



# Southeast Wisconsin Communications Resource/Support Group

## 2004 Annual Report

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### 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
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### *Regular Dialogue and Information Sharing*

This year the SEWCRSG held six committee meetings and four sub-committee meetings. The SEWCRSG meetings provide the forum for regular dialogue and information sharing. Subjects frequently discussed include the following:

- Wireless 911 – *Hot Topic of the year*
- CIB eTIME
- APCO Updates
- WICORTS Updates
- OJA Updates
- TIME Program Updates
- Marquette Interchange Reconstruction Project Updates
- Pertinent Legislative Actions
- Vendor Equipment Information

### *Training*

Each year the SEWCRSG offers training opportunities for dispatchers. This year the group sponsored two *Severe Weather Training for Dispatchers* classes in April. The classes were attended by a total of 77 people representing 17 different agencies. The SEWCRSG will also be hosting a *Highway Watch* training session on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

### *Interoperability Advancement*

On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 the SEWCRSG sponsored a workshop titled *Communications Back-Up and Redundancy NOW!* The purpose of the workshop was to engage southeast Wisconsin public safety agencies in reviewing existing infrastructure and system capabilities. The goal was to develop an immediate action plan and schedule for identifying and implementing communication back-up and redundancy measures. The workshop was driven by the need for action NOW.

The workshop started with an overview of the SEWCRSG and the need for back-up and redundancy between public safety agencies. Then, breakout groups discussed the resources available at an agency level and identified the barriers that prevent sharing of those resources. The groups reconvened and developed an action plan. Below is a summary of the progress made towards the five main action items identified by the workshop participants.

## **1. Compile Inventory**

- The SEWCRSG Communications Back-Up and Redundancy survey was distributed in April of 2004.
- Surveys were returned by eight agencies. The results were compiled in a spreadsheet format and used for needs identification.

## **2. Identify Needs**

- The results of the Communications Back-Up and Redundancy survey made it clear that public safety agencies in southeast Wisconsin cannot communicate with one another.
- The WISPERN frequency was identified as one potential mutual aid channel. However, testing of the channel identified dead spots.
- The SEWCRSG then began investigating the feasibility of connecting via micro-wave.
- Ultimately the SEWCRSG concluded that there was a need for an engineering study to determine the most efficient and cost effective approach to interoperability for the region.
- At the end of October, Milwaukee County, on behalf of Milwaukee, Racine, Walworth, and Waukesha counties and the Wisconsin State Patrol, applied for the OJA Interoperability Engineering Study grant.

## **3. Raise Awareness**

- Awareness presentations for the SEWCRSG have been given to the following groups: OJA, WICORTS, and the Intermodal Administration.
- A one page informational brochure about the SEWCRSG has been developed to aid members in raising awareness.
- Parallel to the awareness effort, the SEWCRSG is in the process of formalizing the organizational structure of the group.
- From this effort the mission statement was revisited and modified to wholly encompass the current mission of the SEWCRSG.

## **4. Develop Training Activities**

- The SEWCRSG is in the preliminary stages of developing a training program for a dispatcher mutual aid team.
- In addition, the group is starting to plan a full-scale, communication focused, exercise to be conducted in the spring of 2005.

## **5. Develop Pilot Program**

- In response to the results of the Communications Back-up and Redundancy survey a pilot program was identified. The original program included Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties and the Wisconsin State Patrol.
- The pilot sub-committee began having meetings in July and focused on the aforementioned WISPERN and micro-wave study efforts.
- The OJA Engineering Needs Assessment grant brought about a program shift and the pilot program was modified to include Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. Kenosha County opted out of the grant application to focus on their unique border issues with Illinois, but will remain a part of the pilot program.

## ***Coordination with Other Related State/Local Initiatives***

The SEWCRSG continually strives to keep itself informed on the progress being made by other related efforts throughout the state of Wisconsin. Many of the group's members serve as liaisons with other efforts and are able to facilitate a two-way sharing of information.

..... And yes, we did buy a vowel - SEWCRSG