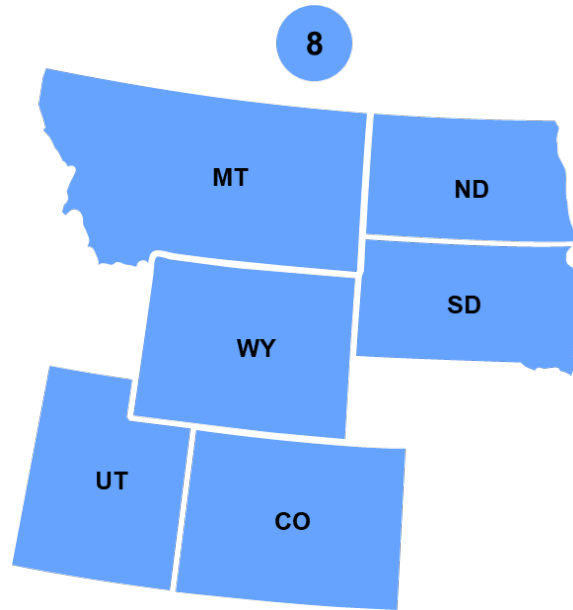
Enclosed: Region 8 CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report   www.fema.gov

REGION 8 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION WORKING GROUP
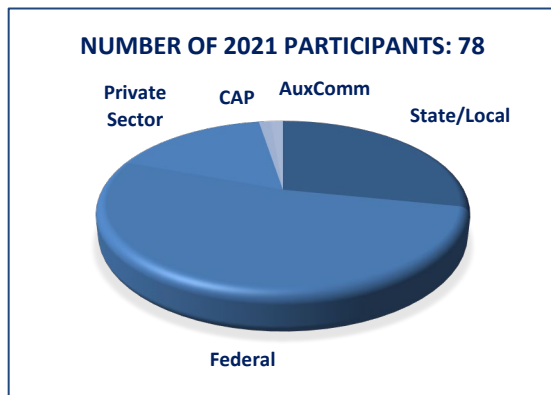

Figure 21: August 2021 Region 8 RECCWG Plenary Group Photo

CY 2021 OVERVIEW

The Region 8 Emergency Communications Working Group (RECCWG) is composed of the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The Region 8 RECCWG

**Figure 22: 2021 RECCWG Participation**

changed dramatically in 2021, in a transitional period, with the RECC retiring and the Co-Chair resigning the position. This led to an interim RECC and the 2020 Region 8 Co-Chair accepting the position as an acting Co-Chair. Additionally, many members of the RECCWG have retired and new members have taken their place, bringing fresh eyes and new ideas to the group. RECCWG participation in 2021 is shown in **Figure 22**.

Region 8 experienced major disasters in four of its five states with the majority of incidents resulting from wildfires. Other weather events effected the

Region in 2021, from straight-line winds to flooding events. The COVID-19 pandemic persisted throughout the year. Working in a pandemic environment had a major impact on emergency and disaster response in Region 8 states. In addition to natural disasters and COVID-19, RECCWG members responded to and reported on numerous incidents and planned events. Each event posed a unique set of challenges that responders and officials, many of whom are members of the RECCWG, were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the Region and across the country. **Figure 23** provides a snapshot of regional events, such as incident responses, planning activities, trainings, exercises, and communications coordination efforts, that have required support from RECCWG members in Region 8.
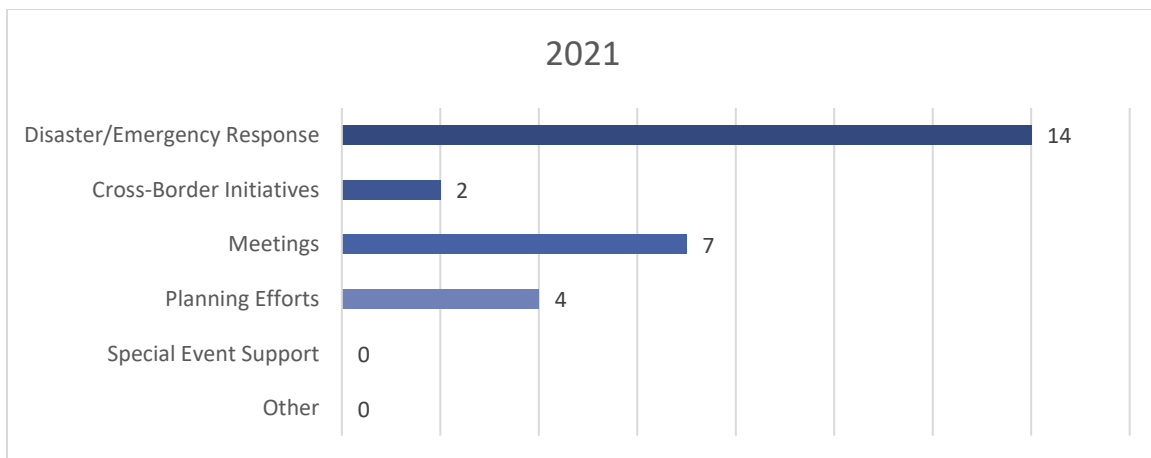
Figure 23: Regional Events

The Region's states have been working toward a long-overdue Land Mobile Radio (LMR) infrastructure refresh over the last few years. Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Utah are all either adding sites or refreshing/replacing their statewide networks. States are moving from proprietary sytems to P-25 standards based infrasturucture and adding additional sites. LMR interoperability, particualry along bordering states, will increase. The RECCWG made several other significant advances in meeting their congressional goals; these are documented further in this report.

The Region 8 RECCWG held a major tabletop exercise at their face-to-face plenary meeting to determine which communications gaps are likely to occur during a major seismic event and develop strategies to mitigate them.

New leadership at the RECC and Co-Chair level, as well as the addition of new membership will revitalize the RECCWG in 2022. Additionally, new perspectives will assist in identifying regional, cross border and intrastate communications gaps and devising strategies to mitigate the identified gaps.

For additional information regarding the Region 8 RECCWG, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 8 Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), Brian Landrum, at Brian.Landrum@fema.dhs.gov or 720-626-3259.

Table 12: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
RECCWG LEADERSHIP	
Nancy Dragani	Acting Regional Administrator-R8 RECCWG Chair
Charles "Bunk" Lawley	Deputy Regional Administrator
Patricia Sarin	RECC (January – March)
Brian Landrum	RECC (September – Current)
Glen Klaich	Region 8 RECCWG Co-Chair, Colorado Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)
Tonya Aragon	Acting Region 8 RECC (March – September)
COLORADO (CO)	
Emit Hurdelbrink	Colorado Department of Public Safety, Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator
Pam Monsees	Program Manager, Public Safety Communications Network
Tom Munsey	SWIC, State Emergency Preparedness Program Manager/State Continuity and Emergency Management Office Department of Administration
NORTH DAKOTA (ND)	
Darin Anderson	SWIC /Public Safety Program Manager, ND IT
Dan Donlin	NDES Radio Director

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Jason Horning	Program Manager, Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911), North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo)
Karen Kempert	9-1-1 Coordinator/Emergency Manager, Cavalier County
Jennifer Moeller	Administrative Staff Officer 3, NDDES
SOUTH DAKOTA (SD)	
Allan Miller	Planning Chief, S Dakota OEM
Jeff Pierce	SWIC/Engineering Administrator, South Dakota Bureau of Information and Telecommunications
UTAH (UT)	
James Baker	Acting SWIC
Richard Armstrong	Emergency Communications Services, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Welfare Services
Doug Reneer	Emergency Communications Services, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Beth Todd	Fire Manager, Utah Valley Emergency Communication Center
Juan Villanueva	Communications Officer, Division of Emergency Management
Jerry Wellman	Civil Air Patrol, Utah Wing
WYOMING (WY)	
Russ Dalgarn	Converse County Emergency Manager
Jim Frank	Wyoming Office of Homeland Security
Mark Kelly	Wyoming Department of Transportation
Nathan Smolinski	WyoLink Support Manager, Wyoming Department of Transportation
Federal Partners	
Chris Baker	FirstNet Senior Public Safety Advisor
Mark Beecroft	Denver MERS
Richard Caschera	FEMA Spectrum Management
Scott Carpenter	Regional Response & Preparedness Specialist, Western Region, NOAA/NWS
Gordon Coles	Telecommunications Specialist, Emergency Communications Division/CISA
Cathy Orcutt	Priority Telecommunications Area Representative (PAR)/CISA
Nicole Firelli	FEMA DEC Supervisor
Chris Foltz	NOAA, Emergency Response Specialist
Scott Hansen	Chief Communications Integration Branch (CIB), FEMA Disaster Emergency Communications Division National RECCWG Coordinator
Joe Husnay	Senior Adviser, FCC, Public Safety Homeland Security Bureau, Operations & Emergency Management Division
Scott Jackson	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Jeremy Johnson	Telecommunications Specialist, Emergency Communications Division/CISA
Kris Kerpa	FEMA, Region 8 FIT, Montana
Nate Knapp	Response Division Director, FEMA Region 8

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Mark MacAlester	Liaison to NORAD & USNORTHCOM, CISA
Dorothy Savola	Regional Outreach Coordinator, CISA
Julie Malingowski	Meteorologist, National Weather Service Western Region
Kevin Moore	Operations Branch Chief, FEMA R8
Tracey Murdock	Region 8 Coordinator, First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)
Steve Noel	West Sector Chief, CISA
Daniel Roberts	Telecommunications Manager (RF), FEMA MERS Denver
Nikki Shears	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Dave Sonheim	Cybersecurity Advisor, CISA Region 8
Brandon Smith	Telecommunications Specialist, Emergency Communications Division/CISA
PRIVATE INDUSTRY PARTNERS	
Rosalie (Rose) Mata	Verizon Managing Partner, Civilian-Western States
Mark Anderko	Mutualink, Business Development Executive Federal Government Services
Nieama Booker	Verizon Government Relations
Jared Hilzendeger	Verizon Emergency Response Team
Shannon Jenness	Verizon Government Accounts
Curtis Mentz	Verizon Crisis Response
Casey Muilenburg	Manager–Business Development West, T Mobile
Adrian Valenzuela	Verizon Client Executive
Tony Patino	T-Mobile Emergency Response Team
OTHER PARTICIPANTS	
Michael Caiafa	FCC
Bob Carey	Bureau Chief
Kevin Coen	FEMA DECD Group Supervisor
Shelia Curtis	Utah DEM, Operations Chief
Shawn Graff	CISA Regional Director, Region 8
Larry Harkleroad	FEMA DECD Group Supervisor
Lorry Herrera	Utah DEM Logistics Planner
Joe Hillis	ITDRC
Sue Kohlwey	Administrator
Brian Luu	FCC

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Paul Miller	Verizon
Joel Palmer	FEMA Region 8 UT FIT Team Leader
Doug Reneer	AuxComm
Rick Retz	Bridge4PS, Operations
Wally Raub	FEMA Region 8 IMAT Service Branch Chief
Logan Sisam	FEMA FIT (Utah)
Mike Brinkman	Continuity Of Operations Manager/FEMA R8
Rod Goosen	Chief Executive Officer/RoGo Fire
Angela Copple	EMAC Program Director/NEMA
Judy Watanabe	Utah Division of Emergency Management

CY 2021 RECCWG ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND 2022 PRIORITIES

The accomplishments below chronicle the achievements the Region 8 RECCWG completed to improve preparedness and emergency response communications capabilities in 2021.

Statutory Duty 1

Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP)

Accomplishment 1: Conducted a tabletop exercise to determine communications gaps and develop strategies to mitigate them

The Region 8 RECCWG held the first face-to-face plenary meeting in the nation since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. A large portion of the meeting was devoted to the tabletop exercise that was developed in conjunction with the Region 7 and Region 10 RECCWGs. The scenario encompassed a major seismic event on the Wasatch Fault in Utah. RECCWG members from all the Region 8 states participated and provided input into potential responses to the injects.

