

MINUTES

JOINT INTERIM COMMITTEE ON ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, October 25, 2017
1:30 P.M.
Room 151, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee Members Present: **Senators** Bill Sample, Co-chair; Ronald Caldwell, Linda Chesterfield, Jimmy Hickey, Jr., **Representatives** Stephen Meeks, Co-chair: Charles Blake, Karilyn Brown, Frances Cavanaugh, Jim Dotson, Andy Mayberry, **Alternates** Sarah Capp, Lanny Fite, Roger Lynch, Carlton Wing

Other Legislators Present: **Senators** Jonathan Dismang, Joyce Elliott, Larry Teague, **Representatives** Scott Baltz, David Branscum, Vivian Flowers, David Hillman, Grant Hodges, Reginald Murdock, Aaron Pilkington, Johnny Rye, Danny Watson

Call to Order

Senator Sample called the meeting to order and thanked everyone in attendance for coming.

Representative Meeks noted agenda items for upcoming meetings to include: the 911 Code System and Earthquake Preparedness.

Consideration to Approve June 29, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Senator Sample made a motion to approve the minutes and without objection the minutes were adopted.

[See Exhibit C]

Introduction of State of Arkansas Chief Data Officer (CDO)

Dr. Richard Wang introduced himself, his team and briefly discussed his mission.

[See Handout 1 and Handout 2 for the full presentation]

Issues included in the discussion:

- introduction of his team which includes: Adita Karkera, Database Administrator Lead; Robert McGough, Data Warehouse Lead; Collette Johnson, Chief Data Officer Executive Support; and Lynda Englehart, Research Project Analyst
- current tasks and the progress made related to assessing how the CDO can best serve Arkansas as well as next steps
- announcement of The Inaugural State of Arkansas CDO Forum to be held on Friday, November 10, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. in the Old Supreme Court Chamber

Discussion of Arkansas Tornado Warning Management and Operation

Dennis Cavanaugh, Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM), National Weather Service

[See Exhibit E2]

Issues included in the discussion:

- warning alerts come via NOAA Weather Radio, terrestrial radio, television, social media, cell phone, email and sirens
- many sirens are out dated, costly to maintain and are often ignored in some areas because they can't be heard due to the terrain
- some siren systems are linked therefore the alarm will often sound in an area not meant to have a warning
- sirens are becoming obsolete because of advanced technology which is the direction of the future

Sonny Cox, Former Arkansas County Judge, Arkansas Association of Counties

Issues included in the discussion:

- many sirens are from the 1980's making replacement parts difficult to procure
- sirens don't have the same impact they once did
- sirens are useful for parks, playgrounds and other public areas
- having a safe room or designated area in your home in case of severe weather is advised

Todd Yakoubian, Meteorologist

Issues included in the discussion:

- the linkage of the siren system has caused a "boy that cried wolf" mentality
- Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama make up Fatality Alley
- more tornado deaths occur in Fatality Alley than any other place in the country
- mobile home density in Fatality Alley is 44% and 25% for permanent homes
- nighttime tornados are more difficult to spot
- to ensure that you are informed, have more than one way to receive a warning i.e. an app on your phone and a radio or some other combination
- school should not be cancelled during severe weather threats as they exercise drills and have designated safe spaces

Other Business

Representative Baltz was recognized and noted that he would like for the committee to address the issue of cell phone reception in certain areas of the state. He would like for the committee to begin conversations with providers about getting better service and reception in these areas. Representative Cavanaugh expressed concern about the inability of first responders to communicate with each other because of this problem.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:40 P.M.