

Interagency Dispatch Implementation Project (IDIP) Continuity of Operations (COOP) Webinar Transcript

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Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for standing by and welcome to the IDIP Strengthening COOP. At this time all lines are in a listen only mode. Later we'll conduct a question and answer session. Instructions will be given to you at that time. If you do need assistance during the call today, please press * and then 0 and an operator will assist you offline. I would now like to turn the conference over to Kolleen Beesley, please go ahead.

Good morning everyone. This is Kolleen Beesley. Thank you for taking the time to dial-in and make sure you can get up on the Live Meeting. The meeting's going to start in just a couple of minutes. I want to give everybody a chance to be in the system so they can listen and participate as well. I did send a briefing paper out with the meeting invitation. Please while you're waiting if you haven't already done so, take the time to take a look at that. It will give you some background on what we're up to. We'll be back with you in just a few minutes.

<Silence>

Alright, let's go ahead and get started, its five minutes past the hour. And again, I want to thank you all for joining this webinar, the part of the Interagency Dispatch Implementation virtual roadshows. This one is, this is being recorded, if you have objections to that, you should go ahead and disconnect. You certainly, I hope everyone can hear me out there and can hear the other speakers. This meeting, because it's being recorded, will be posted and made available, should you need to listen to it or share it with other people later. We're going to provide for a question and answer period, after we, as we go along, we'll ask the operator to open the line so that you can ask questions if you have them. We'll go ahead and get started. This particular virtual roadshow is about strengthening the continuity of operations planning or our COOP planning. It's very important that we have that in place to support our employees and the public in the event of an emergency. I guess I'm going to do my standard, for those of you who haven't heard it, spiel on what is IDIP and why are we doing it. And for those of you who have heard it, I apologize, please be patient. I appreciate that you have attended this many briefings. What is IDIP and why are we doing it? Throughout the last 15 or so years, 20, I don't know how long, they have been studying dispatch. There have been multiple studies from competitive sourcing to PricewaterhouseCoopers to management efficiency assessments and beyond. Many recommendations came out of that; some of them were implemented, you have IRWIN as a result. A lot of those other things, it wasn't ripe, it wasn't the right time, etc. and some of them have and some of them haven't. Our leadership said, here is a charter. Stop studying,

implement some of these fixes if you can. It's an 18 month project, chartered by Tom Harbour and Jim Douglas from the Office of Wildland Fire, Tom Harbor Forest Service director of Fire and Aviation at the time. They hired a program lead; that is the position I am in. I have a team of folks that work with me, the core team I call them. Then we have subject matters experts primarily from the tier 3 organizations, some tier 2. And of course, Susie Stingley Russell, Chuck Womak, Bill Fletcher, they all advisor us and counsel us, along with, depending on the topic, other subject matter experts, maybe around IT issues or around agreements. The Charter gave us three key deliverables. The first one was a Computer Aided Dispatch Standardization and we have done a webinar on that. We have done Request For Information, that project is well underway. The second one, and this isn't in order, the Interagency Dispatch Operations Guide or the IDOG, which is like the IHOG for helicopters and all the other OGS out there, the third is around governance and staffing. That's a really big topic, governance and staffing. We split it into three technical working groups. We had a workload technical working group, we have a governance working group, technical working group, they are doing agreements and the COOP and some other things, and facilities and information technology working group. We had to divide the workload up into categories. The COOP standardization implementation, this was developed by your governance technical working group, these are the individuals who were on the team or are who still are on the team, who have worked a lot of hours behind the scenes to make a day in the life of a dispatcher better and beyond. I am sorry, my slide moved forward, I have a ghost in my mouse, just a minute, let me see if I can fix that. Oh boy, hang on. Okay, there they are. Today we have Sheri Fox, the center manager Great Plains interagency dispatch center, who is going to present some of the information to you, and Tim Bradley, center manager at Central Idaho interagency. These two folks have been the ones who have worked with the team to develop what we are going to share with you. Also have Susie Stingley Russell, National Coordination System Coordinator from the Fire Center here on the line. Susie, I'd like to open the floor to you please.

