Today's Presenters- FEMA Regional Emergency Communication Coordinators (RECC)

- Mr. David Benoit, FEMA Region IX
  - With FEMA since 2008 as a RECC
    - Provides oversight of and technical expertise for RIX's Disaster Emergency Communications and RECCWG programs.   Responded to and provided direct support for many disasters including Hurricane Sandy (New York), Typhoon Soudelor (Saipan) and CA Fires
  - Previously, worked for Coast Guard, FAA and served in the USAF (24 years)
  - Holds undergraduate degrees in business electronics, a graduate degree in Organizational Management and Commercial Class and Extra Class Ham Radio Licenses.
- Ms. Pat Sarin, FEMA Region VIII
  - With FEMA since 2009. In 2013, assumed the position of RECC
    - Since being with FEMA she has supported and coordinated RECCWG meetings and calls for Region VIII. Deployed multiple times to ND, SD, and MO for spring flooding; and for Hurricanes Irma and Maria
  - Certified Business Continuity Professional with the Disaster Recovery International Institute, has a Technician Class Ham Radio License and is a member of the Amateur Radio Relay League
- Mr. Archie Salters FEMA VI
  - With FEMA since 2000; holding various communications positions; manages the R6 RECCWG and the R6 Inter Agency Steering Committee
  - Prior military service of 9 years as an RF technician

Today's Webinar: featuring FEMA's RECCWG liaisons and an opportunity to discuss communication interoperability issues and solutions sets

- An overview of FEMA's Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) mission and makeup
- FEMA Region IX lessons learned with California Wildfires and current events
- FEMA Region VIII update on annual report and activities going on in Region VIII
- FEMA Region VI lessons learned from 2017 Hurricanes
- Interoperability issues between border states and how the RECCWG has helped to facilitate solutions
- Current Outreach and Tribal Engagement Efforts
- Emerging issues and recommendations that foster disaster recovery as well as address instabilities and vulnerabilities such as cyber security
- Existing resources and tools to assist WRP Partners.
- Opportunities for further agency involvement with RECCWG efforts.

Public Communications During Disasters

David Benoit
RECC (Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator)
david.benoit@fema.dhs.gov
510-627-7268   *12 Jun 2018*

FEMA

Background

- *Day Job: FEMA Reg 9 Regional Emergency Comms Coordinator*

- *Disaster: Support/facilitate establishment, operation and/or restoration of <u>emergency communications</u> before, during and after disasters*

- *Fire Disaster Role 1: Provide Disaster Survivor Assistance at Santa Rosa; 10K+ served!*

- *Fire Disaster Role 2: Support FEMA Reg 8 and OEC reps providing comms support from Sacramento*

- *Environment: Wind + Dry Conditions + Trees +Two Lane Roads + Ignition Source? = Firestorm/Furnace conditions!*

FEMA

2017 Northern CA - Got Infrastructure?

FEMA

Got Cellular, Telephone, Internet?

Alert, Information and Warning

- *Cellular WEA alert at County level not used*

- *Concern: Alert might cause traffic blockages (2 lane roads) restricting First Responder response operations*

- *Notifications: First Responders knocking on doors due to speed/spread of fires*

- *Cellular: Online mapping products could not keep up with fire movements!*

- *Got Infrastructure?: Cellular, telephone, 911*

- *Broadcasts: AM/FM Radio, TV, Cable, etc.*

FEMA

Online Mapping/Alternate Routing?

Survivor Assessment

- *"How Did You Get Alerted"?: how did you know what was happening around you, where/when to go?*

- *Group 1: Cellular: Tell me what to do - someone/something else decides? = Casually <u>Waiting</u> for Info*

- *Group 2: +Radio, TV, Cable, Internet: listening for what to do - I decide! = Actively <u>Listening</u> for Info*

- *Comfort Level: Not knowing ("guessing" what to do) vs knowing (informed decision making)*

FEMA

Awareness: Vulnerabilities During Disasters

- *CELLULAR: societal/media "conditioning", single mode of info, waiting for the beep, 5 bar "connectivity"*

- *INFRASTRUCTURE: Fragile, esp. during disasters, cellular, internet single-points-of-failure, cellular system operation dependent upon telephone based infrastructure, radio paths, internet links, power, etc.*

- *COMMUNICATIONS: Fires, mudslides, power blackouts, etc. have the potential to easily destroy any portion of this infrastructure and render it useless for the purpose of public emergency coordination or notification;*

- *CONSOLIDATION: Over fiber optic cable, internet cloud, microwave systems*

FEMA

Comms Outages Can Affect Entire Regions!