While not all states in the Region are subject to earthquakes, the scenario allowed for discussion on alternative issues that apply to each state and discussion on supporting roles for states outside potential incident areas.

Examples of issues identified during discussion:

- Staffing shortages because of the inability of emergency managers and first responders to get to work
- Major communications outages (both public safety and commercial) inhibiting command and control
- Limited situational awareness reporting both in-state, within the Region, and nationally
- Supply chain shortage of life sustaining commodities
- Communications equipment and fuel to supply communications sites
- Communications short falls that inhibited informing the public of the situation and providing information on how to receive medical and life sustaining services

The RECCWG used recently added PACE models in the state emergency communications annexes to formulate communications strategies in their states to overcome communications gaps simulated in the exercise. The PACE model is developed with each state and evaluates their communications capabilities to determine which of these will be used: Primary, Auxiliary, Contingency and Emergency communications. These models assisted the RECCWG in developing strategies to overcome simulated gaps.

Priority 1: Review the outcomes from the tabletop exercise and develop strategies and agreements to further mitigate potential communications gaps

In 2022, the Region 8 RECCWG will review the tabletop exercise After Action Report (AAR) and outcomes from the tabletop exercise to identify additional mitigation strategies that can be applied during disaster operations. The discussion will assist in both in-state and regional planning efforts, the development of future communication systems and planning for hardening existing systems. Additionally, the discussion will support the development of cross state agreements for using Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) to provide personnel and equipment to mitigate identified gaps.

Accomplishment 2: Enhanced communications resiliency in the Region

Multiple LMR communications projects are underway in the Region. Each state is undertaking projects to update their current systems, add additional sites or, in the case of Utah, completely replace the system. Each of these projects will either provide additional coverage to the state or bring systems up to P-25 standards. Ultimately, the projects will enhance both in-state and cross border interoperability or harden the sites and network. For example, Utah's upgrade will mitigate pre-identified earthquake hazards and enhance multiple sites with the ability to withstand earthquakes.

Examples of improvements in the Region include:
- Colorado is currently installing new public safety grade routers at each LMR site, performing a complete replacement of their microwave backhaul system and adding four new sites.
- North Dakota has updated their PSAP consoles to provide cross band capabilities. They have started the updates and build out of 140 LMR sites across the state and are 35% complete. They added Critical Connect and Smart Connect to integrate LTE cellular into their LMR system and set up agreements with FirstNet to co-locate and share tower sites.
- South Dakota is adding three additional sites, testing LTE cellular to LMR integration and upgraded their LMR system to full P-25 standards.
- Utah began a project to completely replace their LMR system and bring it to current P-25 standards, by adding additional sites and hardening existing sites.
- Wyoming has added seven new LMR sites and has nine additional sites in the construction phase to enhance in state coverage.

All of these projects were shared with the RECCWG during regular meetings. Many of the changes were influenced by information shared during these meetings.

In addition to LMR upgrades, Colorado has begun testing multiple communications methods and paths between county EOCs, PSAPs and at the state EOC to provide redundant and resilient communications.

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications

Accomplishment 3: Coordination efforts continued during 2021 around the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic

The RECCWG members adapted well to working within a COVID-19 environment. They continued to hold their regularly scheduled bi-monthly teleconferences, held one virtual two-day plenary, and in August conducted the first face-to-face plenary in the nation since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members from all states participated in the calls and plenary sessions. State status reports on programs, infrastructure, training, exercises and best practices were exchanged. Additionally, subcommittees addressed actions to improve the RECCWG's performance in meeting congressional goals. For example, the AuxComm subcommittee worked on their base plan and monthly regionwide network testing.

Priority 2: Evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on RECCWG planning, training, exercises, and disaster response

As variants of the COVID-19 virus continue to spread throughout the nation, the RECCWG will continue to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on planning, training, exercises, and operational response. Innovative methods have been developed to maintain readiness and provide operational support during disasters. These include using virtual command centers, establishing vaccination policies and social distancing.

As the pandemic continues, the virtual solutions put in place to meet, coordinate, and train in a pandemic environment will provide alternative coordination options during times of disaster and may lead to virtual coordination for upcoming disasters with a cost saving benefit. Regularly publishing quarantine requirements allows planners to be prepared to send surge responders without having them quarantine upon arrival. This will assist in shifting manpower from state to state during the upcoming wildfire season.

Accomplishment 4: Enhanced AuxComm services to ensure communications capabilities are available during a major disaster

Recent changes in RECCWG membership required new leadership for the AuxComm subcommittee, with Emit Hurdelbrink assuming the chair. The AuxComm subcommittee is working to prepare a task book to set standards and procedures for auxiliary communications which will be shared across the Region. The subcommittee is currently holding monthly Region 8 radio network tests. Subcommittee members are also participating in national and multi-national radio testing. For example, they participated in the Colorado wide area weather event exercise, which involved 15 counties and eight Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) districts in training and testing their capabilities. Participants used digital high frequency devices called WinLink to pass damage assessments and weather-related reports to a State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).

These developments will ensure the AuxComm groups in each state have the training, procedures and equipment necessary to provide much needed communications at a state, regional and cross regional level during times of disaster.

Statutory Duty 3

Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made

Accomplishment 5: Improved state to state responder communications along borders

The RECCWG members recognized the importance of effective communications to handle not only day-to-day public safety incidents, but also major disasters and events that occur in multiple states. Communications across state lines have always been difficult since most systems are built to specifically meet the needs of the particular state.

Recognizing the need to provide public safety communications to bordering communities and counties, RECCWG members in Colorado have been installing repeaters in several locations along the Colorado and Kansas border to enhance interoperability between the states. Montezuma County, Colorado is working on a cross-border solution with San Juan County, Utah. Additionally, Montana is working with Wyoming on cross-border communications along the I-90 corridor to enhance coverage in some communication gap areas.

Priority 3: Develop a sample state to state ICS 205 and share a template with the RECCWG

The August 2021 tabletop exercise showed the need for a pre-existing channel plan for incoming surge responders. The RECCWG has taken this to the next level and determined each state could use such a plan for disaster operations. For 2022, the RECCWG will work together to create a channel plan template using the NiFOG and federal LE/IR channels to assist each state in coordinating communications for command and control and tactical operations with incoming surge responders.

The RECCWG will evaluate whether this should be taken to the next level of obtaining the common channels in each state's fleet-map and preparing channel cards for the various state radios.

Priority 4: Increase diversity within the RECCWG by extending outreach to Tribal nations, local governments, and various disciplines that are underrepresented in the current RECCWG makeup

Personnel changes at the state and local levels, as well as the social distancing requirements brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have changed participation in the RECCWG. Participation from each state within the Region is still strong, but the RECCWG is seeing less participation from county and local governments, as well as fewer disciplines being represented. Additionally, there was no tribal participation in 2021.

The RECCWG members and the RECC will begin additional outreach to county, local and tribal governments in 2022. As face-to-face meetings begin, local, tribal, and governmental agencies representing the various disciplines will be invited to attend from the areas surrounding the meeting location. This outreach should help diversify membership to provide a wider range of expertise to identify and solve communications issues throughout public safety.

CY 2021 RECCWG ACTIVITIES

RECCWG members collaborated on several projects, supported events, held workshops and participated in a tabletop exercise this year, detailed below in **Figure 24**.

2021 RECCWG Meetings

- 2 plenaries - In-person and virtual discussions and briefings regarding state updates, federal updates, and RECCWG partner updates, with presentations from commercial carriers, federal partners, VOAD organizations, and reviewed 2021 priorities and objectives, and planned for 2022.
- 5 teleconferences - Discussions and briefings regarding developments, unmet needs, and efforts in communications in Region 8. Topical presentations from commercial carriers, federal and private partners.

2021 RECCWG Initiatives and Activities

- Region 8's RECCWG has the following subcommittees:
  - Charter, Membership, Position Papers
  - Technology, Standards, Utilities, Inventory of Resources
  - Planning, Training, Exercises, Outreach and Best Practices
  - Auxiliary Communications
    - subcommittee activities and recommended actions are discussed at each of the two plenaries held each year.
    - the Charter, Membership, Position Papers subcommittee will review the R8 RECCWG charter in 2022.
- AuxComm nets/check-ins
- Colorado: ARES statewide Simulated Emergency Test (SET) planning (October 2021), Weekly AuxComm roundtable coodination calls, AuxComm supported CPW in Golden Gate Canyon
- exercise participation
  - ESF-2 Wasatch Fault Catastrophic Earthquake Tabletop Exercise in August 2021
  - Colorado Communications Exercise (October 2021)
- webinars, training, workshops
  - Colorado: AuxComm Virtual Training Course (November 2021), Communications Exercise (October 2021)
  - Colorado: 2020 Annual Public Safety Communications Summit
  - Montana: Public Safety Fall Training Forum (September 2021)
  - South Dakota: FirstNet Webinar (September 2021)
  - Utah: Region 8 SEPT 2020

2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members

- disasters
  - Colorado: Wildfires (DR-4581-CO)
  - Colorado: ongoing COVID-19 support
  - Colorado: I-70 closure due to major mud and rockslides in previous burn scar areas of the Glenwood Canyon (State disaster declaration - D 2021 127)
  - Montana: Robertson Draw Fire (FM-5392-MT), Buffalo Wildfire (FM-5399-MT), Poverty Flats Fire (FM-5403-MT), Richard Spring Fire (FM-5406-MT), Stright-Line Winds (4608-DR-MT), Richard Spring Fire (DR-4623-MT)
  - North Dakota: Severe Storm, Straight-Line Winds, and Flooding (4613-DR-NR)
  - South Dakota: Schroeder Fire (FM-5384-SD), Auburn Fire (FM-5418-SD)
  - Utah: Mammoth Fire (FM-5388-UT), Pack Creek Fire (FM-5391-UT), Parleys Canyon Fire (FM-5408-UT)
- special events
  - Colorado: 2021 Major League Baseball All Star Game at Coors Field in Denver
  - Montana: Iron Horse Rodeo/Hells Angels Pre-Sturgis
- cross-state/regional collaboration
  - Wyoming and Montana coordinating Motorola Critical Connect
  - Canada and Montana have shared international LMR
  - Canada Alberta and Saskatchewan with Montana continue to use VLAW waiver with FCC
  - Montana Highway Patrol and Idaho State Police have MOU
  - North Dakota added Critical Connect and Smart Connect to handle LTE integration
  - Interoperability between South Dakota, Minnesota, and Manitoba
  - Wyoming is working on Critical Connect to connect with neighboring states

Figure 24: CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

LOOKING FORWARD

During 2022 the Region 8 RECCWG will review the outcomes and develop strategies and agreements to mitigate the communications gaps identified in the tabletop exercise held in August 2021. They will continue to evaluate the effects of pandemic on planning, training, exercise and disaster response and develop mitigation strategies as well as seek best practices from other regions RECCWGs to mitigate and overcome the limitations pandemic creates. This may include advancing meeting technology for virtual meetings and working with health officials to ensure the safety of RECCWG members and their teams during meetings, training and disaster response.

To improve cross border interoperability and ensure disaster communication is available when needed in a no notice event, the RECCWG will develop a sample state to state Incident Communications Plan (ICS 205) and share with the RECCWG.

The RECCWG members will identify qualified candidates within their respective states in Tribal nations, local governments and various discipline that are underrepresented in the current RECCWG makeup and submit their names for inclusion as members.

One of the key outcomes of the Regions RECCWG are the Disaster Emergency Communications Annexes to the Region 8 Emergency Communications Plan. These annexes provide critical information to the federal government on the current state communications status and identify potential shortfalls in disaster communications as identified by the state. During 2022 the South Dakota Annex will be updated.

Additionally, throughout the year the RECCWG will hold four teleconferences, one virtual and one face to face plenary meeting. The RECCWG will report on communications infrastructure and program updates, share best practices, upcoming training and exercise information and work to identify and mitigate public safety communications gaps in the region.

