

Director's Corner

Executive Director, Chris Fischer

It is my pleasure to welcome our two newest staff members to NORCOM; Mark Nelson, Technology Project Manager and Susan Beisheim, Human Resources Manager. We are fortunate to have attracted two highly experienced professionals to help in the creation of our new organization. They both come to NORCOM with a wealth of experience and knowledge and we are very fortunate to have them on board! I hope you will join me in welcoming them to our team.

We have been busy at work developing the information for the 2009 Transition and Operating budgets. The policy budget assumptions have been vetted with the Finance Committee, the Joint Operations Board, the Governing Board and the Principal's Assembly. We will be presenting the actual budget figures for review and discussion at the Joint Operations Board meeting in June and their recommendation will be forwarded to the Governing Board in July. It is expected that the Governing Board will approve the budgets at their August meeting.

We are very busy working on developing the lease for the 7th floor communications center space at Bellevue City Hall, working on the final stages of acquisition of the technology solution and developing benefit and compensation packages for the employees that will transition to NORCOM.

We have been distributing the weekly "newsletter" to all of the employees that are eligible for NORCOM employment to insure that communication is open and ongoing as issues arise and are resolved. We have also included and will continue to post "Frequently Asked Questions" so that all employees get the same answer to common questions that are asked. This has generated a continuing dialogue between employees and our NORCOM team which we hope will continue throughout this transition period.

Lastly, we say "goodbye" to Tracy Burrows who has taken a position with the City of Seattle. Tracy has worked tirelessly for the past several years on the NORCOM project and continues to be our champion. Tracy served as not only the Secretary but the historian of the project since its inception. We will miss Tracy, her enthusiasm for the NORCOM project and all of her assistance. We wish her well and are committed to making her proud of her investment in the success of this project.

Principal Agencies:

City of Bellevue
City of Bothell
City of Clyde Hill
City of Kirkland
City of Medina
City of Mercer Island
City of Snoqualmie
Eastside Fire & Rescue
King County Fire Protection District 27
King County Fire Protection District 45
King & Kittitas County Fire Protection District 51
Northshore Fire Department
Shoreline Fire Department
Woodinville Fire & Life Safety

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Principal Assembly's Report

On May 14, members of the NORCOM Governing Board as well as elected officials met at Kirkland City Hall for the first annual meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on current NORCOM activities and progress, accomplishments to date and the challenges facing us in the months ahead. A work plan was presented to inform the Assembly members how we will prepare for "go live" with operations planned for 7/1/09 and those tasks associated with the work plan. The final topic of discussion was to present the policy assumptions that were used to develop the 2009 Operations Budget. These assumptions were developed, presented and approved by both the Joint Operations Board and the Governing Board in advance of the meeting. The 2009 Operating and Transition budget will be presented in detail to the Joint Operations Board using these assumptions at their June meeting and to the Governing Board in July.

June 13, 2008
8:30-10:00 AM
Kirkland City Hall

July 11, 2008
8:30-10:00 AM
Kirkland City Hall

NORCOM Introduces New Staff Members

HR Director, Susan Beisheim



I have heard about NORCOM in theory for several years. It is exciting to see it take shape and to have the opportunity to be a part of it. It is my hope to make a valuable contribution to NORCOM, drawing on my many years of Human Resource Management experience.

Most recently I worked for 7 years at Valley Communications Center in Kent, Washington, as the HR Manager. Of all of the kinds of HR work that there is, I find working in Public Safety for and with emergency 911 dispatchers to be by far the most rewarding and the most challenging! My formal education includes a BA in Human Development, an SPHR professional certification in the field of Human Resources and lastly, I am a certified practitioner of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

MBTI is a useful tool in the areas of communication styles, conflict resolution, change management and stress-related issues. All of these, I'm sure we can agree will be in play as we transition from the different centers into the new world of NORCOM.

While my area of responsibility is wide, my primary focus has been on the "people". I have spent the best part of my first few weeks with NORCOM in a variety of meetings and venues that gave me access to many potential NORCOM employees. It is wonderful to know the people and learning what their questions and concerns are. While my work will always be broad in scope, "the People" will always be my focus. I look forward to being a part of the team that makes NORCOM internationally recognized as the kind of center that others look to as a model of excellence.

NORCOM Introduces New Staff Members, continued

Technology Project Manager, Mark Nelson

My work with NORCOM began in 2005 when I accepted the opportunity to support fourteen police, fire and EMS agencies evaluate whether to form a consolidated public safety communications agency. In July 2006, the NORCOM Business and Services Plan was complete and I continued to support public safety clients as a consultant.