CASE STUDY

NEW YORK CITY WORLD TRADE CENTER ATTACK

▶ During the September 11 attack in 2001, traditional telecommunications were stretched and overloaded. Phone networks along the entire East Coast were congested into uselessness.

▶ Communications between emergency services personnel were limited by a lack of interoperability between departments.

▶ Many fire-fighters died when the towers collapsed because they couldn't receive the warning that the police officers received from the New York City Police Department (NYPD) helicopters.

▶

FEMA

Solutions

- *MONITOR: <u>Actively</u> listen to/promote monitoring of other sources of info such as local AM/FM radio, TV (DTV and cable), XM/Sirus, NOAA radio, sirens/public address, digital signage, scanner*

- *COMMUNICATE: "Wired" telephones, FRS/GMRS radios, CB radios, Ham radios, cellular text messages, message boards, door to door, runners, markings*

- *PLAN: Meeting places, consolidate & share resources*

- *UNDERSTAND: Recommendations in no way diminish the importance and/or reliability of commercial comms infrastructure or its ability to deliver emergency messages when/where there needed but rather emphasizes the need for the public to maintain an active role in the monitoring of their situation and safety, especially during times of disaster*

FEMA

Region VIII Disaster Emergency Communications (DEC) Western Region Partnership Briefing

Pat Sarin

Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC)

Bob Schroder

DEC Specialist

June 12, 2018

Objectives

- **Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) Annual Report**

- **Region VIII Tribal Emergency Communications Support**

- **Wasatch Fault Planning Efforts**

FEMA

RECCWG's

RECCWG's have been established in each of the ten FEMA regions.

They provide a forum to assess and address the survivability, sustainability, operability, and interoperability of emergency communications systems at all government levels.

FEMA Region VIII RECCWG May 2018

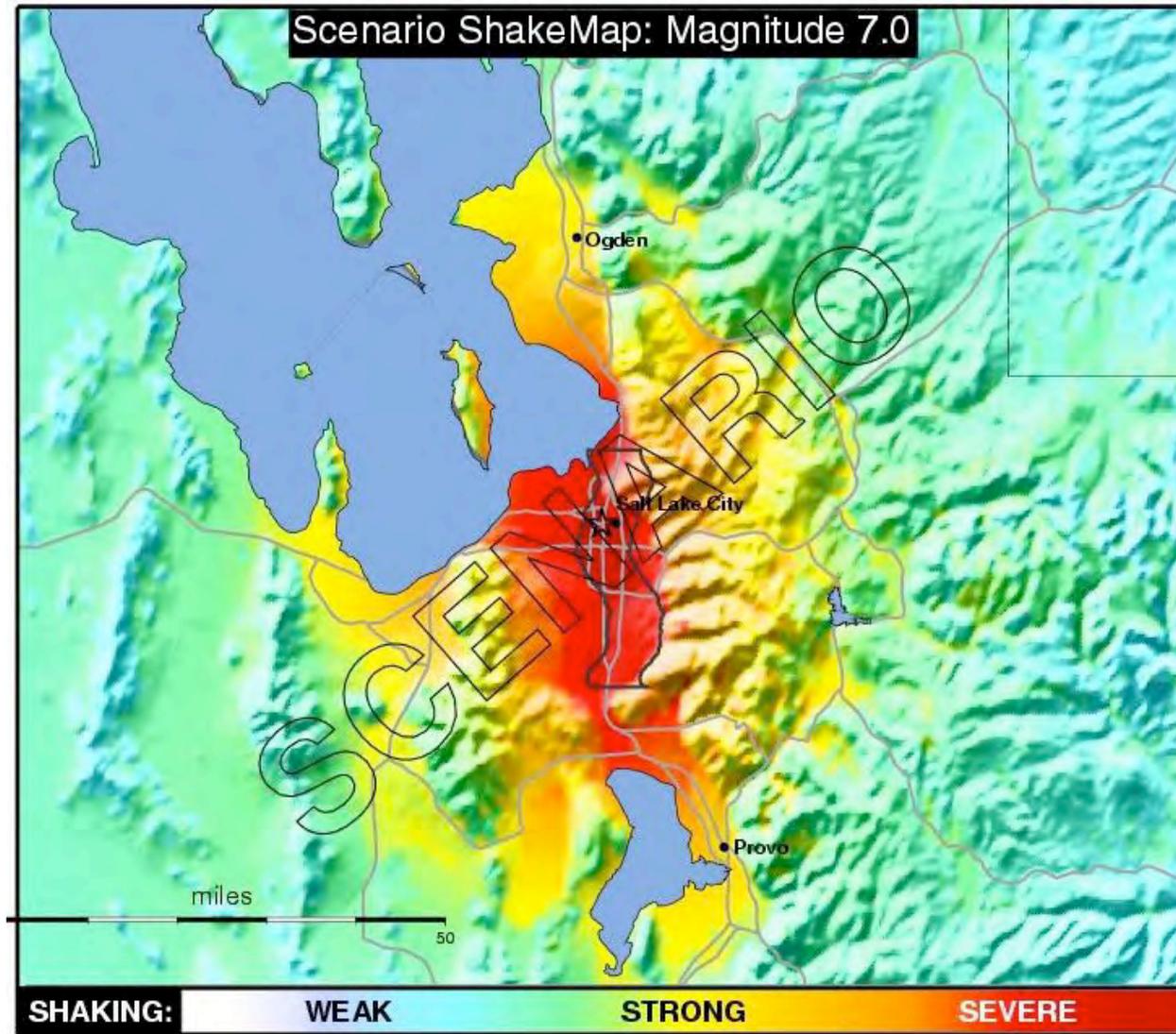# Region VIII Tribal Emergency Communications Support Tactical Missions
Supporting Operability and Interoperability