REGION 9

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 9
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, CA 94607

FEMA

DATE: May 13, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: John Rabin
                                   Assistant Administrator
                                   Response Directorate

FROM: Robert J. Fenton, Jr.
                                   Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: FEMA Region 9 Regional Emergency Communications
                                   Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

As required by 6 U.S.C. 575, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The Annual Report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 9 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined RECCWG Annual Report for calendar year (CY) 2021, which will be distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

- Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
- Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.
- Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

The Annual Report reflects the accomplishments that the Region 9 RECCWG membership achieved to meet the intent of the statute. As such, no modifications were made by the FEMA Regional Office without the expressed approval of the RECCWG membership. The final report as attached wholly represents the RECCWG membership's input and does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the Region.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG has as a venue for federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, and the Whole Community to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region as shown through activities in this report. The accompanying Annual Report provides important insight on how emergency communications related efforts are moving forward in this Whole of Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.

Enclosed: Region 9 CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report   www.fema.gov

REGION 9 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION WORKING GROUP
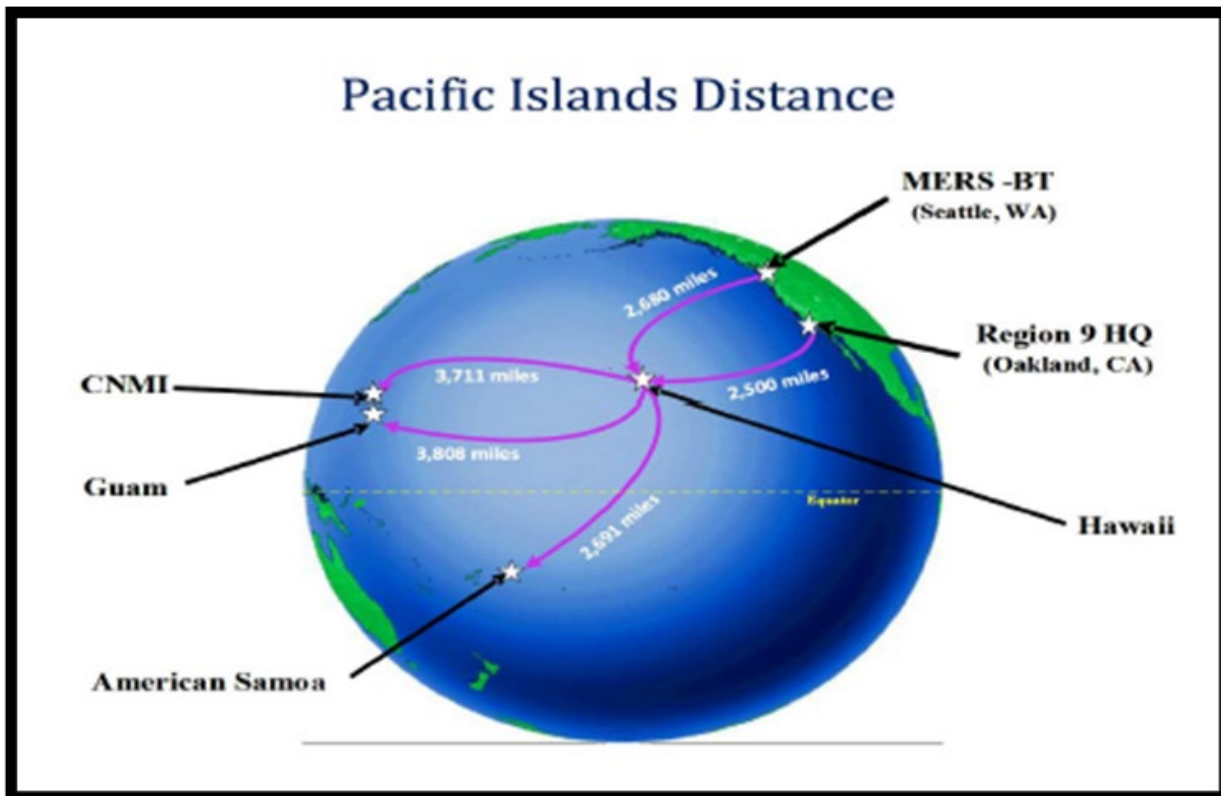
CY 2021 OVERVIEW

Region 9 RECCWG consists of Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada; the territories of Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Ma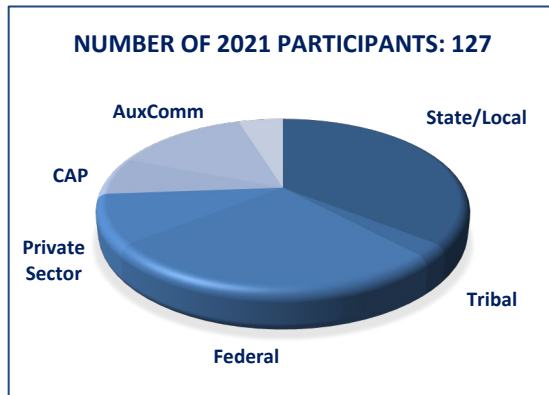riana Islands (CNMI). Unique among the RECCWG is that Region 9 has one of the largest geographic areas of responsibility. It is over 5,500 miles from the Region 9 Regional Office to the CNMI. RECCWG participation in 2021 is shown in **Figure 25**.

Figure 25: 2021 RECCWG Participation

Region 9 experienced 20 major disasters and Fire Management Assistance Grants in 4 of its 4 states and 3 territories. Wildland fires, severe storms and flooding and COVID-19 dominated the emergency management scene in 2021. While all the states in the continental US (CONUS) had wildland fires, California experienced multiple large fires with many lives lost. The COVID pandemic forced Hawaii and the Pacific territories to create and enforce travel restrictions for persons coming into the area. Although after many months of travel restrictions, Hawaii, Guam, and the CNMI updated their COVID-19 entry and quarantine guidance by implementing a vaccination exception program, allowing fully vaccinated domestic travelers to bypass mandatory quarantine, as long as they completed the state or territories pre-travel requirements. Unfortunately, American Samoa continues to enforce its strict COVID-19 travel restriction and closed border policy. This has created a situation that technicians have not been able to enter to perform maintenance and repairs on communications systems. In addition to natural disasters, RECCWG members responded to and reported on numerous incidents and planned events. Each event posed a unique set of challenges that responders and officials, many of whom are members of the RECCWG, were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the region and across the country. **Figure 26** provides a snapshot of regional events, such as incident responses, planning activities, trainings, exercises, and communications coordination efforts, that have required support from RECCWG members in Region 9.
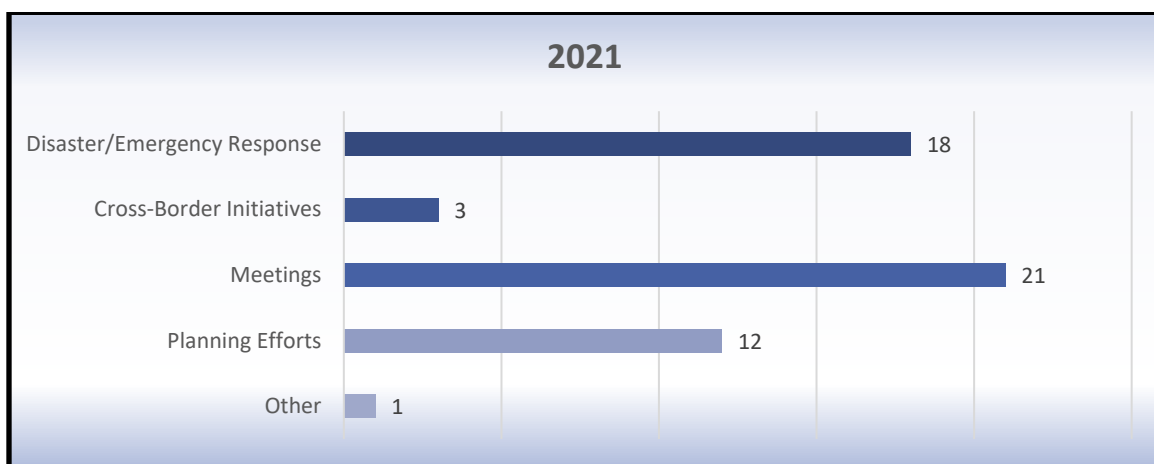

Figure 26: 2021 Regional Events

Many communications systems in the Region are being refreshed. Nevada has begun a multi year project to convert from a proprietary LMR system to a P25 standards based trunked network. California has also begun installation of a new interoperability network, known as CRIS, California Radio Interoperability System, which is a P25 compliant trunked radio system that interfaces to similar local systems throughout the state of California. When fully developed CRIS will provide radio coverage to over 90% of the State's population and over 60% of the State's geographic footprint. The CNMI is refreshing their single tower on Saipan; and Guam has again released a request for proposal to replace their LMR network.

A significant change occurred in the makeup of the RECCWG. Hawaii and the Pacific territories have unique communications issues and have formed a Pacific branch of the R9 RECCWG. The Continental US (CONUS) states meet monthly, and the Pacific state and territories hold a second monthly meeting to address their communications issues. Each group has a separate co-chair.

The Region 9 RECCWG has formed a Pacific branch of the RECCWG consisting of Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas.

For additional information regarding the Region 9 RECCWG, please contact the FEMA Region 9 CONUS Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), David Benoit, david.benoit@fema.dhs.gov 510-627-7268/510-289-0116 or the FEMA Region 9 OCONUS Emergency Communications Coordinator, Bobby Cabino, robert.cabinojr@fema.dhs.gov, 808-851-7907/808-202-4953.

Table 13: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

Name	Role or Agency
RECCWG Leadership	
Robert Fenton	Region 9 Regional Administrator (RA)/RECCWG Chair, FEMA
Shelly McMahon	Region 9 RECCWG CONUS Co-Chair/CalOES, Telecommunications Systems Manager
Leigh Pereda	Region 9 RECCWG OCONUS Co-Chair/Special Projects Coordinator, Guam Police Department
David Benoit	Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC)
American Samoa (AS) Representatives	
Vinnie Atofau Jr.	Deputy Director Operations, Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Alex Baker	Manager, Territorial Emergency Management Coordinating Office/Supervisor, TEOC
Randall Fitisone	Information Technology/Emergency Communications Coordinator
Richard Semo	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)
Samana S. Ve'ave'a	Director, Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Arizona (AZ) Representatives	
Steven Becker	Information Services Group, ADHS
Dennis Bietry	Communications Supervisor, Arizona Division of Emergency Management
Nichole Fortson	Arizona DEMA

Name	Role or Agency
Morgan E Hoaglin	Communications Coordinator, DEMA
Jeremy Knoll	Wireless Systems Bureau Manager, Arizona Department of Public Safety/SWIC
Rich Kochanski	Battalion Chief, Mesa Fire and Medical Department
Dave Roby	WebEOC Administrator, DEMA
Al West	Arizona Transportation Security Administration
California (CA) Representatives	
Mike Beckstrand	Communications Coordinator, Mutual Aid Region 3, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)
Don Boland	Director, Department of Water Resources
Daniel Chui	Acting Coordinator, Agency California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System, San Francisco Police Department
Devin Clarke	Deputy SWIC and Chief of Emergency Communication Division, CalOES
Budge Currier	SWIC/911 Emergency Communications Branch, Public Safety Communications (PSC), CalOES
Timothy Donovan	Homeland Security Unit Supervisor, San Francisco Police Department
Jim Falls	Certified Engineering Geologist, Department of Conservation California Geological Survey
Ben Green	Assistant Chief of Tactical Communications, CalOES
Amanda Ley	Supervisor of Tactical Communications
Leo Liberio	California Director, Air Force Military Auxiliary Radio System (AFMARS)
Ashley Lyons	Communications Coordinator, Central Valley, Mutual Aid Region 5
Dennis McCord	National Operations Officer, AFMARS
Shelly McMahon	Telecom Manager, CalOES
Don Nelson	Humboldt County Communications Division
Anthony Ravago	Chief, Pala Fire Department
Wendy Schleppie	California Department of Water Resources
Mikaela Stirling	Intern, California EOC
Scott Tillman	Region 9 Emergency Coordinator, AFMARS
Heather Topliff	Palm Springs, 911
Steve Weston	Communications Specialist, Tactical Communications Unit, Los Angeles Fire Department
Ralph Williams	Pasadena Fire Department
Jeff Yeagley	Communications Technician, San Francisco International Airport
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island (CNMI) Representatives	
Joey Dela Cruz	EOC Manager, Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)
Gerald J. Deleon Guerrero	Special Assistant, HSEM
John Deleon Guerrero	Director, Department of Public Safety 911 System
Pedro DL Guerrero	Deputy Special Assistant, HSEM
Herman Kintol	SWIC/Comms & IT Manager, HSEM
Jermaine W. Nekaifes	Statewide LMR Network, HSEM
Naomi A. Tagabuel	Grants Manager/Lead Planner, HSEM
Guam (GU) Representatives	

