

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ **New** The October FirstNet Newsletter is available [HERE](#)
- ◆ **New** Click [HERE](#) to see the October 2023 CISA Report

## New Approved ISICS Users

- ◆ City of Marion
- ◆ National Weather Service

## SCIP Planning Dates

Monday, Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>—**Governance Committee**—10 am—noon  
Tuesday, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>—**Technology Committee**—10 am—noon  
Wednesday, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>—**Training & Outreach Committee**—10 am—noon  
Tuesday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>—**FirstNet Subcommittee**—10 am—noon  
Thursday, Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>—**User Group Committee**—10 am—noon  
Wednesday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>—**Operations Committee**—1:30 pm—3:30 pm  
Wednesday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>—**Finance Committee**—9 am—11 am

\*\*\* Final SCIP Workshop is tentatively planned for February 8, 2024 \*\*\*

## To Join ISICS

For more info about joining ISICS click [HERE](#)

To start the process to JOIN ISICS click [HERE](#)

If you need assistance or have questions regarding the ISICS joining process, please contact SWIC Haley Nichols @ [nichols@dps.state.ia.us](mailto:nichols@dps.state.ia.us)

## Note From the SWIC

This is a busy time of year and much has been going on in Iowa with interoperable communications, and one piece of news has dominated my last few weeks in the office -- I am pleased that the ISICSB, on behalf of DPS, has been awarded the 2023 U.S. Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Rural Emergency Medical Communications Demonstration Project (REMCDP) grant in the amount of \$1,859,953 to be implemented over a two-year period ending Sept. 2025.

The proposed solutions through this demonstration project will promote and strengthen interoperability in the rural medical field with public safety and public service across Iowa, demonstrate how emerging technologies and systems ensure successful communications in emergency medical situations, and harden the rural emergency medical communications network into a public safety grade platform reliable in the face of disaster or disruption.

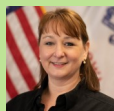
In January 2023, Carroll County, Iowa, hosted a team of subject matter experts from the Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency supporting the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program Operational Rapid Assistance Package (O-RAP) for a site visit. O-RAP achieves the Rural Emergency Medical Communications Demonstration Project (REMCDP) mission to examine communications barriers and identify solutions that enhance existing emergency communications infrastructure to improve the delivery of rural medical care and address National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) implementation gaps. Gaps and challenges identified by the team included: the lack of uniform application of current radio usage protocols, the lack of consistent adoption of the Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System (ISICS) radio platform, the lack of department-level Standard Operating Plans (SOP)/Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), end-user reliance on dispatch to ensure interoperability, and end-user reliance on cellular telephone networks for critical communications. Additionally, the team discussed the outdated statewide EMS communications plan.

This grant award will allow us to continue the core mission of emergency medical services in the 12th most rural state in the nation; to save lives and promote health through emergency medical care. This project will be implemented in 3 phases. Phase 1 is the planning phase where a needs assessment will be conducted to identify further gaps and capabilities in Region 1 of Iowa. Phase 2 will be execution in which equipment will be ordered and installed, training will be conducted, and performance of this execution will be monitored. Phase 3 will be the evaluation and review of the project - necessary changes will be implemented and guidelines, policies, and SOPs will be created based on best practices. The final goal of this project is to systematically roll out the deliverables from phase 3 to the rest of the state (Regions 2-6) as future resources become available.

The grant project is in addition to the continued and constant hard work ISICSB is putting into interoperability this fall. The SCIP working webinars are planned to begin November 6<sup>th</sup>. These 2-hour virtual meetings will allow each ISICSB Committee to review the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan and review and revise goals and objectives for the next 3-year period. I am looking forward to those productive meetings. There is also continued work with our neighbor states including Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois to create seamless interoperability across borders – advancing Iowa’s ability to successfully communicate in all situations.

The final 2023 COMU course, COMT, was held for 2023. This year Iowa was able to provide training for Communication Unit Leader, Incident Tactical Dispatcher, and Communication Technician through CISA TA requests. I want to thank the host cities for their hospitality, delivering welcoming and comfortable classrooms and abundant and varied course resources. And finally, to those agencies who were willing and able to allow their employees to attend these valuable trainings. We know how difficult it is to take your most dedicated workers out of our agencies for even a day – much less a whole week - and I am grateful to all who have made a sacrifice locally to ensure Iowa is developing a resilient and reliant interoperability communications plan and contingency plan.

Be safe in your travels as the weather changes and the holidays find us once again, and thank you for all you do for your community and Iowa.



Respectfully,  
Haley Nichols, SWIC

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## ISICS System Administrator Report (September 2023)

**Radios** = 34,166 (up 709 from August 2023)  
**Talkgroups** = 3,152 (up 82 from August 2023)  
**Push-to-Talks** = 2,847,844 (down 51,026 from August 2023)

## FirstNet Authority Update

FIRSTNET adoption in Iowa is growing. The reason it's growing is because the network has proven to work as intended: public safety communications. More public safety entities in Iowa are realizing the importance of this network as they perform their daily duties. As technology advances, public safety should not have to put up with ineffective data communication when commercial networks are congested.

Networks are congested because the public uses these networks for more than just phone calls and texts. Video streaming, etc, all contribute to overloading the public networks and can quickly overload the network capacity. Sporting events, interstate blockages, and disasters can all cause networks other than FIRSTNET to congest the cell service in that area, preventing communication on those devices. Public safety responds to all these events; unless you are on FIRSTNET, your device is just another device wanting service during congestion.

Public safety on the FIRSTNET network receives priority every time they need it to complete the mission at hand. The FIRSTNET network ensures the data works, and they can still communicate when other networks are overloaded. FIRSTNET allows public safety to continue their work on their devices regardless of additional network congestion.

As your Senior Public Safety advisor, I can assure you that this network in Iowa is the real deal. AT&T has built a solid, robust network in Iowa, just as the FIRSTNET broadband committee required when Iowa signed up.

Iowa was very particular about the buildout because we demanded coverage. In the public safety world, coverage is king. Iowa has the best of both worlds when it comes to public safety networks; Iowa not only has a premiere LMR network but a premiere cellular network for its data with FIRSTNET; talk about interoperability at its finest: Iowa has it.

With LMR and Data networks, it's essential to have structure and governance. Iowa has that as well. Your FIRSTNET broadband committee and your Interoperability Board operate at a level most states dream of having.

Iowa is a leader in the nation for its capabilities in LMR and now its FIRSTNET network. Iowa is widely known for the quality of public safety and the networks it operates on each day.

In the coming months, the FIRSTNET authority will reach out more to public safety in Iowa so we can spend reinvestment dollars effectively. FIRSTNET continues to reinvest in the network to ensure public safety receives what it expects from a network.



Tom Lampe, Senior Public Safety Advisor  
FirstNet Authority

## New FirstNet Sites

Two new 4G LTE cell site have launched; include Band 14 for first responders:

- NE of Ankeny near I-35 & NE 126th Ave. in **Elkhart, IA**
- **Davenport** near 46th St. & Eastern Ave.
- **SE of Dubuque** near US-52 & Catherine Rd.

Two small cell nodes have launched:

- One in **Ankeny** near SE Lorenz Dr. & SE Delaware Ave.
- One in **Des Moines** near Evergreen Ave. & SE 22nd St.

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## HAPPENINGS

View calendar [HERE](#)



ISICSB Website



Interop Website

**“Real heroes die  
serving the law,  
not resisting it”**  
~ Unknown