- **Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS)**

  - **Deployment of Portable Radio Towers**

  - **Set up Mobile Emergency Operations Vehicles – MEOVs**

  - **Handheld Radios**

FEMA

4

Wasatch Range EQ Planning Scenario
7.0 M earthquake on the Salt Lake Segment of the Wasatch Fault

Scenario ShakeMap: Magnitude 7.0

SHAKING: WEAK — STRONG — SEVERE

Finally at the End of the Day …

FEMA

The Bottom line is

"No person shall lose his or her life because public safety officials can not communicate."

-MT Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan

Questions ?

FEMA

FEMA Region VI
Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator
Roles and Hurricane Harvey Feedback

June 13, 2018

Archie Salters

Acting RECC, FEMA Region VI

FEMA DEC Coordination with Regions, States, Tribes and Localities

> *DEC integrates with State and local agencies through the Regions to provide emergency communications assistance throughout all phases of an incident*

- **RECCWGs** serve as a coordination point for Federal, State, local, and Tribal agencies at the regional level on emergency communications-related matters

- **FEMA State Emergency Communications Annexes** describe the primary and backup communications systems used by Federal, State, local, and Tribal entities and identify resources that States may request during a catastrophic event

- **FEMA Regional Emergency Communications Coordinators (RECCs)** report to the RA on emergency communications issues in the Region, establish relationships with State and local emergency responders, and coordinate disaster emergency communications capabilities and requirements during a response

- **FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS)** provide mobile and tactical communications capabilities to support State and local agencies requesting emergency communications support

H.R.5441 - Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act Title XVIII Section 1805 established RECCWGs

Title XVIII legislation requires that RECCWG membership include Federal, State, local, and Tribal public safety agencies and emergency response organizations representative of the region. Passed on October 4, 2006.

<u>CONGRESS ENVISIONED THE FOLLOWING STATUTORY DUTIES FOR RECCWGS:</u>

- Assessing the survivability, sustainability, and interoperability of local emergency communications systems.

- Reporting annually to Federal stakeholders on the regional status of interoperable voice and data emergency communications networks.

- Ensuring a process for coordinating effective multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency emergency communications networks for use during disasters.

- Coordinating the establishment of Federal, Tribal, State, and local support services and networks.

*The focus and direction of RECCWGs is determined by **RECCWG members***

RECCWG Membership and Partnerships

MEMBERSHIP

(1) NON-FEDERAL.—Organizations representing the interests of the following:

    (A) State officials

    (B) Local government officials, including sheriffs

    (C) State police departments

    (D) Local police departments

    (E) Local fire departments

    (F) Public safety answering points (9–1–1 services)

    (G) State emergency managers, homeland security directors, or representatives of State Administrative Agencies

    (H) Local emergency managers or homeland security directors.

    (I) Other emergency response providers as appropriate

(2) FEDERAL.—

Representatives from the Department, the FCC, and other Federal departments and agencies with responsibility for coordinating interoperable emergency communications with or providing emergency support services to State, local, and tribal governments

PARTNERSHIPS

+ Communications equipment manufacturers and vendors (including broadband data service providers)
+ Local exchange carriers
+ Local broadcast media
+ Wireless carriers
+ Satellite communications services
+ Cable operators
+ Hospitals

+ Public utility services
+ Emergency evacuation transit services
+ Ambulance services
+ Amateur radio operators and organizations
+ Representatives from other private sector entities and nongovernmental organizations as the Regional Administrator determines appropriate

Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator (RECC) – Blue Sky Roles

- Support the coordination of resources, expertise and staffing for activities and roles in the Region/RECCWGs

- Lead State and Regional emergency communications plans development and provide technical expertise on existing and emerging emergency communications technologies