Name	Role or Agency
John Bamba	ESF-2/COM-T/Communications Specialist, Guam Police Department
Samantha J. Brennan	Advisor, Guam Homeland Security (GHS)
Leo Rustum J. Espia	Director, Emergency Operations Center/Deputy Administrator, GHS/OCD
Charles V. Esteves	Administrator, Office of Civil Defense (OCD)
Victoria Foreman	Special Projects Coordinator, Office of Technology
Frank Leon Guerrero	Director, Marianas Regional Fusion Center
Frank L.G. Lujan, Jr	SWIC/Chief Technology Officer, Office of Technology
Lucia Perez	ESF-2/Cyber and Telecommunications Intel-Analyst, GHS/OCD
Paul Rolinski	Communications Manager/E911 EMD Supervisor, Guam Fire Department
Joel Valenzuela	Guam Homeland Security Watch
Hawaii (HI) Representatives	
Teresa Debebar	Land Mobile Radio Program Assistant, United States Army Pacific
Major General Kenneth Hara	Director, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA)
Ryan Hirae	ESF-2/Assistant Telecommunications Officer, HI-EMA
Everett Kaneshige	Hawaii Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)
Vince Krog	Radio Engineer, Statewide LMR Network
Bill Marhoffer	Emergency Management and Preparedness Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard District 14
Luke Meyers	Administrator, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency
Kurt M. Nagano	Senior Radio Technician, HI-EMA
Walter Pacheco	Communications Coordinator, Maui Police Department
Courtney Tagupa	PSAP/911 Director, State of Hawaii 911 Board Executive Director
Nevada (NV) Representatives	
Terry Bohl	Director, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN)
First Sergeant John Fansler	Nevada National Guard
Melissa Friend	SWIC/Division of Emergency Management/Homeland Security (DEMHS), Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Melissa Lawney	Regional Communications Coordinator, Washoe County 800-MHz Communications System Joint Operating Committee
Gina Marotto	Acting Director, Intertribal Emergency Response Commission (Sparks, Nevada)
Vince Puglia	Director, Radio Systems Bureau, Las Vegas Metro Police Department
Lonnie Richardson	Director, Information Technologies, City of Las Vegas
Mike Russ	Disaster Services Manager, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians (Highland, California)
Jim Stillwell	Tribal Representative, Arizona
Tribal Representatives	
Artena Moon	CISA
Perry TwoFeathers Tripp	Inter-Tribal Council of California (ITCC)
Sandy Tripp	Tribal Liaison
Chris Poehlmann	Tribal Liaison
Sky Road Webb	Program Manager, ITCC
Private Industry Partners	

Name	Role or Agency
Jeff Casey	Sprint Wireless
Casey Muilenburg	Sprint Wireless
John Rosica	Army MARS/President, NVIS Communications LLC and Barrett Communications Consulting (California)
Federal Partners	
George Aldrich	IT Specialist, FEMA
Chris Baker	NTIA FRNA
Art Botterell	Senior Emergency Services Coordinator, AFMARS/CalOES
Bobby Cabino	Emergency Communications Coordinator, FEMA R9, Pacific Area Office (PAO)
Scott Carpenter	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Weather Service (NWS)
Paul Coburn	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Larry Clutts	ECD
Nicole Firelli	FEMA DECD, DEC Group Supervisor
Glen Gorud	Chief, FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Support, Bothell
Scott Hansen	National RECCWG Coordinator, FEMA
David Hartshorn	San Francisco Office, District Director, FCC
Tracy Haynes	Director of Field Operations, FEMA R9 Pacific Area Office (PAO)
Chris Hillis	Information Technology Disaster Resource Center, Co-Founder
Robert Hugi	Telecommunications Specialist, DHS
Al Kenyon	FEMA IPAWS
Scott Jackson	Telecommunications Specialist, National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA)
Thomas Lawless	Regional Coordinator, Emergency Communications Division (ECD), DHS
James Lundsted	Regional Coordinator, ECD, DHS
Mark MacAlester	CISA
Eric Main	Telecommunications Specialist, FEMA
Shawn Matz	Acting Response Division Director, FEMA Region 9
Dennis McCord	National Operations Officer, AFMARS
Charles McPhatter	FEMA DECD HQ
Suzanne Moss	ESF-2 Coordinator, General Services Administration (GSA)
Robert Mussenden	Attorney Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, FCC
Kevin Nida	FirstNet Authority
Bill Preiss	FEMA, National IMAT West
Harriet Rennie-Brown	National Association of State 911 Administrators
Nikki Shears	Senior Agent, Tiger Team (Denver), Enforcement Bureau, FCC
Eric Simmons	Spectrum Manager, USCG (Oakland, California)
Steve Simmons	AFMARS
Stephan Silen	Installation Director, MARS, Travis Air Force Base (AFB)
Scott Sweigart	Telecommunications Manager, FEMA MERS Bothell

Name	Role or Agency
Kenison Tejada	FirstNet Authority, Senior Public Safety Advisor, OCONUS
Dan Wills	Regional Coordinator, ECD, DHS
Wade Witmer	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)
Terry Yonamine	IT Specialist, FEMA PAO

CY 2021 RECCWG Accomplishments and 2022 Priorities

The accomplishments below chronicle the achievements the Region 9 RECCWG accomplished to improve preparedness and emergency response communications capabilities in 2021.

Statutory Duty 1

Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan

➤ **Accomplishment 1: Updating the Nevada Emergency Communciation Annex and conducted interim updates to the CNMI, Guam and American Samoa Annexes**

The completion of the Nevada Annex to the Regional Emergency Communications Plan (RECP) was essential to sustaining Region 9's interoperability and preparing the state in the event of a disaster that has a direct impact on communications. Through the collaboration between Nevada's stakeholders and other emergency communications partners within the Region 9 RECCWG, the Annex was completed in a timely manner. Stakeholders from Nevada aided the Annex development by providing information regarding major communication systems interoperability, key facilities and interoperable communications during response and recovery operations.

Additionally, interim updates were done on the American Samoa, Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas annexes using information presented at the monthly OCONUS RECCWG meetings and the Annual OCONUS RECCWG plenary in October.

➤ **Accomplishment 2: Participated in workshops and a tabletop exercise designed to test readiness response and recovery efforts**

RECCWG members participated in a series of workshops, and a Tabletop Exercise conducted by the FEMA National Exercise Program. The Typhoon Pakyo is an Annual preparedness and recovery exercise designed to test readiness response and recovery efforts. This year's scenario simulated a category 4 and 5 typhoon making landfall during a COVID-19 pandemic for both the CNMI and Guam. The CNMI workshop addressed the CNMI's ability to establish and maintain communications with Tinian, Rota, and Guam post-landfall. RECCWG members were able to engage stakeholders across the CNMI on current operational coordination and communications capabilities. The key findings from the workshops were used to develop the Typhoon Pakyo TTX, which examined the CNMI's capabilities of public, private, and nonprofit partners to implement appropriate coordination and communication structures for incident management and information sharing, assessing the situation, ensuring interoperable communications, maintaining a common operating picture and conducting effective public messaging. The TTX identified challenges and opportunities for improvement, with operational coordination and communications capabilities identified as one of

three key focus areas. The TTX also identified gaps and areas for improvement in current plans and processes to improve CNMI's operational coordination and communications planning and response capabilities.

Additionally, a separate Guam Typhoon Pakyo workshop was conducted focusing on resilient communications. The workshop addressed the availability of pre-positioned and tested alternate communications, including from non-traditional partners if or when traditional communications are unavailable. Stakeholders discussed the availability of landlines and alternate communications for leadership if cellular networks go down. Examined the roles and responsibilities of ESF #2, and identified existing communications policies, procedures and MOUs related to a disaster response. The key findings of these events will help build the capacity to prepare for and respond to a catastrophic typhoon impacting the CNMI and Guam, with the added special circumstance of a pandemic situation and the inherent challenges to pre- and post-impact preparedness and response efforts.

Attendance for these events was one of the largest territorial communications events with over 100 participants representing territorial key leadership, public, private, nonprofit, and federal interagency partners. This helped RECCWG members develop and enhance relationships with our territorial partners, that were previously nonexistent.

FEMA National Exercise Program produced a summary of conclusions that identified gaps in communications and mitigation strategies. The summary was shared with RECCWG members and referenced to improve current Region 9 Emergency Communications Summary's, Annex's, and Plans.

➢ **Accomplishment 3: Operational response in a COVID-19 environment**

Official travel during 2020 was heavily restricted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This continued in Hawaii and the Pacific territories into 2021 which resulted in an inability to provide out of state surge responders and assistance for disasters and also resulted in diminished communications system assessments, maintenance, and repairs.

A large portion of communications response and focus was set aside for the repatriation flights into American Samoa. Shortly after the Governor declared the Covid-19 Pandemic a danger to the public, the borders to American Samoa were closed. During this time several flights would take place throughout the year in which stranded American Samoa residents would fly into American Samoa in a controlled fashion to undergo a brief period of quarantine before being released from quarantine sites. Shelters needed to be identified in regard to policies set in place by the AS Department of Health. With the need to isolate personnel and passengers, video-teleconferencing would become one of the primary means of meeting and communication between agencies and the public. VTC equipment, radio equipment, and mobile operations centers are some of the items that would be deployed during these flights. In addition to the direct response to the repatriation flights, some indirect testing was done, such as the broadband network in American Samoa being used to test the effectiveness of at home schooling via software like Zoom or Google classroom. One of the concerns of the American Samoa Broadband group was that the broadband infrastructure would be unable to support such a large amount of traffic. It was discovered that the broadband network would be able to support at home learning should schools need to be shut down due to a community outbreak. Though the flights have finished, and America Samoa has moved back to a more normal schedule in

terms of flights, quarantine measures and response still remain in place. ASDHS continues to support these efforts into 2022 by providing assistance with equipment, communication support, and agency coordination. At the later stage of 2021, the need to get the vaccinated population total count up became one of the Governor's biggest pushes. In partnership with many different ESFs, ASDHS was able to assist with the coordination efforts needed to run such a large operation successfully. Communications plans were setup, VTCs were setup, call centers were established, vehicles were deployed, and vaccination areas were all identified under the assistance of the many partnering agencies. The mass vaccination campaign was largely successful and is responsible for one of the biggest jumps in total population vaccination to date.

The RECCWG members consistently reported on their state or territory's travel restrictions, vaccination, and quarantine requirements during virtual monthly meetings. This information was shared with the private sector partners participating in RECCWG meetings. Any travel restrictions that were different for private industry and government responders were reported.

➢ **Priority 1: In-person coordination visits to the Pacific territories**

There have been significant changes in Pacific Territory ESF2 leadership during the last few years. These changes reinvigorated participation in the RECCWG and recognition of the need for a Pacific sub-group to work on issues specifically related to that area of operations. While the Pacific sub-group meets monthly and provides reports on each territory's communications systems, a visit to each of the territories to gain a more in depth understanding of the communications systems, infrastructure and conditions would greatly benefit FEMA's readiness to respond to a disaster. If 2022 travel restrictions allow, the FEMA R9 Emergency Communications Coordinator in Hawaii will visit each of the territories to gain a more complete view of the situation in each territory and work with each to mitigate gaps, bring federally supplied systems and services online and gain the knowledge required to prepare the Region and MERS to respond to communications needs in the Pacific during a disaster.