Good morning. One of the things I have been involved in studies over time, as Kolleen alluded to. Back in 2008 we did ask the question if people had, if the dispatch centers and the study itself was only for the federal centers, but we asked the question did they have backup generators. We realize at the time many centers did not have that portion of their COOP. We developed a template way back when for COOP planning, continuation of operations. What we realized when we went through the IDIP process is that although we did that good work, that was almost, probably 10 years ago or eight years ago, and has not really been implemented, hasn't been implemented consistently, so the good work that the Technical Working Group, the governance, is that they realized looking at the COOPs, is that we could adopt and provide a better standard for all of our centers by adopting the FEMA format, and getting it to work in our system. Because it's accepted by the government, it would probably work well with our state partners as well as going back to management and actually investing in your continuation of operations. I really applaud the work that the governance TWG did and the work that the IDIP team has done in trying to bring us up to that next level of professionalism when it comes to

our continuing of operations of our centers and providing that consistent service that we are expected to provide by all of our stakeholders. I know that Alaska the other day, had to, they were down three days because they hadn't been testing, the facilities people had not been testing their backup generator for their coordination center and it took down, it actually fried some components. Not only do you want to go through this process, but you also want to make sure that you test it. Even though IDIP is going, it will come to a conclusion as a project, then the actual accountability will fall back to the national coordinators and some of your review processes to make sure that we have one, adapted this, implemented it, and then are testing it on a yearly basis. Thank you all for joining us and I'll turn it back over to Kolleen.

Thank you Susie, I appreciate your support on this. I am going to let Tim Bradley talk to you about the reasons, everything that is going on. Susie touched parts of that. But this is to let you understand the discussions the TWG had. Go ahead Tim.

Good morning everyone. As Susie and Kolleen alluded to, we went through and we found the problem, which is basically an inconsistency exists in policy and direction for the development of COOP plans across agencies. In many locations they are not required to have one or they just haven't been developed, leaving that operation and its personnel and the people they support vulnerable in the event of something happening, like a local, localized acts of nature, accidents, and technology with radios, telecommunication, and the internet going down. Even just this morning here we had a nice big rainstorm and some of our radios went down. With that, we're going to look at some key points that we can discuss on that. Go to the next slide. Some of the things we looked at is there was a standardized COOP template develop as a result of the previous dispatch study, which Susie alluded to. However, not all dispatch centers were following the standard or knew they existed. Since that study, or those previous efforts, the federal emergency management agency, FEMA, had developed a standardized Coop template. What we have discussed is the lack of standardization the use of the structure of the COOP can create some confusion, inefficiencies and create liabilities across the community. Inconsistencies can potentially create life and safety situation, which we are really trying to avoid. We need to have understanding for the need for COOP, which I think is kind of self-explanatory and its use in identifying. Begin to make sure they identify primary mission, essential functions, like those radio, those phones, that internet, and also if you have to relocate so the emergency location facilities. What are you going to do if you have to vacate your facility? In consultation with the agencies we have listed here plus the personnel listed toward the bottom, it was unanimously decided we would use a standard FEMA COOP plan template so we would have all that standardization across the nation in all, whether it be federal, state or cooperator dispatch centers. I think that's all I had there for you, Kolleen.

I was on mute, I apologize. Thank you. Thanks Tim. We decided that, you know, how are we going to implement? That's what we have been told to do, implementation project. We're going to implement the use of the FEMA COOP template. And using the standard bring us to

the next level, where we need to be. And we're asking, this is supported by leadership, that all wildland fire dispatch centers develop this by March of 2017. We've got some time, the winter is coming, the snow is coming, but by March of 2017 after fire season, this fire season. Of course, if there are COOP capital investments needed, they can be budgeted for locally in a phased manner, just get them and thereby March 2020. That gives everybody time to prepare, if you need a generator or better generator, or something like that. Then here are key, our implementation plan. And I'm going to let Sheri Fox from Great Plains explain that part of it to you.