- Serves as primary advisor to the RA on emergency communications

- Supports the administration of the RECCWGs building key relationships between Federal, State, local, Tribal, and private sector partners

- Coordinates/participates in National, regional, cross-regional, State, and local conferences and communications exercises

- Engagement of RECCWG members and key Federal, State, Territorial, and Tribal emergency communications stakeholders

- Works closely with FEMA regional IT & IMAT teams and the Denton MERS group to prepare for supporting response and recovery operations
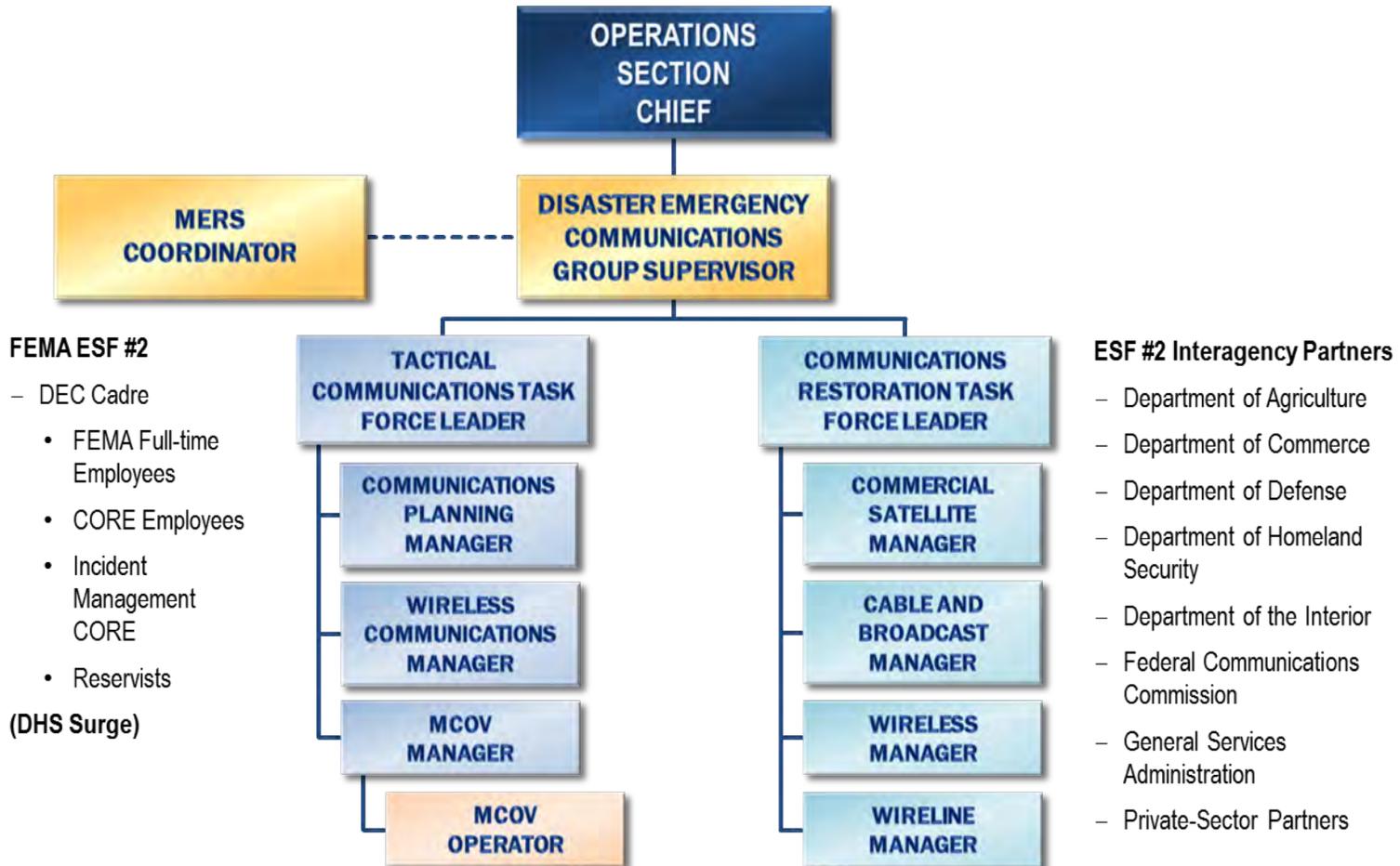
RECC Role in Disaster Response

- Provide situational awareness to State, Federal leadership.

- Ensure operable and interoperable communications are available in a disaster, voice, video, and data communications for responders and Federal partners.

- Lead Integration of Federal resources during an incident to support the emergency communications needs of State, local, and tribal governments in support of Lifesaving life sustainment periods of Response.

