



Knox Regional Communications

327 Park Street, Rockland, Maine 04841-5302
Tel: 207-594-8527 Fax: 207-594-0441

Linwood L. Lothrop, ENP
Director

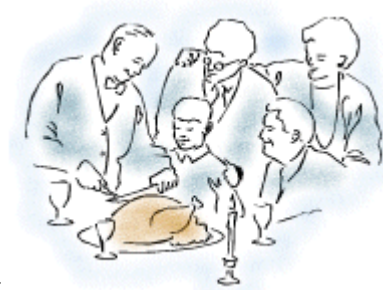
Stephanie Gibbs
Supervisor

Robert Coombs
Supervisor

County Commissioner's Meeting
Communications Report – November 01, 2005



Happy Thanksgiving



YOU'RE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT.

**PREPARE
FOR WINTER.**

Winter is a beautiful time of year, especially when a fresh layer of snow covers everything. Winter can also be a very dangerous time of year. If you plan on traveling during the winter, it pays to be prepared for the unexpected. Getting stranded during a winter storm can be a matter of life and death.

Maine has already seen its first winter storm. Parts of the State have already received over 16 inches of snow!

The Knox Regional Communications Center wants you to enjoy winter. With that in mind, we would like to pass on these safe winter driving tips.

- Clear snow and ice from all windows and lights – even the hood and roof – before driving
 - Pay attention. Don't try to out-drive the conditions. Remember the posted speed limits are for dry pavement.
 - Leave plenty of room for stopping
 - Leave room for maintenance vehicles and plows – stay back at least 200 feet and don't pass on the right.
 - Know the current road conditions. Call 1-800-695-ROAD or 511 for traveler information.
 - Use brakes carefully. Brake early. Don't stomp on the brakes. It takes more time to stop in adverse conditions
 - Watch for slippery bridge decks, even when the rest of the pavement is in good condition.
 - Don't use your cruise control in wintry conditions. Even roads that appear clear can have sudden slippery spots and the short touch of your brakes to deactivate the cruise control feature can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
 - Don't get overconfident in your 4x4 vehicle. Remember that your four-wheel drive vehicle may help you get going quicker than other vehicles but it won't help your vehicle stop faster. Many 4x4 vehicles are heavier than passenger vehicles and actually may take longer to stop. Don't get overconfident with your 4x4 vehicle's traction. Your 4x4 can lose traction as quickly as a two-wheel drive vehicle.
 - Don't pump anti-lock brakes. If your car is equipped with anti-lock brakes, do not pump brakes in attempting to stop. The right way is to "stomp and steer".
 - Look farther ahead in traffic than you normally do. Actions by cars and trucks will alert you quicker to problems and gives you that split-second extra time to safely react.
 - Go Slow! Drive according to conditions.
 - Carry a cell phone or citizens band radio, if one is available.
 - Drive with your headlights on
 - Stock your vehicle with basic winter driving equipment: a scraper and brush, small shovel, jumper cables, tow chain and a bag of sand or cat litter for tire traction.
 - Include road flares, a blanket, heavy boots, warm clothing and flashlight with batteries
-

October 2005

- 01 Knox County Full-Scale exercise at Rockland City Hall
- 04 Senior Officials Workshop on WMD, Portland, ME.
- 05 Department Heads' Assoc. Meeting
- 06 Full-Scale Exercise Evaluators Meeting at Knox EMA
- 07 Knox County Health and Safety Day
- 11 County Commissioner's monthly meeting
- 11 Rockland PD Supervisors Meeting
- 12 Public Official's Conference at "The Haven"

- 12 Participated in Medomak Valley Career Day for seniors
- 17 Knox RCC Supervisor's Meeting
- 18 NENA Conference Planning Committee Meeting
- 18 9-1-1 Council Meeting at CMCC
- 19 CAMEO Training in Augusta
- 19 Met with County Budget Committee and Commissioner's for 2006 Budget Review
- 19 Knox County Mutual Aid Association Meeting at Waldoboro Fire Dept
- 20 CAMEO Training in Augusta
- 21 NENA Regional Training Workshop in Ellsworth (Hancock County SO)
- 21 Attended the Reception for County Administrator
- 24 Attended the APCO Atlantic Conference in Portland
- 25 Attended the APCO Atlantic Conference in Portland
- 26 Attended the Open House for the new Court Complex
- 27 KRCC Training class – Fire Extinguisher Training
- 27 Attended MACo Meeting at Wiscasset

