

Meeting Notes for April 22, 2003
EMWIN Discussion sponsored by UDFCD

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m. in the Fire Administration conference room Westminster Public Safety Admin building.

Attendees

Kevin Stewart, Mike Reddy, Larry Mooney, Jim Lancy, Carol Small, Bob Glancy, Ray Bartik

Introductions

Kevin opened the meeting by briefly reviewing previous discussions within the committee.

Discussions

Ray provided an overview of the Fort Worth EMWIN transmission system.

EMWIN is one of several weather content vehicles available to Emergency Managers (EM). It should be considered another tool to be used in conjunction with Internet, Weather Radio, and other services. EM's should not rely on any one service exclusively, as any system can fail.

Kevin recommended using UDFCD funding to develop a basic working system and build a steering committee of EM's in the District to guide content and dissemination rules. As an example, schools may be interested in the EMWIN service, but the system should be established and well understood by the EM community before recommending the tool for other user groups. Education of the user population is important for success. The user software is configurable to allow extremes - between information overload and very limited and tailored information for a less sophisticated audience.

The group discussed whether the content should be filtered at the satellite downlink site, or at the user sites. Ray stated the EMWIN system is designed as a broadcast service. He recommended transmitting a broad range of content for the more sophisticated users and filtering information based on severe weather policies for specific uses. 911 dispatchers, as an example, may want very brief direct descriptions of a severe weather event tied to specific policies they need to follow. An emergency management office may want a more detailed, complete text of the warnings and watches for their needs.

Jim and Mike discussed a current proposal being developed for a homeland security grant.

ACTION ITEM:

Jim asked Ray to provide an equipment list for an inexpensive EMWIN receiver system (approx. \$700) per site.

The group discussed the range of content that can be disseminated on EMWIN. The content must be weather or civil emergency / homeland security related. Larry mentioned a program in progress to allow Emergency Managers to be able to directly input messages to the system. Discussion followed regarding establishing some form of template for such messages. Ray mentioned a software tool available to assist with EMWIN message creation for EM's.

ACTION ITEM:

Jim agreed to provide a list of Emergency Management offices (potential receiver sites) to Ray for purposes of radio coverage evaluations.

Mike offered to investigate the City of Westminster's interest in hosting the EMWIN transmitter site.

ACTION ITEM:

Mike asked Ray to provide a list of technical specs for the satellite receiver, transmitter, and Internet connectivity.

Mike provided a tour of the 911 dispatch center for Larry, Bob, Kevin, and Ray.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30

Respectfully,

Ray Bartik
Skywarn Systems Inc.