- Serve as the central point for federal responders tactical communications and coordination.

- Coordinate "Federal Actions" providing temporary emergency communications for State/Local/Tribal responders
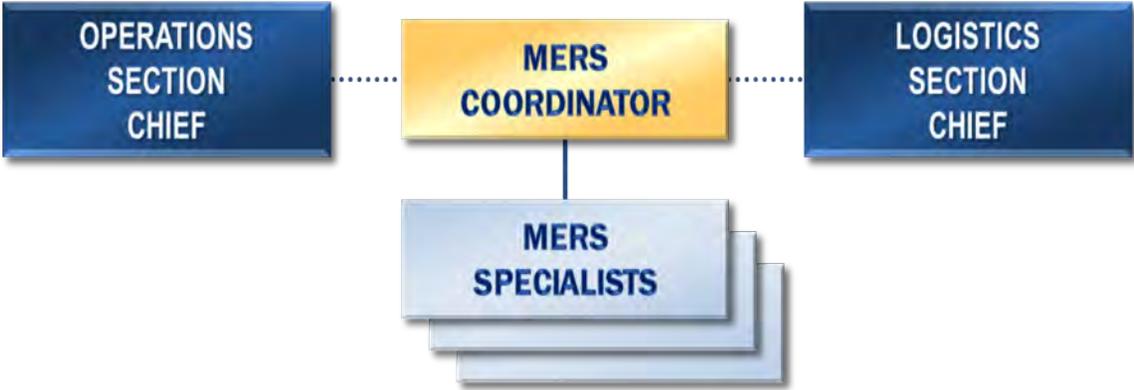
Support Organizations and Resources

- FEMA Region Emergency Communication Coordinator
  - Serves as the POC to FEMA for all State, local and industry partners
  - RRCC Advisor/Coordinator
  - Lead coordinator between Federal and State ESF-2
  - Lead, establish and/or coordinate the "DEC Group" supporting ESF-2 community at JFO

- National Coordination Center for Communications (NCC)
  - Coordinates with "All Commercial Industry Restoration"/Telecommunication Infrastructure Analysis
  - Daily Government/Industry Call
  - Establishes and Co-Leads ESF-2 Staff for JFO DEC Group/State EOC

- Office of Emergency Communications (OEC)
  - Technical Assistance to State, Local & Tribal Communicators
  - ESF-2 Staff for JFO DEC Group/State EOC

- Federal Communication Commission (FCC)
  - Public Safety & Commercial Telecommunications
  - Disaster Information Reporting System (DIRS)
  - Radio Spectrum Coordination/Analysis/Temporary Licensing Authorizations
  - ESF-2 Staff for JFO DEC group/State EOC

- National Telecommunication Information Administration (NTIA)
  - Federal Spectrum Coordination (Federal Agencies & DoD)
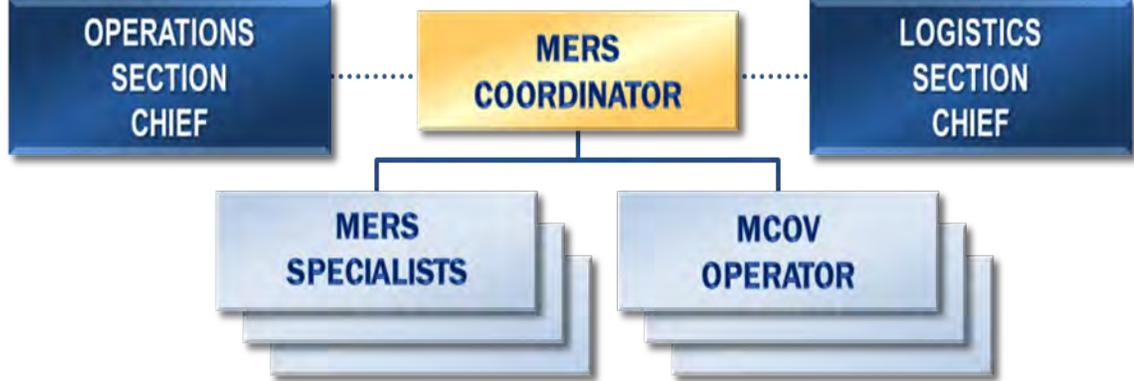 - ESF-2 Staff for JFO Group/State EOC

JFO DEC Group Structure

FEMA ESF #2

- DEC Cadre
  - FEMA Full-time Employees
  - CORE Employees
  - Incident Management CORE
  - Reservists

(DHS Surge)