Good morning everybody. Thank you for attending. The COOP, IDIP COOP implementation plan provides information on how to access resources to complete your plan. This will be posted on the IDIP webpage and it also will be posted as a chapter in the interagency dispatch operations guide or the IDOG. The IDIP website right now provides the same information until IDOG is available. This is a national standard FEMA template. It provides thorough instruction and guidance. I don't want to use it to scare everybody, it is about 80 plus pages long. But like I said, it provides thorough instruction and guidance so it goes through each section and explains what should be in that section. So your plan should be close to 30 pages. It's kind of estimated that it would take at least 40 to 50 hours of one dedicated person to put together this plan using this template. Then of course, you will have to vet it through the rest of your folks, your dispatch center, the center management, and then your board or governance folks, stakeholders to make sure they are all on board. It will take some time but it is very doable. It is the minimal standard. You can add what you would like, additional information. But it is also flexible enough to tailor to your local needs. It does meet, as Tim said, state and federal requirements to facilitate your essential functions. Also, all interagency wildland fire dispatch centers will be utilizing the same template. In the event someone was to take the place for me, as center manager, comes in and then there is a natural disaster, they should be aware of how to implement the plan because they should have a similar plan in their location. Next slide Kolleen, please. The COOP development will be included in the IDIP center managers' academy. That is under development to the workload/staffing TWG. They're also working with FEMA to develop a one-day webinar. And I'll talk a little bit more about the FEMA folks that can help you out. They are really excited about trying to put together a wildland fire, dispatch centric webinar that will be helping us. And then also testing and training will be implemented by the national coordination system committee, the NCSC. These are to be part of our annual preparedness review, as Susie said earlier. We need to test this and exercise it annually. So as I said, FEMA help is available. Oh sorry, backup please Kolleen, slides show is going forward. FEMA help is available through the website that is on your webinar. Here is the link to the all of the national FEMA centers. Their regions are a little bit different than our regions as we're set up. But these guys are very, at least the gentleman I talked to in the Denver area, is very excited about helping with this project. This is part of their mission. That is part of the money they get, is to assist us with putting together our plans. They are willing to come to you as long as you have a class of 15 or more. And at no charge. They will bring all of the materials and set

up. Just give them a room with 15 plus people and they will all help you guys, teach you guys to develop your plans. And they say it usually takes about two days. Also, if you are interested you can attend classes at the emergency management Institute which is located in Emmetsburg, Maryland. The class number is L0550. I couldn't find a class on that but they have some excellent FEMA coordinators not only for COOP but additional courses as well. Next slide Kolleen, please. As Susie said test, train and exercise. This is actually the last chapter in the template. It's very important. And they stress how important it is. We should be exercising annually and testing and training often. Test you generators, the incident that happened in Alaska this week. Train your people, as you are bringing on seasonals and new personnel. It's very important. Test your kits. Make sure you have everything in your kits that are needed. The national coordination system committee, the NCSC, again will develop and validate process for the testing, training and exercising. And I believe Susie and the NCSC are working on making it part of our annual reviews. And again, this is very important so we can protect our folks in the field and the public as well. And as I said earlier, excuse me, as Kolleen said earlier, we're hoping, the centers should develop this by March 2017. Any capital investments that are identified should be budgeted locally and prepared to have in your budget and purchase by 2020. I believe that is all I have, Kolleen.

Thank you Sheri. Now we are going to open it up to anyone who has questions, comments etc. Cynthia, could you please see if we have questions out there.

Certainly. And ladies and gentlemen, if you wish to ask the question please press star followed by one on your touchtone phone. You will hear a tone indicating you have been placed in queue. You may remove yourself from queue by pressing the pound key. If you are using a speaker phone, please pick up your handset before pressing the numbers. And once again, for any questions or comments press star and then one. One moment please. Once again, it is star and then one for your questions or comments. We'll go to the line of Laura Hill. Your line is open.

Kolleen, I'm just trying to dig through my COOP for FAM artifacts and the last plan that I have for FAM is 2007. Is anyone aware of an updated plan for our continuity of ops for that period of time?

Susie?

Is that for FEMA? I'm sorry.

No, it's actually our internal plan for Fire and Aviation Management and the last copy I had is 2007.

Susie, do you know?

They just exercised the COOP plan for the Washington office, so I would talk to Gordy Sacks on that one.

Okay, alright. Thank you.

But I had a question for the community. Are we going to distribute the COOP plan out through, like the national coordinators list or is it just go fetch on the website?

We could do it either way, Susie. We could put it up on the website and then send out a link to it. That's probably better than clogging with the big attachments. But certainly, we can send out an email that you can distribute to your mailing list to let people know exactly where to find it on the website.

I think that would be good. And then if we could get the attachment as well in case somebody has problems downloading the document.

Alright.

And just as a reminder Kolleen, I believe we took the document template and made it 508 compliant. And I believe Linnea was going to post it on the website as well.

That's right. We have it in Word and in PDF format. When you converted it, it should convert to 508 compliant. If you're going to post that on the Internet in any way, that would be important, even on the intranet it would be important. It should be up on the website shortly. Other questions out there?

Thank you. And once again, as a reminder press star and then one for your questions or comments. And allowing a few moments, I'm showing no question in queue at this time.

That is amazing. Okay, I think we'll give it a couple more minutes. If there are no more questions on this, I would be willing to open it up to general questions about the IDIP effort.

