



SEWCRSG

Southeast Wisconsin Communications Resource/Support Group

2006 Annual Report



SEWCRSG Mission

The SEWCRSG is enhancing public safety communication systems by facilitating regional peer networking of emergency service providers. This is being accomplished through:

- Regular dialogue and information sharing
- Training
- Interoperability advancement
- Coordination with other related state/local initiatives

2006 – THE HIGHLIGHTS

Last year the SEWCRSG was able to fulfill its mission while moving forward with a number of new initiatives. Below are some of the accomplishments of 2006.

- SEWCRSG Bylaws were finalized and adopted on April 25, 2006.
- The SEWCRSG hosted two free dispatcher training classes, which were attended by more than 100 people.
- A SEWCRSG Web site was created: www.sewcrsg.org
- Development of the Wisconsin Interoperability System Exchange, or WISE, application continued including a significant data collection effort.
- The SEWCRSG partnered with WI-NENA and WI-APCO to develop the Wisconsin Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce, or WI-TERT.
- Committee meetings and the new Web site provided SEWCRSG members multiple forums for networking and sharing information.

SEWCRSG COMMITTEE

On April 25, 2006, the SEWCRSG committee adopted SEWCRSG Bylaws. The bylaws define the purpose of the group; outline membership rights and dues collection; and establish a formal structure that includes a board of directors and officers. In June, the committee selected interim officers who will serve until a formal board of directors is elected in 2007. With the completion of the bylaws, the SEWCRSG will apply for status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit (tax exempt) organization in early 2007. This formal structure will help assure longevity of the SEWCRSG and may allow the group to pursue funding opportunities that could further support SEWCRSG initiatives.

The SEWCRSG committee continued to meet regularly and held seven meetings in 2006. Each meeting gave members an opportunity to share information about other related state/local initiatives they are part of including WI-APCO, WI-NENA, the State Interoperability Executive Council and the Traffic Incident Management Enhancement Program. The committee also used the meetings as a forum for discussing special topics. Special topic presentations included:

- “WiMAX/WIRLWIND – A Broadband Wireless Public Safety Communications System with Disaster Survival Capability,” presented by **Ken Schlager**, the Chief Telecommunications Engineer from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.
- A demonstration of the Communication Assets Survey and Mapping, or CASM, application provided by **Maureen Weiher** from Milwaukee County’s Information Management Systems Division. CASM is a secure, Web-based tool developed to enhance interoperable communications among local, state, and federal emergency responders and public safety officials.

OUTREACH

To facilitate outreach efforts, a SEWCRSG Web site was developed and published: www.sewcrsg.org.

Created by Jodi Wolfe, graphic designer and site Web master, the site includes the SEWCRSG's mission, history and bylaws; committee meeting summaries and previous annual reports; and information about on-going SEWCRSG initiatives. The site also links to other valuable Web sites and includes a regularly updated training page.

To promote and raise awareness of WISE, Connie Catterall demonstrated the application during a presentation at the Statewide Traffic Incident Management Conference in July. The presentation generated a positive response from conference participants.

Connie Catterall and Katie Belmore also wrote a paper titled "The Invisible Communication Link: Recognizing a Dispatcher's Role in Traffic Incident Management", which was presented at the Institute of Transportation Engineers 2006 Annual meeting in August. The presentation has led to information sharing requests from both Minnesota and Indiana.

INTEROPERABILITY

Development of the Wisconsin Interoperability System Exchange application continued in 2006. The WISE application is designed to help law enforcement and other emergency responders communicate during mutual aid situations. The application can identify common mutual aid radio frequencies for voice communications between emergency response agencies, and provides agency contact information.

After a demonstration of the Communication Assets Survey and Mapping application in April, the committee decided to continue to develop the Web-based WISE application. CASM is a secure, Web-based tool developed by the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program to enhance interoperable communications among local, state and federal emergency responders, and public safety officials. The committee considered eliminating WISE and using the CASM application instead. However, after much discussion and a unanimous vote, the committee decided to continue developing the WISE application for regional use while encouraging local agency participation in data entry to the CASM application.