ESF #2 Interagency Partners

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Defense
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of the Interior
- Federal Communications Commission
- General Services Administration
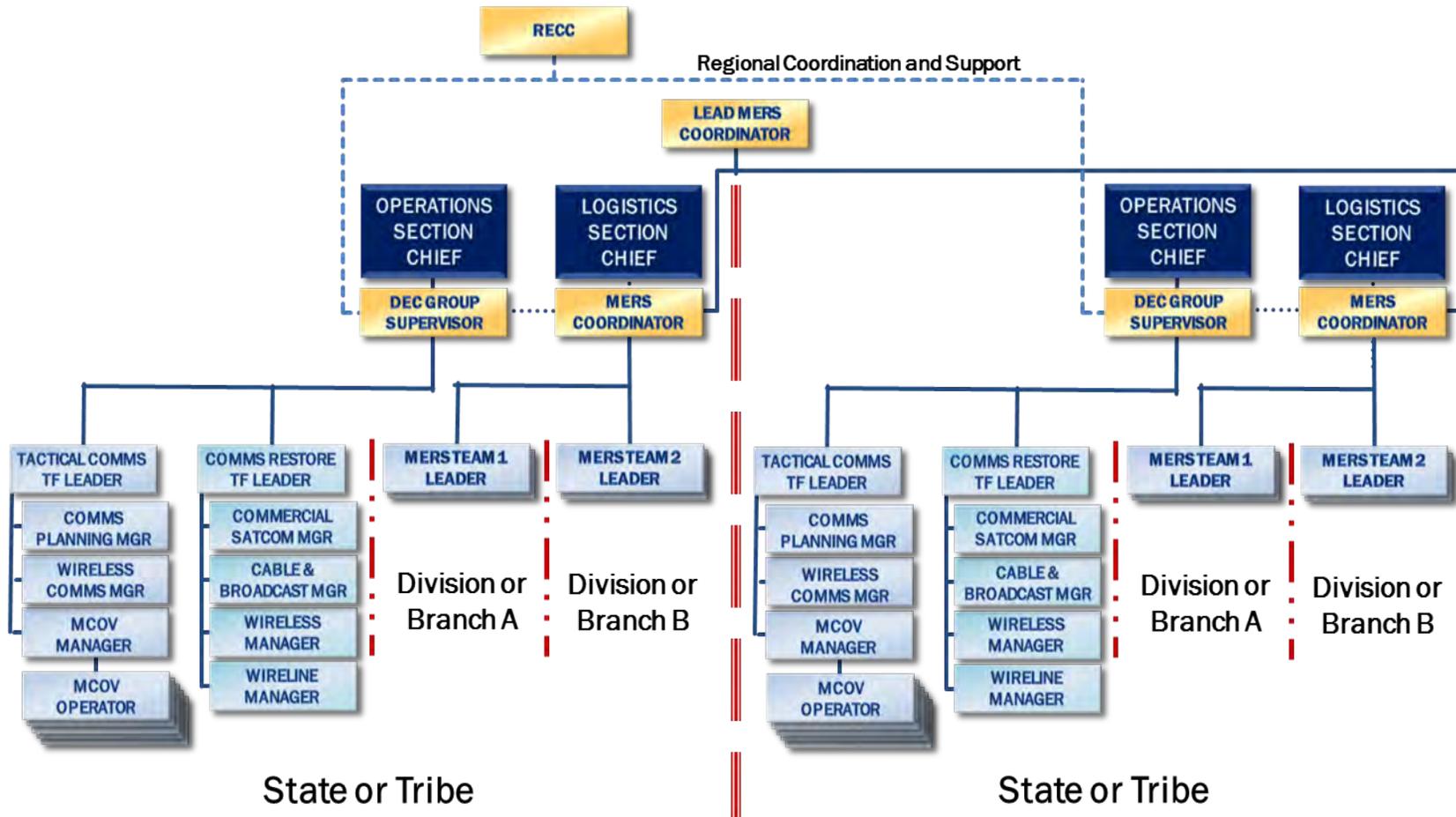- Private-Sector Partners

Coordinating Structure

Small Incident with No MCOV Requirement and No DEC Group

Small Incident with Limited MCOV Requirement and No DEC Group

Coordinating Structure (cont.)

Large Complex Multistate Disaster Requiring Cross-Border Coordination

Hurricane Harvey: What was different?

Pre Storm Activities:

- Activated and Deployed Federal staff Pre-landfall
- When Hurricane Harvey was still a Tropical Depression, ESF-2 was activated remotely in support of the system; 2 days later team deployed to Texas.
- Integrated Federal ESF-2 with State Texas Communication Coordination Group (CCG) (State ESF-2 staff)
- 2010 Texas Legislation directs integrating State/Fed/Commercial
- Immediate impact regarding improved speed of Texas communication response efforts – Minutes vs Hours/Days
- AAR- Best practice is to activate and employ ESF-2 early and often on Level 1 & some type of activation for level 2 events
- AAR- Need HQ NRCC ESF-2 to be the executer of the ESF-2 Activation/Mission Assignment writing.