The Knox County full-scale exercise was held on Saturday morning, October 1st. The drill simulated a terrorist attack at the Rockland City Hall, which included an explosion and release of toxic chemicals. The drill called for actual response of emergency services and the setup of a decontamination unit on site. There were about a dozen volunteer victims that needed to be rescued, deconned and treated at the scene before being transported to area hospitals.

The exercise also tested the Pen Bay Hospitals emergency action plan.

On 06 October a review of the drill was conducted. The following is a brief overview of the results of that meeting.

EMS Review:

Overall, everyone did a good job. The initial entry into the hot zone went well and the victims were recovered and moved from the area. There may be a need for additional metering for chemicals in the future. The number of available personnel was limited. There would need to be a greater response of trained personnel in the future. Victims were placed in a same location until decon. Several responders were contaminated from entering the hot zone without proper protection. Also, several responders were contaminated from coming in contact with the victims. Adequate protection needs to be in place for the workers dealing with the victims. Need to include EMS trained people in the decon area so that they can start an early screening of victims.

Communications Issues

Some responders said they did not have the frequencies to communicate with anyone. The communications center has provided this information to all public safety agencies through newsletters, meetings and department mailings for the past two years. In checking one of the complainant's vehicles, it was discovered that the frequency was, in

fact, installed in the radio, but the operator did not know what the channel was for. More education is needed to standardize radio abbreviations and procedures. It was noted that there was communications indicating possible contaminants at the scene. First responders may need to take a little extra time to initially protect themselves before entering the area. The need for additional analog frequencies for on-scene use was identified. There was some confusion over EMS Sector command, but that was worked out. Many of the issues were new and just require practice to improve on.

Law Enforcement

Felt that communications on the radio were difficult. The channel was tied up with too much traffic. Incident Command appeared overwhelmed by complexities. The ham radio was a help in non-emergent communications, freeing up the main radio channel, however there needs to be better identification of the HAM operators in the field.

Other Lessons Learned

- Need to improve radio communications between Pen Bay Hospital and EMS
- Midcoast Mental Health would need to call in outside resources
- There is a need for an aid in the Command Post
- Additional radio frequencies needed on scene for staging, EMS Triage, etc.
- Exploring use of a Mutual Aid chief for assistance at Command Post
- EMS needs more training on Haz Mat procedures
- Need to separate the Decon Trailer from the Hat Mat Technician Trailer
- Need additional personnel to help with setup of decon tent
- Need clarification on role of the EOC and Unified Command
- Public Information Officer role vs. that of Joint Information Center

Overall, the drill went well and did exactly what we hoped for. It brought up issues that need to be worked on to improve our overall operational response to these types of emergencies.

I would again like to thank the County Commissioners for sponsoring the Knox County Health and Safety day on October 7th. I have gotten feedback from several of my employees that they felt the day was quite informative and was a great opportunity to mingle with other county employees and administration in a relaxed environment.

The Public Official's Conference was held at The Haven in West Rockport on October 12th. The conference was well attended with over 45 municipal and county officials in attendance. This year's conference featured the Dragon Cement Products hazardous materials incident that occurred earlier this year. The company president provided an overview of what caused the incident, followed by the Thomaston Fire Chief describing his response. A/C Adam Maceli explaining the role of the Rockland Fire Dept.'s Haz Mat response team and what it took to bring this incident to a safe conclusion followed this up. The costs associated to this response were also discussed. Cost recovery for contaminated equipment is a major part of the response. The procedures necessary for cost recovery were reviewed in the meeting. The lack of qualified personnel to respond

to similar incidents was discussed. Efforts will be made to try and recruit more volunteers will be forthcoming.