The WISE application is now moving ahead with emphasis on data collection for law enforcement, fire and emergency services agencies. The data collection effort for law enforcement frequency information is approximately 35 percent complete. Jason Zehring from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has overseen development of the WISE application. He recently completed the agency authorization section of the application, which allows agencies to access and update their information. The application is expected to be ready for live operation in early 2007.

TRAINING

Severe Weather

A severe weather training class for dispatchers was developed in conjunction with Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week. The training was taught by Rusty Kapela from the National Weather Service in Sullivan and included a briefing on the new all-hazards emergency message collection system called HazCollect. Two classes were held on March 7, 2006 and 43 participants representing 20 agencies attended.

Terrorism Awareness and HAZMAT Overview

A day-long terrorism awareness and HAZMAT overview training class, geared for dispatchers, was developed. An agent from the FBI gave attendees a general overview of terrorism, current threats and hazardous agents, and discussed a dispatcher's role in the response to a terrorist event. The Milwaukee Fire Department's HAZMAT team shared basic operations information, reviewed equipment requirements and discussed the information dispatchers need to collect when assisting with a HAZMAT response. Two classes were held in September and 65 participants representing 22 agencies attended.



WI-TERT Mission

To provide and maintain a resource network of qualified Telecommunicators whom are available for rapid deployment to assist Public Safety Communication Centers in times of man-made or natural disasters.

TELECOMMUNICATOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE TASKFORCE

In February 2006, the Wisconsin chapters of NENA and APCO partnered with the SEWCRSG to initiate the development of a TERT for Wisconsin. A WI-TERT steering committee was formed in March and committee members have been meeting regularly.

Recognizing the important role the Wisconsin Division of Emergency Management plays in disaster response, one of the first actions of the committee was to approach WEM in an effort to gain support for the WI-TERT. Successful outreach efforts led directly to the development of a memorandum of understanding between WI-NENA, WI-APCO, the SEWCRSG and WEM. The MOU was created with assistance from WEM attorney Randi Milsap and provides guidance for the use of the WI-TERT for requested assistance during man-made or natural disaster relief operations. The MOU was finalized in December, and it is expected that all parties will sign the MOU in March 2007.

The steering committee is also proactively working with the National Joint TERT Initiative, or NJTI, which is a partnership between the national organizations of NENA and APCO. At the WI-NENA 2006 Annual Great Lakes Fall Conference in October, Connie Catterall co-facilitated a TERT breakout session with Ron Bonneau from the NJTI. The WI-TERT steering committee also sponsored a booth at the conference's vendor hall.

In an early December workshop, the steering committee initiated development of the WI-TERT member application process and the basic WI-TERT training program. The steering committee's goal is to achieve deployment capabilities by the end of 2007.

The WI-TERT was promoted with presentations, an exhibit and a brochure at the annual WI-NENA conference in October. The outreach materials highlight the partnership between the WI-TERT and the NJTI.



SEWCRSG PARTICIPANTS

Multiple public safety agencies from:

- Jefferson County
- Kenosha County
- Milwaukee County
- Racine County
- Ozaukee County
- Walworth County
- Washington County
- Waukesha County

Other agencies including:

- Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Trauma Advisory Council
- Traffic Incident Management Enhancement Program
- Wisconsin ARES/RACES
- Wisconsin Department of Corrections
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Wisconsin Division of Public Health Bureau of Emergency Medical Services
- Wisconsin Emergency Management
- Wisconsin State Patrol
- Others

9-1-1 ISSUES

In 2006, a joint legislative committee was established by the Wisconsin chapters of APCO and NENA. The main objectives of the committee are to:

- Consolidate 9-1-1 legislation to cover existing landline and wireless legislation.
- Have surcharge revenues submitted to the systems (PSAPs) and have them (the systems) cover service costs.
- Remove any sunset clauses.
- Have any legislation regarding 9-1-1 be technology neutral so as to cover landline, wireless, VOIP and any other new technologies that access 9-1-1.

The SEWCRSG has decided to take a step back and allow the joint legislative committee take the lead on this issue. Regular updates about the progress of the committee are given at SEWCRSG meetings, and the SEWCRSG has said they are willing to provide support as requested.

2006 SEWCRSG INTERIM OFFICERS



President Connie Catterall



Vice-President Captain Jay Maritz



Treasurer Wendy Maechtler



Secretary Anne Reshadi