➢ **Accomplishment 4: Tri-State Technical Assistance for the Colorado River**

Federal, state, and local partners across California, Arizona and Nevada came together to coordinate community alerts and warnings in the event that a dam along the Colorado River were to fail. The Region 9 RECCWG anticipates used lessons learned from this technical assistance offering to create a template for future communities with dams to utilize. Emergency communications partners from Torrance, California shared lessons learned from nuclear power plant warnings and alarms to instruct local municipalities how to plan their alerts and warnings for potential dam failures along the Colorado River. The coordination within this technical assistance offers support services and solutions to protect critical infrastructure and human lives.

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications

➢ **Accomplishment 5: Enhanced communications resiliency through system refresh and updates**

Many of the land mobile radio systems in Region 9 are nearing end of life, which makes them maintenance intensive and spare parts are difficult to obtain. The RECCWG members have worked closely to report on future and ongoing system upgrades to share information and best practices as well as ensure standards-based interoperability as they update, refresh and replace their systems. This RECCWG led coordination will help resiliency by ensuring the LMR networks in the region obtain a high level of interoperability across the platforms.

Within the region there are several ongoing updates and replacement projects, including:

- Nevada is phasing out a proprietary EDACS trunked system and replacing it with a standards based P25 trunked network. This will be completed in a five year phased approach.
- California started a trial phase on a new interoperability system which, if the current trial period is successful, will be phased in over the next few years. Installation of the CRIS, California Radio Interoperability System, is now in Phase of 5. It's a P25 compliant trunked radio system throughout the state of California. When fully developed the CRIS will provide radio coverage to over 90% of the State's population and over 60% of the State's geographic footprint.
- The State of Hawaii Public Safety Hawaii Wireless Interoperability Network (HIWIM) LMR system is in the process of upgrade. They completed 86% of 47 P25 phase 2 upgrades to HIWIN sites. The 55 microwave sites are 91% complete for their IP conversions.
- GovGuam is currently working on releasing a request for proposal for a complete LMR system replacement, specifying a standard based P25 system.
- GovGuam, through the Guam Fire Department, also began the upgrade of the NG-911 system.
- The Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas accepted a contract to refurbish both the tower and equipment room on Mt. Topachau in Saipan. Mt. Topachau is the single site on Saipan for the territories 800 MHz radio system and also is home to several pieces for MERS equipment. The site has been subjected to multiple typhoons and other weather events and is severely damaged. Plans are underway to harden the site, update the equipment and repair or replace the tower. This will be a phased approach.
- The Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas upgraded the Island of Rota's LMR system by relocating some of the towers to more efficient locations and added repeaters on multiple towers.

Projects updates were shared with the RECCWG during regular meetings. Many of the changes were influenced by information shared during RECCWG meeting.

➢ **Priority 2: Bring primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency (PACE) communications capabilities to all states and territories**

The states and territories in Region 9 have primary communications in the form of Land Mobile Radio, landline, cellular and data services. Many of the LMR systems need extensive updates and many are

currently undergoing refreshes or replacement. The PACE model provides an overview of the depth of communication services that can be relied upon when capabilities in the early (Primary and Alternate) stages are degraded or fail. These gaps are often filled with satellite, tactical repeaters and HF radio systems. On the continental US most states have backup communications to fill the roles required in the alternate, contingency and emergency stages of the model. It will be helpful for cross border and situational awareness to identify the anticipated methods each state and territory intends to use in each stage of the PACE model and share that information among RECCWG members and adjoining states so contact can be made, and information exchanged during disasters.

The Pacific territories are often without reliable contingency and emergency communications. Satellite phones and BGAN terminals have been provided to the territories by FirstNet to fill that role, but that agreement will expire in March 2022, and satellite service will no longer be provided by FirstNet. Guam requested an extension from AT&T for the satellite assets as well as the mobile devices that were provided to Guam for emergency communications but at this time, a decision has not been made. This will degrade reliable first responder communications in the territories, for example, during the OCONUS RECCWG meeting, the American Samoa SWIC briefed that first responder communications and commercial provider networks became significantly congested and that the FirstNet network was the only reliable wireless service available throughout the March 2021 Tsunami warning.

During 2022, the RECCWG will inventory and share the results of each state's PACE model with the membership, work to identify gaps in the PACE model and seek solutions to mitigate the gaps.

> **Accomplishment 6: Restored continuity and emergency communications capabilities across Region 9 during COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions**

The FEMA National Radio System (FNARS) is a FEMA-owned, nationwide, high frequency (HF), Automatic Link Establishment radio network that provides users with contingency voice, chat, and phone patch communications. FNARS also enables real-time situational awareness directly from disaster areas to improve decision making during continuity events. The FEMA FNARS office coordinated with RECCWG members along with state and territorial FNARS point of contacts to schedule site visits to perform preventive maintenance in Hawaii, Guam, and the CNMI. While adhering to state and territorial COVID-19 travel restrictions, the technicians were able to travel to the territories for the first time in over a year. In addition to performing preventive maintenance, the technician was able to assess and restore FNARS capabilities on Guam and the CNMI. A successful connectivity test was conducted between Guam, the CNMI, and Hawaii Emergency Operations Centers.

The LMR network in American Samoa remains the key means of communication for all first responders. The LMR network in American Samoa is outdated and is in dire need of an overhaul. The quality is very poor around inner areas around the island and coastal areas where the signal is generally better are not much clearer. An assessment done in 2019 revealed much of the towers used by the LMR are un-climbable due to advanced rusting. Using this assessment done in the past and identifying issues that were experienced with the current LMR system, DHS has developed a plan to overhaul the LMR. Working with Logic Wireless, ASDHS has identified key areas where equipment and solutions are to be deployed.

➢ **Accomplishment 7: Coordination efforts continued during 2021 around the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic**

The RECCWG members adapted well to working within a COVID-19 environment. They held monthly meetings for both the CONUS and OCONUS virtually. In addition, they each held a one day virtual plenary to discuss system updates, identify communications gaps and discuss mitigation strategies as well as receive presentations on updates to existing programs and cutting edge commercial technology. While the virtual meetings evolved from teleconferences to using Zoom for Government and allowing enhanced presentations and collaboration, the members anticipate the time when face-to-face collaboration can start again.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has set back American Samoa's siren system upgrade project several times. All siren sites are currently operating on satellite cards that no longer work. This has effectively put the system out of service. However, even though there were plans in place to fly in technicians to install satellite cards and upgrade the siren system scheduled for 2021, the technicians were unable to do so due to a global parts shortage and the quarantine requirements that are set in place in American Samoa. The system was largely put aside, and local measures were put in place to supplement the siren system. These measures include village outreach for educational purposes in hazardous environments and meeting with village mayors to coordinate evacuation routes/procedures.

When available, the vendor for ASC is scheduled to come to American Samoa (2022) to install new satellite cards as well as assess issues with the Siren Warning System. This will largely be a parts assessment as it was discussed that travel to American Samoa will be too difficult to identify with Covid restrictions in place. Parts will be ordered and installed by ASDHS and ASPA technicians as they are needed at their respective locations.

American Samoa Department of Homeland Security EOC part of the plan for communications projects was the upgrade of the ASDHS-EOC facility. This project was worked on over the span of several months. Network installation for equipment and phone services for use by ESF members has largely been completed. The EOC has since been used for several smaller events and is much easier to accommodate ESF members. The EOC now resembles a more traditional EOC-like facility and less of a conference like area. The EOC upgrade also takes into consideration the possibility of expansion of services such as the FNARS and an E-911 dispatch system. Some smaller equipment still needs to be ordered to achieve the final ideal EOC setup.

➢ **Priority 3: Continue to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on RECCWG planning, training, excerises, and disaster response**

Travel restrictions and social distancing requirements brought about by COVID-19 have forced Region 9 states and Territories to be innovative in the ways they approach planning, training, exercises, and disaster response. Fortunately, there were few disasters requiring responders to travel to areas with strict entry requirements. The RECCWG has shared and reported travel requirements and quarantine restrictions place on both government responders and industry at their regular meetings. This information was reported up to FEMA Headquarters for their situational awareness. As other variants of the COVID-19 virus evolve within the nation, the RECCWG will continue to share travel restrictions

as they apply to government and industry personnel to help ensure an adequate response can be achieved in a timely manner.

American Samoa developed a cyber security incident and response plan along with the necessary policies and procedures. Incident response plan was developed in partnership with a third party after reviewing network infrastructure – equipment, hardware, software etc.

Statutory Duty 3

Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

➢ **Accomplishment 8: The Region 9 RECCWG organization was revised to create two subgroups: one for CONUS states and one for OCONUS (Hawaii and the Pacific territories)**

The RECCWG recognized that communications share many commonalities across all areas of the Region, they also can be very different between the CONUS and OCONUS. To address these differences from a local perspective the RECCWG created two subgroups, a CONUS subgroup consisting of Arizona, California and Nevada and an OCONUS subgroup of Hawaii, American Samoa, the CNMI and Guam. These groups meet monthly to report on communications, identify gaps and work on mitigation solutions for their respective areas. This allows issues that are common to each area to be discussed and addressed locally. The subgroups, if needed, can be merged to address regionwide issues.

The Region 9 RECCWG continued to discuss how to best stage caches of deployable communications equipment that can be quickly employed during a disaster or event. Due to the extreme geographic constraints faced by the Region, it is imperative that caches are staged in accessible locations and in manageable proximity to members. During the OCONUS RECCWG Plenary, MERS discussed the possibility of identifying and securing an on-island controlled storage facility in American Samoa and the CNMI. In American Samoa MERS currently utilizes a storage facility at the Army Reserve Center but the facility has reached maximum compacity, so additional equipment must be shipped in from Hawaii during a disaster. Deployable assets for The CNMI are currently stored at the Guam Distribution Center, which impacts response times during a disaster in the CNMI due to transporting equipment, as seaports and airports could be affected. With the help of the RECCWG, MERS is currently in the process of securing the requested storage facilities on American Samoa and the CNMI. This will ensure the rapid fielding of deployable communications equipment to support disaster response operations.

➢ **Priority 4: Explore initiatives to Bring Alert and Warning services to areas without them and enhance the services in other areas**

NAWAS and IPAWS are important alert and warning tools for emergency management. IPAWS has recently enhanced features to more closely control where the alerts are broadcast and increased the number of characters allowed to provide a more complete message to the public. These features can be leveraged to provide targeted messaging to precisely defined areas for evacuation purposes. In 2022 the RECCWG will attempt to inform stakeholders of the new features to aid in targeted delivery of information and evacuation orders.

NAWAS provides situational awareness and disaster information to the state and territorial governments. The NAWAS system in American Samoa has been intermittent and down for several years due to suspected service provider line issues, creating a gap in alerting. RECCWG members have been working with ASDHS, ASTCA, and AT&T technicians to troubleshoot and identify a solution to bring NAWAS back online. ASTCA provided a solution to remove the NAWAS circuit off the STI Earthstation satellite and reroute it to the Hawaiki undersea cable. This solution would allow ASTCA to manage the circuit with an easier path for troubleshooting. ASDHS is currently awaiting replacement parts. Once the parts are received and installed, it is believed that the NAWAS connectivity should be restored.

Additionally, IPAWS was subject to several issues that prevented it from being an effective tool across the territories. Many of the carriers in the Pacific are not United State carriers and are, therefore, not subject to the same requirements to carry IPAWS messages as United States carriers.