And it looks like we do have a question from the line of Jack West. Your line is open.

Good afternoon everybody.

Hi Jack.

One of our biggest issues we're having here in Florida, it being the sole dispatch center for the entire state, is how to integrate voice control over IP into our COOP plan. Because in the old days you could just go out and get a government vehicle and enter your hit your local repeaters if your building was not habitable. Now I've got to talk to south Florida. How do I go about getting that? My IT folks, they know how to explain it in IT speak. But nobody else really understand it so I can put it in a co-op plan. And also understanding, what is an acceptable

time period between the time my building is uninhabitable and when we are back on the air again?

Well the COOP plan would talk to you about time frames and give you some guidance along that. And I guess it depends, and this is kind of a lower interagency, it somewhat depends on who the lead agency is for your radio infrastructure. Do you know who that is?

Currently it is the Forest service.

Okay, so what I know is, they have a map, the CIO of the Forest Service, has a map of which repeaters are, do employ ROIP and which ones do not. If you would contact CIO radio program directly you should be able to get the information you need around that part of the network. Is that helpful?

It is. And would they have information on the DOI also? Because we are, there's more DOI in Florida than Forest Service.

No, the DOI has the information on the DOI. And it depends on the Bureau. So if you're, which Bureau, Park Service?

Park Service and Fish and Wildlife.

That is not as readily available right now. One of the things that the IDIP did was raise that issue to leadership. Being able to find out radio coverage maps and what's ROIP and what's not, is difficult depending on which agency you work for and since we all use all agency radios it's a challenge. It is not fixed. I would suggest, maybe email me a little bit more specifics. Or send it in to IDIP and I can see if I can pass it over to someone in the DOI, to the right bureaus. The Forest Service should open up a ticket. And the others, DOI I can elevate it when I send it over. And we have a few people I can think of that might be able to help us.

Thank you so much for your help today.

Oh, you're very welcome. Great question.

Thank you. And for any other comments or questions, press star and then one. And at this time, there are no other questions in queue.

You guys are letting us off the hook easy today. I'm going to go to the next slide. We are continuing with these virtual roadshows because it is probably the best way to communicate with the largest audience out there. It's pretty hard to get to every meeting, as you know. We're going to be doing one soon on interagency agreements, not intending to make you agreement specialists but to give you a bit of a decoder ring, of which agreements do what, and which ones you should have in order and who to call when you need help. We have learned a

lot talking to the grants and agreement specialists. We believe that delegation of authority from a center manager from your governing board or whoever hosts

<Bell rings>

Oh, oh. I think I made it back. You need a delegation of authority to your center manager and of course your assistant center manager. We're going to be talking about that a little bit. That will be a very short one, it's pretty simple. We're working on standardizing the interagency service and supply plan template. Again, we vetted that through lots of people who are involved, the procurement folks, etc. to help provide, to write a standard. Again, we are trying to standardize as many things out there as we can without breaking local business. The more standard we are the better we are to exercise total mobility. And if you're lucky enough to get me to show up on a fire order, to come help you, I can actually know where to look to find things and be of some help to you. It's to facilitate our total mobility. We are also working on a project to standardize interagency websites and to reduce the workload that dispatchers have in maintaining those sites. In fact, not being webmasters, but providing content, yes, but doing the web mastering, no. We're working on some things like that, we're hoping to get approval on it. Just a lot of different projects going out and you're going to see some virtual road shows coming we'll do. There will be other ones. We will announced them through Susie just like we did this one. There is the website for IDIP which is a rather lengthy thing to write down. If you would like that and you don't know where it is and you would like that URL, it's easier to just to email IDIP@fs.fed.us for anything, questions, comments, feedbacks, etc. Just go ahead and email us. If it's about Computer Aided Dispatch, it's the CADS email that I previously have given you. That is all we have for today unless there are more questions. Cynthia you want to give it one more shot?

And as a final reminder, to any questions or comments, press star then one. I am showing no further questions in queue.

Alright. Thank you everybody. It is always nice to block out a certain amount of time and be able to give it back to you at the end of the webinar. I hope that you will join us for future webinars, knowing that we try to get to the point and give you the information that you need. Again, thanks for your time. Thank you, Susie, Tim, Linnea for setting up the technology, Bob, Sheri. And I appreciate you Cynthia, for being there as well. And thank you all for your time and we'll talk to you next time. Take care.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen, that does conclude your conference call for today. Thank you for your participation and using AT&T executive teleconference services. You may now disconnect.

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