Other problems associated to this response were also highlighted, including how a PIO could have made a difference in preventing some of the issues that came up. The Rockland Fire Department's decon tent and Haz Mat trailer were also set up for inspection in the parking lot.

The staff of the Knox RCC played host to several students from Medomak Valley High School that were interested in a career in public safety. On October 12th these students participated in the school's career day, allowing for them to visit the Knox County Sheriff's Dept, Jail and Communications Center to see, first hand, what the job is all about.

The 9-1-1 Council Meeting was held at the Emergency Services Communication Bureau on October 18th. The following is a brief synopsis of that meeting.

The State Police will cut over to the new communications center at the Central Maine Commerce Center on October 19th. A tour of the new center was provided to all attendees after the meeting. There are still presently no other communications centers that have stepped forward with an interest in joining the new center. The policy board for the new center is meeting every 2 weeks to come up with a policy and procedures book for the new center. The Human Resource part of the board's effort is nearing completion. This will cover issues on how to integrate employees from other jurisdictions into the new center. The policy board recently sent out surveys to over 600 agencies and personnel asking a variety of information such as how various H.R. issues were handled by other agencies, what resources do other agencies possess, what are you present dispatching responsibilities, frequencies used, etc. To date, they have received very few returns. Members of the board will be calling select agencies in an attempt to gain answers to some of the issues facing the board. Good Luck.

Recent consolidations around the state include Gorham PD consolidating with Cumberland County Communications. There have been two meetings in Bangor between the Penobscot RCC, Bangor PD and the State Police. Both Penobscot RCC and Maine State Police Orono are in need of more room and a new facility. They are looking into the idea of possibly co-locating the two centers into one facility. The State Office of Information Technology is participating in the discussions to help create a RFP for a new or existing facility that would meet the needs of the co-location discussions.

As of today, the number of PSAPs in the State stands at 46.

PSAPs will start receiving VOIP calls at your PSAP on ten digit lines. Locally, we have been receiving VOIP calls from an IP relay center for calls all over the United States. The most recent call was to report a structure fire in The Bronx, New York City. The service providers for IP and the state PSAPs continue to try and work out call delivery issues to provide accurate caller information and location. There are presently between 400-600 VOIP service providers across the US.

VOIP customer figures continue to grow. This will have an eventual effect on revenues to fund the operation of 9-1-1 services. The VOIP service is unregulated, and thus far not subject to any 9-1-1 surcharges. It is hoped that eventually taxpayers will demand the service be taxed as they fight to lower local tax increases. Also, improvements to the IP service will be driven by customer demand to ensure their calls are being properly delivered to PSAPs. Until that day comes, we are fighting hard to deal with the issues of providing accurate service.

The Verizon contract renewal was discussed. This contract would provide upgraded PSAP call handling equipment to all the centers. It would also include mapping capability. Presently, the contract talks are at a standstill. Verizon does not want any accountability to continue the existing contract. They do not want to live up to the maintenance agreements. This stems from the incident in Massachusetts where the state is suing Verizon over a botched call due to equipment software errors. This could result in a multi-million dollar settlement. The Legal Dept of Verizon now does not want to offer a level of service that is equal to what is already in place here in Maine over fears of further lawsuits in the future. The State is requiring a system that will perform, at the least, as well as the existing equipment in use in the state. The state also wants that guarantee in writing. Contract talks between the state and Verizon are continuing in an effort to come up with a solution that meets the needs of both parties. Liability is taking over the delivery of services by Verizon.

This issue will ultimately affect multiple vendors. The 9-1-1 system is made up of various manufacturer components. The vendors will all be taking a long hard look at what happens in this case in Massachusetts, and how the liability can trickle down to the system component providers in the future.

If no agreement can be reached, then the state will be forced to go back to an RFP calling for minimum stipulations that mirror what is already in place for system maintenance and performance standards. The State ESCB has already scheduled a meeting with another vendor for the end of October to see where the state stands in the market for possible replacement of the system. There are at least three equally qualified vendors that can provide the desired level of service.

The database currently being used by the state is owned by the state. It is housed at Verizon to run the 9-1-1 network, but they do not own it.