The Governor of American Samoa requested an exercise to test the Public Alert infrastructure along with siren activations. Local cable news and ISPs were able to display their appropriate messaging via cable TV messaging. NOAA weather radio tests and warning systems worked properly at this time. Some of the public radio networks were able to send out test warnings, although some stations did not participate in this exercise. SMS continues to remain slow with some users reporting receiving messages ranging from hours – days after the message was sent out. Both ISPs have stated they are aware of the issue, and they are working on internal solutions.

During 2022 the RECCWG will work to identify solutions to the NAWAS outages and determine if IPAWS can been enhanced in the territories. If IPAWS cannot be enhanced to satisfactory levels, members will explore alternative technologies to provide A&W to affected populations.

> ➢ **Priority 5: Increase diversity within the RECCWG by extending outreach to the Tribal nations and county and local government as well as outreach to the various disciplines that is under represented in the currrent RECCWG makeup**

The R9 RECCWG matured its membership despite changes of assignments and retirements of many members from county and local governments. The active membership on the CONUS sub-group is consists primarily of representatives from state governments. Guam has representatives attending from Homeland Security, police, and fire. CNMI recognized the value in having multidisciplinary representation and is extending invitations to their police and fire department to represent their respective disciplines in the OCONUS RECCWG calls.

The RECCWG is the one organization in the nation that brings together public safety and emergency management professionals from all levels of government and all disciplines. The Region 9 RECCWG will extend outreach through its various state representatives to recruit qualified personnel from county and local governments in the areas of emergency management, police, fire, and emergency medical services to help identify and solve the communications challenges these groups face.

Similarly, Tribal governments in the region are under-represented in the RECCWG's active membership. The RECCWG will work through the Region 9 Tribal Liaison to extend offers to the Region's Tribes to bring qualified tribal members into the RECCWG.

> ➤ **Priority 6: Promote and participate in FEMA National Radio System (FNARS) Regional monthly testing to improve reliability of system components.**

FEMA Region 9 RECCWG continued to coordinate with state points of contact for FNARS to assist them in ensuring the equipment is operable and maintained. Once technical services are coordinated, the region will work towards identifying grant funding or other potential funding sources to ensure that states will be able to staff their FNARS equipment with competent operators to conduct testing in accordance with the national standards. The RECCWG will explore the development of a White Paper to describe the need for grants to train and fund radio staff in State and Territorial Emergency Operations Centers. The RECCWG will also continue to support FEMA's FNARS office with scheduling site visits to perform preventive maintenance and system upgrades at Pacific locations and provide updates on COVID-19 travel restriction guidance.

CY 2021 REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

Partners in all Region 9 states enhanced emergency communications through their efforts during an unprecedented year. COVID-19 has reshaped the way business was conducted and changed the focus of many conversations around public safety and emergency communications. The pandemic caused the cancellation of many large-scale events, exercises, conferences, and cross-state and cross-regional events. Nevertheless, RECCWG members adapted to a new normal and continued to improve their communications systems, collective knowledge base, and peer networks across the country.

Table 14 lists incident responses, planning activities, trainings, exercises, briefings, coordination efforts, and other events sponsored or hosted by a state where awareness, participation, and/or information sharing were coordinated through the Region 9 RECCWG.

Table 14: Regional Coordination Activities

REGION 9		
TYPE	**DATE RANGE**	**DESCRIPTION**
Disaster/Emergency Response	1/19/2020	American Samoa COVID-19 (EM-3465-AS) Emergency Declaration declared on 3/12/2020
	1/19/2020	American Samoa COVID-19 Pandemic (DR-4527-AS) Major Disaster Declaration declared 4/17/2020
	1/20/2020	Arizona COVID-19 (EM-3442-AZ) Emergency Declaration declared on 3/13/2020
	1/20/2020	Arizona COVID-19 Pandemic (DR-4524-AZ) Emergency Declaration declared on 4/4/2020
	4/8/2021-Cont…	Arizona Margo Fire- Fire Management Assistance Declaration (FM-5385-AZ) declared on 4/8/2021
	5/27/2021-Cont…	Arizona Spur Fire- Fire Management Assistance Declaration (FM-5387-AZ) declared on 5/27/2021
	6/6/2021-Cont…	Arizona Telegraph- Fire Management Assistance Declaration (FM-5389-AZ) declared on 6/6/2021
	7/22/2021-7/24/2021	Arizona Severe Storms and Flooding (4620-DR-AZ) Major Disaster Declaration declared on 9/13/2021
	1/20/2020	California - COVID-19 (EM-3428-CA) Emergency Declaration declared on 3/13/2020
	1/20/2020	California - COVID-19 Pandemic (DR-4482-CA) Major Disaster Declaration declared on 3/22/2020

	12/3/2020	California Bond Fire - Fire Management (FM-5383-CA) Assistance Declaration declared on 12/3/2020
	6/24/2021-7/6/2021	California Lava Fire - Fire Management (FM-5393-CA) Assistance Declaration declared on 6/29/2021
	7/14/2021-10/25/2021	California Wildfires - Major Disaster (4610-DR-CA) Declaration declared on 8/24/2021
	7/20/2021-Cont…	California Dixie Fire - Fire Management (FM-5400-CA) Assistance Declaration declared on 7/20/2021
	8/4/2021-Cont…	California River Fire- Fire Management (FM-5405-CA) Assistance Declaration declared on 8/5/2021
	8/14/2021-10/21/2021	California Caldor Fire - Emergency Declaration (3571-EM-CA) declared on 9/1/2021
	8/17/2021-Cont…	California Monument Fire - Fire Management (FM-5412-CA) Assistance Declaration declared on 8/17/2021
	8/14/2021-10/212021	California French Fire (FM-5416-CA) Fire Management Assistance declared on 8/25/2021
	8/14/2021-10/21/2021	California Caldor Fire (4619-DR-CA) Major Disaster Declaration declared on 9/12/2021
	9/23/2021-9/28/2021	California Fawn Fire (FM-5417-CA) Fire Management Assistance Declaration declared on 9/13/2021
	10/13/2021-11/17/2021	California Alisal Fire (FM-5419-CA) Fire Management Assistance Declaration declared on 10/13/2021
	1/19/2020	Guam Covid-19 Pandemic (DR-4495-GU) Major Disaster Declaration declared 3/26/2020
	1/19/2020	Guam Covid-19 (EM-3466-GU) Emergency declaration declared 3/12/2020
	1/19/2020	Hawaii Covid-19 Pandemic (DR-4510-HI) Major Disaster Declaration declared 3/31/2020
	3/18/2021	Hawaii - Severe Storms, Flooding, and Landslides (4604-DR-HI) Major Disaster Declaration declared on 4/13/2021
	8/1/2021	Hawaii - Mana Road Fire (FM-5404-HI) Fire Management Assistance Declaration declared on 8/1/2021
	1/20/2020	Navajo Nation COVID-19 Pandemic (DR-4582) declared on 2/2/2020
	1/20/2020	Nevada COVID-19 (EM-3443-NV) Emergency Declaration declared on 3/13/2020
	1/20/2020	Nevada COVID-19 Pandemic (DR-4523-NV) Major Disaster Declaration declared on 4/4/2020
	6/9/2021	Nevada Jacks Valley Fire (FM-5390-NV) Fire Management Assistance Declaration declared on 6/9/2021
	7/22/2021	Nevada Tamarack Fire (FM-5402-NV) Fire Management Assistance Declaration declared on 7/22/2021
Cross-Border Initiatives	3/15/2021	Black Sky Communications TTX
	3/23/2021 – 3/26/2021	ESF-2 Spring Training
	8/11/2021	National Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alert test
	1/28/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	2/25/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	3/25/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	4/29/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	5/27/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	6/24/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	6/15/2021	RECCWG OCONUS Teleconference
	7/27/2021	RECCWG OCONUS Teleconference
	7/29/2021	RECCWG Teleconference

Teleconferences and Meetings (incl. virtual)	8/17/2021	RECCWG OCONUS Teleconference
	8/18/2021	Hawaii – SCIP Teleconference
	8/26/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	9/21/2021	RECCWG OCONUS Teleconference
	9/30/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	10/21/2021	RECCWG Virtual Plenary
	10/27/2021	RECCWG OCONUS Virtual Plenary
	11/16/2021	RECCWG OCONUS Teleconference
	11/24/2021	Hawaii – SCIP Teleconference
	11/30/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
	12/14/2021	RECCWG OCONUS Teleconference
	12/30/2021	RECCWG Teleconference
Communications Planning Efforts	2/5/2021	CNMI -Typhoon Pakyo Workshop 3: Operational Coordination and Communications
	5/12/2021	Region 9 Regional Emergency Communications Plan Updated
	6/8/2021	Guam – Typhoon Pakyo Workshop: Resilient Communications
	6/15/2021	Hawaii Land Mobile Radio Encryption Guidance
	6/30/2021	Guam Disaster Emergency Communications Annex Updated
	8/24/2021	CNMI – Typhoon Pakyo 21 Tabletop Exercise
	10/1/2021	Hawaii Statewide Interoperability Auxiliary Communications Report
	12/2/2021	Hawaii Disaster Emergency Communications Annex Updated
	Multiple dates	R9 All-Hazards Plan Annex K Development
	Multiple dates	R9 Communications Playbook Development
	Multiple dates	SoCal Earthquake Plan Communications Plan Annex E Updated
	Multiple dates	Hawaii TCIP Updated
	12/1/2021	CNMI Disaster Emergency Communications Annex Updated
Other	4/21/2021	LMR-Hawaii Radio IP2LMR Phase I Programming

LOOKING FORWARD

The Region 9 RECCWG will continue strengthening relationships in the Pacific territories and Hawaii as well as work collaboratively to identify solutions to the long-standing communications issues in the territories. They will work to improve activity and diversity among the membership by identifying qualified persons from all levels of government and across all public safety disciplines to solicit as members.

REGION 10

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 10
1100 228th St. SW
Bothell, Washington 98021

FEMA

DATE: May 20, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR:

        John Rabin
        Assistant Administrator
        Response Directorate

FROM: Willie G. Nunn
        Regional Administrator

Digitally signed by WILLIE G NUNN
Date: 2022.05.20 10:53:30 -07'00'

SUBJECT: FEMA Region 10 Regional Emergency Communications
        Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report

www.fema.gov

As required by 6 U.S.C. 575, each Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) must report annually to the Regional Administrator on the Region's status in building robust and sustainable interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks. The Annual Report provides each RECCWG an opportunity to share its progress, activities, and accomplishments against each of the statutory duties identified in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended.

The attached annual report, developed by the FEMA Region 10 RECCWG membership with FEMA support, is my Region's submission for the combined RECCWG Annual Report for calendar year (CY) 2021, which will be distributed to the Director of the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

(CISA), the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information of the Department of Commerce (DOC). The annual report describes the RECCWG's progress on each of the statutory duties as outlined below:

- Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).
- Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications mutual aid agreements.
- Coordinate the establishment of federal, state, local, and tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

The Annual Report reflects the accomplishments that the Region 10 RECCWG membership achieved to meet the intent of the statute. As such, no modifications were made by the FEMA Regional Office without the expressed approval of the RECCWG membership. The final report as attached wholly represents the RECCWG membership's input and does not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the Region.