Although my formal work supporting NORCOM as a consultant was complete in 2006, I continued to follow its formation by attending fire district commissioner and city council meetings as NORCOM was reviewed and approved, and celebrated when NORCOM became a reality in November 2007.

When the search for NORCOM's technology manager was launched, I evaluated the requirements and my skills, experience and willingness to do what is required to make NORCOM a success. I was delighted to be selected in February to support NORCOM at this critical phase of its evolution. Joining the NORCOM team with Chris Fischer and Susan Beisheim, both experienced leaders in public safety, makes NORCOM a unique, and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

For more than 25 years I have supported the development, implementation and integration of new technologies and organizations.

I began my professional career with AT&T in Chicago. In the 1970s I became interested in a project to evaluate demand for telephones in cars. I was soon supporting implementation of the first commercial cellular telephone system which started service in Chicago October 13, 1983. The 25th anniversary celebration will happen in a few months.

I continued to support wireless communications opportunities and relocated with my family to San Francisco and Atlanta before arriving in Seattle in 1989.

My wife, Nancy, and I have been married for 38 years and are grateful that both of our children and their families are nearby. Although I made a run at retirement in 2001, I found after a few months that I missed working with great people, developing organizations and supporting new technologies. When not working, I enjoy being with my family, boating, reading and fixing whatever is broken.

NORCOM Logo



Congratulations to Julie Buckingham-Lofink, Eastside Regional Communications Center Supervisor who submitted the idea of the logo and to Dimitri Ancira and Lee Wallat of Kirkland's multi-media services they turned her dream into reality for NORCOM. The new logo reflects NORCOM perfectly.

HR Update

Human Resource Manager, Susan Beisheim

Wow, has it been a busy 6 weeks since I started with NORCOM. We are making some significant headway in several important areas. I interviewed several different benefit brokers and ultimately selected ClearPoint. Some of you may recognize this name as they also provide benefits to both City of Kirkland and the City of Bellevue. We also have a labor attorney on board who will help us navigate the two existing bargaining contracts and prepare a new one for the NORCOM employees who will be represented. Progress on the MEBT benefit has been slow with some bumps, but it now appears that the concerns have been resolved and we will be moving forward in the process to evaluate possible MEBT plans.

NORCOM is gearing up to recruit its first official NORCOM employee. The job announcement for Finance Manager will be posted soon. Concurrently we will be providing the appropriate boards with the policy statements and other pieces of information that are needed for NORCOM to function independently.

NORCOM NEWS started last month. This is a weekly blast to all potential NORCOM employees to keep them updated on the progress of various projects and activities and to give them another venue to ask and receive answers to their questions. The first issue was well received and we look forward to continuing to provide this to all potential NORCOM employees.

“The Hammy” – is the prized trophy that will be awarded to the winning public safety group that collects the most food, in weight, per person in the month of June. NORCOM has been challenged by Valley Comm and we have accepted that challenge. We look forward to proudly displaying “The Hammy” at the NORCOM headquarters when we win and we know we will win!!

Technology Updates

Technology Manager, Mark Nelson

Evaluation of New World Systems (currently used by Kirkland Police Communications), TriTech (currently used by Eastside Communications) and Tiburon (recently selected by the King County Sheriff Communications Center) continues. The Technology Steering Committee has determined that none of the candidate suppliers currently meets all of NORCOM requirements. Bud Backer – Fire and EMS, Gene Markle – Police, Kevin Bostrom – Communications, Kassie Tadsen – Technology and Mark Nelson – NORCOM project management are the Technology Steering Committee (TSC).

The TSC met with the President / CEO and Chief Technology Officer from each of the three suppliers and will be evaluating what technology elements can be supplied by NORCOM's proposed Go-Live on July 1, 2009, and what elements would be available after the Go-Live. The TSC is tasked with developing a consensus recommendation to the NORCOM Joint Operations Board.

Planning is underway to support NORCOM's operation as a stand-alone entity. Although NORCOM will initially be located at Bellevue City Hall, its technology and operation must be configured to facilitate independent operation. This planning involves telephone service, local and wide area networks, servers, and all of the other technologies required for NORCOM's independent operation. Much of the technology currently used by Eastside Communications is supported by people who are candidates to join NORCOM's technology team. This experience is of great value to NORCOM.

The Challenge

Food Drive June 1st – June 30th

Valley Communications Center – Kent, Washington has challenged all potential NORCOM employees and other local Communication Centers to a food drive in the month of June. The public safety group that collects the most food, in weight, per person in the month of June will win “The Hammy”. The food collected will be donated to food bank of the winning groups choosing. All donations can be accumulated at your centers or it may be dropped off to NORCOM headquarters in Kirkland.