Hurricane Harvey: Observations

- AAR- ensure FEMA Spectrum manager is located at the CCG (For Texas)
- AAR- Ensure all fed partners (IE: USAR) coordinates with DEC Group upon deployment and employment of RF resources.
- Best practice: DEC Group was fully functional proactively managing and coordinating response resources as appose to a reactive reporting role.
- AAR (R6 issue to work through): Re-Fueling fed and industry partners (need to work through lawyers to ensure the Life saving Life sustaining requirements and possible repayment for the fuel)
- Louisiana Guard deployed their State LWIN radio system in Texas
- FCC Special Temporary Authorization (STA) – 5 minute to approve by FCC & State of TX
- Supported Broadcasters – Food/Water to On-Air staff, fuel & technical staff to sites, FCC license changes, normal broadcast to 24/7 emergency information
- Cell carriers jointly used Federal Staging Areas going forward, vehicle storage & fuel pods
- Watercraft transportation coordination for telecom & broadcasters to their sites
- Texas TF-1 US&R radio coverage operational area need to grow (Cross-banded LMR to MSatG2 network Serving as a repeater to expand coverage)

Hurricane Harvey – Observations

- AAR- Vendors could not fill immediate need for the MSatG2– created run on vendors
- AAR- FEMA process of procurement could meet the immediate need to support the immediate need.
- Five 911/PSAP's Destroyed – 9 TERT Teams/42 Staff supporting operations
  - Worst part of storm 37 PSAP's were down rerouted
- AAR- PSAP don't necessarily report this information to the SOC or up-channel to IPAWS Fed Authority, DIRS report provided the visibility the state didn't get through direct reports from their county PSAP
- Each county is an alerting point for IPAWS, no process for Fed authority IPAWS reporting for providing status
- AAR- There's no directed process identified for reporting IPAWS outages/ nor for tracking IPAWS messaging for tracking
- Deployed NTIA to coordinate Federal spectrum use, first time to manage all federal assets
- ❖ City of Houston
- Prior to Hurricane arrival, City of Houston operated on generators prior to storm arrival. Only lost one radio site for one hour- A UPS blew up (City of Houston Radio shop made repairs)
- Used jet skis for service calls
- Reused Super Bowl 51 Communication Plan

Hurricane Harvey – Lessons Learned

- Deployment of "ESF-2 staff pre JFO to the RRCC/IOF/JFO".

  - When necessary, the DEC Group should be stood up pre-disaster as the Regional ESF2 "DEC Group".

- State partners and other decision makers may need education on the DIRS report regarding how valuable the information is to the State Emergency Operations Center.