I recognize the importance and value that the RECCWG has as a venue for federal, state, local, Tribal agencies, and the Whole Community to improve emergency communications coordination and response capabilities within the Region as shown through activities in this report. The accompanying Annual Report provides important insight on how emergency communications related efforts are moving forward in this Whole of Community as it is embodied in the RECCWG membership.
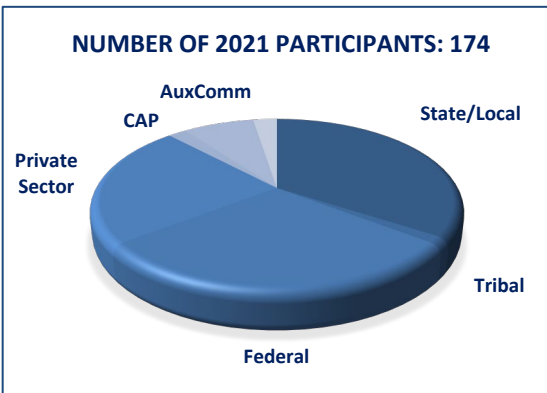
Enclosed: Region 10 CY 2021 RECCWG Annual Report   www.fema.gov

CY 2021 OVERVIEW

Region 10's Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) continues to strengthen relationships across the region and to expand interoperability

Figure 27: 2021 RECCWG Participation

coordination within each of the member states. Composed of the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, the Region 10 Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) worked in collaboration throughout 2021 alongside its federal and private sector partners, auxiliary communications (AuxComm) volunteers, and a host of enthusiastic professionals who lent their time and expertise to advance communications interoperability across the region. The notable growth in Region 10's participation and membership is attributed to the RECCWG's goal of representing the whole community. They added new partners from the private sector and increased representation by the state and federal partners. RECCWG participation in 2021 is illustrated in **Figure 27.**

Region 10 RECCWG member states experienced major disasters from wildfires, the COVID-19 pandemic, continued civil unrest, and floods. Region 10 RECCWG member states received five Major Disaster Declarations and 12 Fire Management Assistance Declarations. In addition to natural disasters, RECCWG members responded to and reported on numerous incidents and planned events that required interoperability among field personnel, command centers, volunteer organizations, and local agencies. Each event posed a unique set of challenges that responders and officials, many of whom are members of the RECCWG, were able to solve and learn from, thanks in part to close collaboration with their peers in the region and across the country.

> Region 10 RECCWG member states received five Major Disaster Declarations and 12 Fire Management Assistance Declarations.
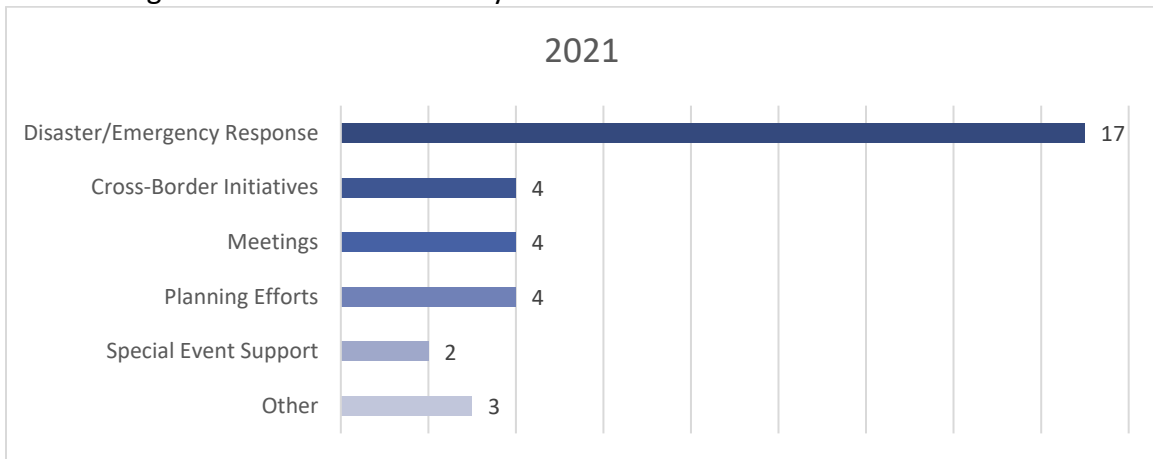
Figure 28: Regional Events

COVID-19, which sparked a nationwide pandemic, highlighted the value of the RECCWGs. This was demonstrated when the pandemic response shifted away from large scale testing locations into mass vaccination sites. To equitably meet the needs of all people testing and vaccination sites were often built-in areas that lacked the communication infrastructure and the coordination and collaboration of the RECCWG was crucial to response. The Region 10 RECCWG worked together and discussed issues regarding access control, travel restrictions and testing requirements, as well as best practices for setting up communications. The Region 10 RECCWG helped facilitate surge support to states with personnel needs by calling upon the RECCWG membership to provide knowledgeable and experienced support staff throughout 2021. ESF-2 and industry partners established quarantine waivers for commercial and public safety surge responders and helped provide cross-state surge support and access to communications capabilities, as requested by states identifying a need. The events of CY2021 provided lessons learned to address in planning efforts for pandemics, cascading events and complex disasters

moving forward. Planning efforts have also continued in preparation for the National Level Exercise (NLE) Cascadia Rising 2022.

The Region 10 RECCWG continues to experience increases in participation each year. This continued membership growth demonstrates the value this work group provides to state and local responders. Region 10 currently has had 940 participants at RECCWG events to date. COVID-19 affected many of the scheduled meetings in 2022, forcing meeting organizers to shift the

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The notable growth in Region 10's participation and membership are attributed to the RECCWG's goal of representing the whole community.

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meetings to online, virtual information sharing platforms. The virtual environment expanded access to these meetings and led to increased participation across the Region. The Region 10 RECCWG added members from a wide range of emergency communications positions and first responders' disciplines, across all levels of local, state, tribal, and federal government as well as private industry partners, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and amateur radio operators. The return to in person meetings is a top priority in 2022 but is constantly being evaluated by the current COVID-19 situation in Region 10.

For additional information regarding the Region 10 RECCWG, please contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 10 Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC), Laura Goudreau, at Laura.Goudreau@fema.dhs.gov, or 425-487-4706.

Table 15: RECCWG Membership Roster CY 2021

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
RECCWG LEADERSHIP	
Vincent Maykovich	RECCWG Chair, Region 10 Regional Administrator (Acting)
Ben Call	RECCWG Co-Chair/Idaho Military Division, Public Safety Communications (PSC), Branch Chief
Laura Goudreau	FEMA Region 10 Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC)
Richard Wilhelm	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 10
Chris White	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 10
Lloyd Kimball	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 10
ALASKA (AK) REPRESENTATIVES	
Greg Eubank	Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM)
Jim Larsen	American Radio Relay League (ARRL), Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES)
Bill Galligan	Alaskan Command (ALCOM) / Joint Task Force Alaska (ATF-AK)
John Rockwell	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)/Alaska State Troopers
Scott Nelson	Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM)
Dan Nelson	Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR)
IDAHO (ID) REPRESENTATIVES	

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Aaron Blake	Emergency Communications Program Manager at Idaho Office of Emergency Management
Buddy Jacob	City of Boise, ID, Communications
Brent Larson	Idaho Office of Emergency Management, Operations Section Chief
Craig Logan	Idaho Public Safety Communications Commission
Brian Shields	Idaho Office of Emergency Management, SWIC/ESF #2 Coordinator
Steve Woodall	SLIGP Program Manager (FirstNet)
OREGON (OR) REPRESENTATIVES	
Doug Jimenez	Oregon Office of Emergency Management
Mark Bucholz	Salem Police Department
Shawn Halsey	Umatilla Morrow Radio & Data District
Ken Kurth	ARRL
Erik Rau	Oregon OEM
David Rudawitz	Civil Air Patrol (CAP)
William Chapman	SWIC
Ron Wright	*(Agency not identified)*
David Wilma	Seattle OEM
Lisa Gorsuch	Oregon Public Utilities Commission, ESF-2
WASHINGTON (WA) REPRESENTATIVES	
Steve Aberle	Clarke County, ARES/RACES
Sue Aberle	Clark County, ARES/RACES
Joshua Atkins	Pierce County Emergency Management
Frederick W. Baker	WA State Department of Transportation
Christopher Barnes	Spokane Emergency Management
Tamara Bartholdi	Washington Air National Guard
John Boal	City of Redmon
George Boswell	ARES
Jon Bromberg	Eastside Fire and Rescue
Michael Burk	Washington National Guard
Lorraine Nelson	PC ARES
Scott Dakers	Washington EMD
Mark Douglas	Washington Emergency Management Division
Robert Ezelle	Washington Military Department
Angie Fode	Adams County Sheriff's Office
Dave Halloran	San Juan County, Washington
Richard Hall	Washington State Military Department IT Division
Scott Honaker	Snohomish Emergency Management
C.M. Sam Jenkins	Ferry County ARES/RACES
Andy Leneweaver	Washington State 911

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
George Long	Washington State 911
Mark Glen	WMD Chief Information Officer
Don Marshall	KE7ARH Bellevue, WA
Ron Miller	WB6JGV Mountain Wave
Matthew R. Modarelli	Washington Department of Transportation
Scott Mosley	Washington Air National Guard
Stan Nelson K7DKK	Pierce County ARES
Gary Nevius	Amateur Radio
Major Chuck Parsons	Washington Air National Guard
Jacob Rain	WMD – Emergency Management Division
Simone Ramel-McKay	Greater Spokane Department of Emergency Management
Justin Roach	Spokane County, Sr. Cyber Security System Administrator
Ons Saleh	City of Issaquah
Josh Shelton	City of Tacoma Emergency Management
Mark Sheppard	City of Seattle
Mike Sinclair	Washington – Civil Air Patrol
Monte Simpson	Washington EMD
Frank Stasser	WA Wing CAP
Jeff Stidham	Washington State Emergency Net (Amateur Radio)
John (Jack) Tiley	ARRL, EWA Section Manager
Carrie Wentzel	Washington Air National Guard
Dee Williamson	Puget Sound Energy
TRIBAL REPRESETATIVES	
Julie A. Jefferson	Lummi Nation
James Schaeffer	Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe
PRIVATE INDUSTRY	
Ed Krom	American Red Cross - NHQ
Robert Gordon	AT&T
Dave Kilker	AT&T
Kenny Mack	AT&T
Carol Tagayun	AT&T
Rob Waites	AT&T
Lauren Paolini	AT&T FirstNet
Richard Braun	Marine Spill Response Corporation
Lewis C. Curtis	Microsoft
Robby Hill	Mutualink
Mark Anderko	Mutualink
Brian Hudnet	T-Mobile
Justin Alwin	T-Mobile

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
John Melbert	T-Mobile
Carla Montrose	T-Mobile
Casey Muilenburg	T-Mobile
Tim Brewer	T-Mobile
Bill Boni	T-Mobile
Genevieve Dujenski	T-Mobile
Dustin English	T-Mobile
Tony Grat	T-Mobile
Kent Bacon	T-Mobile
Mark Haase	T-Mobile
Bill Peters	T-Mobile
Supriya Ramel-McKay	T-Mobile
Pati Scanlan	T-Mobile
Cory Sulenes	T-Mobile US
Robert Vickers	T-Mobile
Pierce Power	Teleira
Kevin Thompson	TrellisWare
Kandice Manygoats	Verizon
Chandler Martello	Verizon
George Barela	Verizon
Nieama Booker	Verizon
Alan Valiev	Verizon
Mike Butterfield	Verizon
Amir Khawaja	Verizon
FEDERAL PARTNERS	
John A. Sherrill	ARMY MARS
Jeremy Johnson	Department of Homeland Security, CISA Emergency Communications Division
Jessica Kaputa	Department of Homeland Security, CISA Emergency Communications Division
Robert Hugi	Department of Homeland Security, CISA Emergency Communications Division
Steve Noel	Department of Homeland Security, CISA Emergency Communications Division
John O'Connor	Department of Homeland Security, CISA
Mark MacAlester	Department of Homeland Security, CISA
Bruce Richter	Department of Homeland Security, CISA Emergency Communications Division
Brandon Smith	Department of Homeland Security, CISA Emergency Communications Division
Artena Moon	Department of Homeland Security, CISA Emergency Communications Division
Cathy Orcutt	Department of Homeland Security, CISA, Priority Access Representative
Colleen Wright	Department of Homeland Security, CISA, Emergency Communications Division
Matthew Butler	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Bothell MERS
Scott Sweigart	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Bothell MERS

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Dean Zimmerman	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Bothell MERS
Scott Hansen	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA DEC, RECCWG Coordinator
Eric Main	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA DEC Group Supervisor
Larry Harkleroad	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA DEC Group Supervisor
Corey Royer	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA IMAT
Scott Kesler	Department of Homeland Security, HQ
Mike Foster	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 7
Jo Robichaud	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 4
Casey Benne	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 10
Kyle McCormick	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 10 Hazard Mitigation Planner
Richard Noble	Department of Homeland Security/ JWPMO Spectrum
Homero Ruiz	Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, Spectrum Manager
Brian K. Kutz	Department of Justice
Terry Alverson	Department of Justice, ESF #13
James Gadsby	Bonneville Power Administration
Marybeth O'Leary	Bonneville Power Administration
Jamie Rivas	FCC
John Healy	FCC
Nikki Shears	FCC
Doug Harder	First Responder Network Authority
Bill Schrier	First Responder Network Authority
Kristi Wilde	First Responder Network Authority
Kenison Tejada	FirstNet Authority – Region 9
Vincent Crawford	GSA
Robin Baker	NCC-MARC
Matt Solum	NOAA, National Weather Service
Andrew Bollenbacher	NOAA, National Weather Service
Andy Brown	NOAA, National Weather Service
Scott Jackson	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Steve Waterman	SHARES
OTHER PARTICIPANTS	
Jeffery Clemens	FEMA DECD Support
Kevin Youngberg	FEMA DECD Support
Ashley Gonzalez	FEMA DECD Support
Lauren Pentrack	FEMA DECD Support
Mike Ping	ARES
Ryc Lyden	ARRL/Amateur Radio Emergency Services
Geroge Gadd	California
Sean Luangrath	Inergy

NAME	ROLE OR AGENCY
Casey Schooley	REDi Healthcare Coalition
Ron Oja	Reliable Building and Remodeling
Jonathan Saad	Roadpost
Rodney Rohm	Rodney Rohm Enterprises
Rod Goosen	RoGO Fire

CY 2021 RECCWG Accomplishments and 2022 Priorities

The Region 10 RECCWG made progress in addressing many of its CY 2021 priorities, despite the persistent obstacles in place from the ongoing COVID-19 response. Additionally, the RECCWG leveraged existing relationships and cultivated new strategies for cooperation to strengthen the region's capacity to meet the demands of responding to a catastrophic disaster during a global pandemic.

Accomplishment #1 :Increased Exercise and Training Opportunities Across the Region 10 RECCWG

In 2021, RECCWG members continued to collaborate with each other to ensure a robust training and exercise program could continue in a virtual world. COVID restrictions kept a majority of the training and exercises virtual but as vaccinations and safety standards increased more in person events were considered. Twenty-nine individual events were hosted across Region 10 from the various RECCWG Partners allowing nation-wide participation for the trainings being offered In addition to more formal training opportunities, monthly webinars covered topics that were broader and more general to reach a wider audience in the RECCWG community. In addition, the Region 10 RECCWG a virtual tabletop exercises (TTX) series focused on preparing for a major disaster such as a rupture of the Cascadia Fault Line. In their first exercise, the RECCWG discussed emergency power capabilities which included alternative power options, maintenance, and sustainment.

Accomplishment #2: Completed Oregon's Emergency Communication Annex

RECCWG members have maintained their momentum in actively reporting on technology upgrades and other changes in the operational and political landscapes of their respective states and localities. Although the many changes are well documented in meeting summaries and reports, it is also important that FEMA and other response agencies have a clear picture of communications operations in each state and in Region 10 as a whole. State Emergency Communications Annexes provide the foundation for the Region 10 Regional Emergency Communications Plan (RECP), which allows FEMA to respond to a state's needs more effectively. Communications officials in state, local, and Tribal agencies, many of whom are also RECCWG members, are instrumental in updating the Region 10 Emergency Communications Plan through their participation in State Communications Annex updates. In 2021, in coordination with Oregon's SWIC, FEMA was able to work with Oregon state emergency communications personnel to update the State Emergency Communications Annex.

Accomplishment #3: Increased use of Geospatial Information Systems and Analysis guiding wildland fire protections for communications infrastructure.

As seen during the 2020 Wildfire Season in Oregon and continuing as a best practice into 2021, multiple states utilized Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) and analysis to protect critical communications infrastructure. With support from CISA's Integrated Operations Division and the National Communications Coordination Center, RECCWG members from Oregon, Idaho and Washington utilized infrastructure mapping to identify critical communications nodes within wildfire boundaries. Region 10 GIS Unit and the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) provided MODIS and VIIRS overlays showing active fire activities and movement of fire over 24-hour periods to help anticipate fire forecasting. MODIS is the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectoradiometer, a satellite-based sensor used for earth and climate measurements by NASA. NOAA's Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) provided weather forecasting capabilities in sensing temperature, vegetation, fire activity and temperature. All these tools combined assisted communications analysts to determine critical communication nodes that were in the direct path of fires. This information was relayed to the fire Incident Commanders directly to assist with prioritizing fire protection resources.

Statutory Duty 1

Assess survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems to meet the goals of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

Accomplishment #4: Continued Support and response to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic affected every aspect of life in the United States and that was no different in Region 10. Remote working, meetings and response efforts continued in the first part of the year but become more in person as vaccination rates increased. The RECCWG in Region 10 excelled in adapting to telework and virtual coordination. In transitioning to a largely virtual environment, Region 10 continued to coordinate meetings and participate in cross-regional response efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. All states and territories under Region 10 coordinated with ESF-2 partners during targeted meetings to assess the regional status of communications, such as statewide land-mobile radio systems, 911 system loads and telecommunicator staff health and wellbeing, and impending communications needs for rapid buildouts of alternate care facilities, COVID-19 testing sites, and vaccination locations. Region 10 became the example for the use of Adobe Connect as an information sharing platform for real-world events, monthly educational webinars, and also as a standing site for RECCWG members to share and access emerging practices, fact sheets and other documents with members across the Region.

Accomplishment #5: Modernized Community Communications Systems to Improve Coverage and Resilency

The awareness of needed LMR upgrades and the limitations on older 911 systems are often the forefront of discussion in Region 10's RECCWG meetings. Region 10's terrain and weather patterns can often present challenges for first responders and communication needs. Collaboration amongst the RECCWG members often lead to better interoperability planning across state lines, sharing of

best practices, and increase support from private communication partners to address the needs of the RECCWG members. Washington NG911 Strategic Planning Support is currently being received from CISA ECD and other agencies to identify shortfalls and upgrades. Washington is making improvements towards true NG911 capabilities, particularly, text-to-911. Another large project is underway to upgrade Alaska's LMR system. it is about two-thirds of the way to completion. After all these projects are complete, Alaska will update the console in their main dispatch center in Fairbanks to improve reliability and enhance the feature sets. Completion of this project will allow Alaska to address emergency response in the challenges presented by the harsh winter weather and environments which are present a majority of the year.

Priority #1: Conduct Region 10 RECCWG exercises to assess communications operability and interoperability and further develop ESF-2 capability/processes regionwide

Region 10 will continue to focus on developing and hosting numerous webinars, information papers and exercises to prepare the whole community on communications resiliency. With a partnership with CISA's Emergency Communications Division (ECD), the Region 10 team will focus on cyber threat exercises and earthquake response exercises to increase the capabilities of all to respond. For cyber, the focus is specifically on threats to the communications infrastructure, such as Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems, 9-1-1 systems, and systems utilized to manage state, tribal and local emergency response. For earthquake response, the RECCWG will continue to breakdown response focus areas into smaller specialty areas of focus, such as volunteer management, transportation of communications equipment, and spectrum management considerations. The region, as a whole, will also host the Cascadia Rising 2022 Tabletop Exercise and Walkthrough Exercise, focusing on the holistic emergency response to a full rupture of the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ).

Statutory Duty 2

Ensure a process for the coordination of effective multijurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other human-caused disasters through the expanded use of emergency management and public safety communications

Priority #2: PACE Plan Development at all levels of government

Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency (PACE) communications plans are becoming the standard in planning for a degraded communications environment. Though there is not a lot of formal curriculum or documentation on PACE planning, the Region 10 RECCWG is focusing on assisting in the development of a common understanding and setting up the ability to identify and test PACE plans at all levels of government and across multiple functions. This process will include instructional guidance, presentations, webinar, planning guidance, and exercise during CY2022.

Priority #3: Sharing an understanding of Mutual Aid systems available for communications and disclosing the challenges and best practices in utilizing mutual aid for communications.

In 2021, the state of Oregon required resources outside of their capability to provide. The state turned to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) for acquiring equipment and personnel specifically to assist in their wildfire response. Although EMAC, and other mutual aid

agreements exist, rarely have they been utilized for communications support. There are some challenges (and opportunities) specific to providing communications resources through mutual aid. During CY2022, the Region 10 RECCWG will provide an educational series on mutual aid agreements, discuss the challenges and best practices, and provide contacts to help communication leads incorporated mutual aid practices into their response toolbox.

Statutory Duty 3	**Priority #4: Rebuild In-Person Relationships among all Region 10 RECCWG membership to strengthen regional capabilities and readiness.**
Coordinate the establishment of Federal, State, local, and Tribal support services and networks designed to address the immediate and critical human needs in responding to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other human-caused disasters.	From March 2020 to January 2022, RECCWG members were restricted from hosting and attending most in-person meetings and conferences, limiting most face-to-face discussions. Despite the ability to host on-line meetings increasing, much was lost when unable to meet together. With COVID-19 protocols being lessened, the Region 10 RECCWG will focus on ensuring there are in person meeting and networking opportunities to bring people together and rebuild those important relationships. The RECCWG will continue, as it has since 2015, the hybrid capability for all meetings to ensure an inclusive environment for those unable

to travel.

Priority #5: Bring together state and regional personnel to host joint workgroup meetings to build cross-state collaboration

Since 2016, the Region 10 RECCWG has held virtual RECCWG meetings in conjunction with in-person RECCWG plenary sessions. COVID restrictions modified this and all RECCWG meetings were held virtually in 2021. This approach increased cross-state collaboration and access to information for members across the Region. An in-person plenary was scheduled for November in Bothell, WA. Although cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Region 10 RECCWG was held virtually over 2 days and was a huge success. With continued work-disruption expected in 2022 due to COVID-19, the Region 10 RECCWG will find new ways to leverage the access provided by virtual information sharing platforms, to bring together more members across the region. The opportunity to hold in person meetings is being looked at and will be scheduled once again after COVID restrictions are lifted.

CY 2021 RECCWG ACTIVITIES

Partners across Region 10 enhanced emergency communications through their support of real-world events and disaster response; attendance at training courses, workshops, and conferences; and their efforts to create and participate in exercise scenarios aimed at closing the gaps in communication across the region. **Figure 29** provides a summary of these events.

2021 RECCWG Meetings

- Four Plenaries Feb, April, Aug and Nov 2021

2021 RECCWG Initiatives and Activities

- Completed the Oregon Communication Annex Update
- Monthly AuxComm Meetings
- 29 Excercises by RECCWG Partners
- webinars, training, workshops

2021 Real-World Events Supported by RECCWG Members

- Five Major Disasters
- 12 Fire Management Assistance Declarations
- cross-state/regional collaboration

Figure 29: CY 2021 RECCWG Activities

LOOKING FORWARD

Region 10 RECCWG continues to look toward the future and hopes to tackle several priorities in CY 2022. Additionally, the RECCWG hopes to retain best practices garnered from previous years and continue to confront ongoing as well as emerging challenges. Identified below are a few items the RECCWG will target during the next calendar year.

- ➢ Priority #1: Conduct Region 10 RECCWG exercises to assess communications operability and interoperability and further develop ESF-2 capability/processes regionwide
- ➢ Priority # 2: PACE Plan Development at all levels of government
- ➢ Priority # 3: Sharing an understanding of Mutual Aid systems available for communications and disclosing the challenges and best practices in utilizing mutual aid for communications.
- ➢ Priority #4: Rebuild In-Person Relationships among all Region 10 RECCWG membership to strengthen regional capabilities and readiness.
- ➢ Priority #5: Bring together state and regional personnel to host joint workgroup meetings to build cross-state collaboration