- Continue to Collaborate during "BLUE Sky" periods focusing on operability, maintenance support to state systems such as the FNARS; Operational Training & Maintenance.
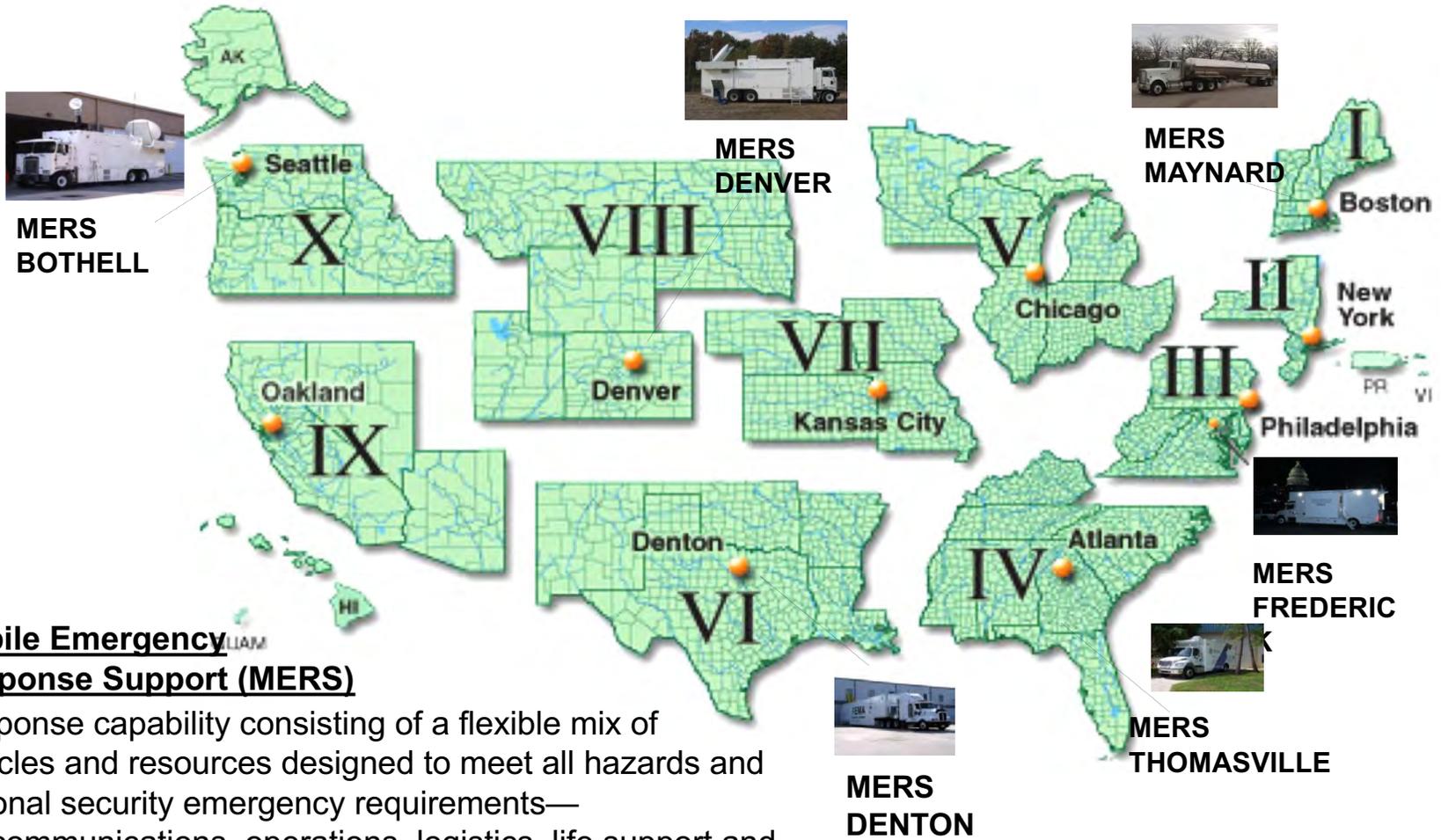
Recommended 2018 Initiatives for ESF-2

- Improve Outreach and Coordination with state partners; look for me to come to your state & establish relationships with the greater community!

- Provide the highest quality of support; at all times share information, answering Request For Information (RFI/RRF)

- Collaborate with all partners; Improve federal coordination to enable a timely and right sized service fulfillment.

- Bolster ESF2 activities; regarding federal activations, reporting, & products to improve leadership decisions

FEMA MERS Overview

> **MERS provides operations, communications, and logistics assets in response to Presidentially-declared emergencies and disasters, as well as planned National Special Security Events (NSSEs)**

- Deploys, installs, and operates communications equipment in support of Federal, State, local, and Tribal agencies
- Provides tactical communications equipment to enable incident command and control and ensure safe and effective response and recovery operations and situational awareness
- Serves as a national asset and deploys response teams and equipment from six geographically dispersed Detachments throughout the country (Bothell, WA; Denton, TX; Denver, CO; Frederick, MD; Maynard, MA; and Thomasville, GA)
- Participates in various FEMA Regions activities including—
    - RECCWG meetings
    - State emergency communications planning efforts
    - Regional communications exercises

MERS Operating Locations

MERS BOTHELL

MERS DENVER

MERS MAYNARD

MERS FREDERICK

MERS THOMASVILLE

MERS DENTON

Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS)

Response capability consisting of a flexible mix of vehicles and resources designed to meet all hazards and national security emergency requirements—telecommunications, operations, logistics, life support and power generation.

FEMA MERS Services and Support

- MERS detachments provide a wide range of support that include the following capabilities:
    - Land Mobile Radio (LMR) support (VHF, UHF, 800 MHz)
    - Portable radios and repeaters
    - Satellite communications
    - Line of sight (LOS) microwave units
    - Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and Radio over IP (RoIP)
    - Secure communications equipment, fax, and video teleconference
    - Power, water, fuel, and life support
    - Communications technicians to maintain and operate the equipment

- Services include:
    - Temporary communications infrastructure support
    - Backup Emergency Operations Center and dispatching capabilities
    - Public alert and warning
    - Backhaul connectivity
    - Sheltering and facility communications

Contact Information

Archie Salters

**Acting Regional Emergency
Communication Coordinator
FEMA/R6/Response Division**

**W# (940) 383-7263
C# (940) 536-9871
C# (940) 231-5772**

Archie.salters@fema.dhs.gov