

Director's Corner

Executive Director, Chris Fischer

Welcome to this edition of the NORCOM quarterly newsletter. It has been a very busy few months here at NORCOM. Our staff has grown in size and now includes: Executive Director, Technology Project Manager, Human Resources Manager, Finance Manager, Operations Manager and by the time this is published we will have added an Administrative Assistant to our team. We are in the process of adding our final management team member, the Professional Standards and Development Manager who will be responsible for Training, Quality Assurance, Records and Accreditation.

We have been based at Kirkland Fire Station #26 and use the training room for our Joint Operations Committee meetings and other meetings as necessary. We appreciate the hospitality of the City of Kirkland, specifically the Kirkland Fire Department for use of the project office space. We will remain at Station #26 until transition to the 7th floor of Bellevue City Hall in late spring of next year. They have been extremely tolerant of our odd hours of work and our intrusion into their station. Thank you!

We are beginning to develop standard operating procedures to support discussions and decisions as it relates to police operations. We still have work to do, but things are beginning to come together. Specifically, we have reviewed the differences and likenesses of police operations among the various police departments and are finding they are more similar than we originally thought and we are optimistic that this process will move forward smoothly. The SOPs will be vetted with the Police Operations committee and then presented to the Joint Operations Board for approval. The same process will be followed for fire operations, but we expect that process should also move along smoothly since Zone 1 fire agencies have been working together for quite some time and procedures are clearly developed. As SOPs are converted from Eastside Dispatch to NORCOM, they will be vetted with the Fire Operations Committee and then to the Joint Operations Board for approval.

You will see from the other information provided by NORCOM staff, we are all very busy moving towards our goal of going "live" by July 2009. There is still so very much to get done but we have a great NORCOM team in place. We have been extremely selective and hired experts to guide us through the transition and development process. We look forward to hearing from you if you have comments or questions and will provide any information that we have at that time.

Regards,

Chris Fischer

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

NORCOM Introduces New Staff Members

Operations Manager, Kevin Bostrom



Hello everyone! My name is Kevin Bostrom and I am excited to be the NORCOM Operations Manager. I have been hearing about NORCOM for many years and am happy to now be a part of the planning process. Being a part of the creation of a brand new communications center is an exciting opportunity and I am honored to have been chosen for this role.

You may recognize me from my previous employment with Eastside Communications. My employment at Eastside included tenure in the positions of dispatcher, lead dispatcher, and supervisor. Prior to Eastside, I was also a dispatcher for a couple of years at Skagit 911 and a few years at Mason County FIRECOM. Additionally, I have prior experience as a volunteer firefighter/EMT and have done volunteer work with the Red Cross.

Because I started in public safety while in high school, I deferred my higher education until later in life. While working at Eastside, I took online courses in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in Emergency Management with a minor in Public Safety Communications. Working full-time and taking courses part-time was a challenge not to be taken lightly, but I valued the experiences of work and did not want a break in my service.

Much work is being done now by many interested parties to ensure a smooth transition of operations to NORCOM. From the operations standpoint, things are beginning to happen quickly. I am confident the work everyone is doing now will ensure a successful transition next year. This is truly a team effort and it could not be done without the assistance of many. Thank you to everyone that is helping make NORCOM a success!

I look forward to the exciting times ahead and to meeting you all. Please feel free to contact at any time.

Upcoming Meetings:

Governing Board Meetings
Occur the 2nd Friday of each month
8:30 AM

October 10, 2008
November 14, 2008
December 12, 2008
Kirkland City Hall, Peter Kirk Rm

Joint Operations Board Meetings
Occur the 3rd Thursday of each month
10:30 AM

October 16, 2008
November 20, 2008
December 18, 2008
Kirkland, Fire Station 26

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NORCOM Introduces New Staff Members

Finance Manager, Gwen Jewett

Greetings to everyone! My name is Gwen and I would like to tell you all a bit about myself. I have been working in Governmental accounting since 2000 when I started with the City of Fircrest as an Accounting Technician. During my time there I processed payroll and accounts payable, managed the Utility accounting, and spent a short time as the Acting Finance Director. I moved to Valley Communications Center in November of 2004 as the Payroll and Accounting Specialist and was promoted to Finance Manager in February of 2006. Now I am so excited to be a part of NORCOM!

In my life prior to Governmental accounting I worked at Safeco Field for the inaugural season, I worked at the Rainier Brewery until it was sold to Miller and closed, and I pursued a career in Musical Theater.

On the personal side of my life, I have two daughters, 18 and 20. My fiancé and I are remodeling/adding on to our home in Burien. I like to camp, sew, read, and play softball, lots and lots of softball! I have visited both the Kirkland and the Eastside Dispatch Center and I look forward to meeting all of you on our journey to our new NORCOM home!

Operations Update

Operations Manager, Kevin Bostrom

Much work has begun to ensure smooth operations from the Bellevue and Kirkland communications centers to NORCOM operations. Many of the topics needing to be addressed were placed on hold until the Operations Manager was hired and could provide input. We are now well on our way and have been working hard to make NORCOM operations a success!

The police operations committee has been working diligently on many topics. This group has been meeting weekly and has been drafting the duties of the data/service position, creation of new police problem/nature codes, and which duties of a records nature will be NORCOM duties and which will be retained by the partner agencies. It is the goal of this committee to have many of the NORCOM police operations ready by January 1st to make our go-live transition smoother. Specifically, it is important that we have both communications centers using the same problem/nature codes and clearing dispositions on January 1st to ensure accurate calls for service reporting. This committee will now be meeting bi-weekly to ensure adequate time for everyone to review operating procedures before group discussion.

There is work to be done on fire operations. However, the Zone 1 fire agencies have been working collaboratively for some time now and already have well established operating procedures. Because of this, less work is needed to transition those operations to NORCOM operations. Additionally, work does need to occur on medic unit calls for service billing. Operations will be working with Finance in the near future to evaluate how medic unit calls for service billing will occur.

Without going into great detail, we are addressing many operational topics including: technology, staffing, lease negotiations, space configurations, backup operations, performance standards, operating procedures, and supporting the work of human resources and finance.

Finance News

Finance Manager, Gwen Jewett

The proposed 2009 budget was approved by the NORCOM Governing Board at the August 8th Governing Board meeting. Participating agencies were advised of the 2009 User Fees on September 5th. The Principal and Subscriber Agencies are now required to approve the fees by November 30th. Once each agencies legislative authority has approved their portion of the fees NORCOM will hold a Public Hearing prior to the Governing Board adopting the final Budget on December 12.

On September 4th notification was received that the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) Seattle Bellevue Grant Core Group approved \$1,498,500 to NORCOM for Technology related expenses. Many thanks go to Fire Chief Trevino, Deputy Chief Warren Merritt and Rebecca Clark of the Bellevue Fire Department. If it were not for all of their hard work and tenacity this grant would not have become a reality for NORCOM.

The possibility to “go live” earlier than the July 2009 date has been discussed and we are in the process of researching the opportunities and disadvantages of adjusting the original July 09 date. Right now we are focused on the financial implications and transitional planning of any recommendation that varies from the original plan. Once we have completed our analysis we will draft a recommendation to bring forward to the Joint Operations and Governance Board detailing the options of a “go live” date earlier than July.

Special Recognition

For many months **Jeannie McGivern** from the Kirkland City Manager’s Office has supported NORCOM with Governing Board Meetings, compliance with Washington State requirements and anything else that was required. And she made it all look easy. Jeannie assures us she will assist Tami McNeal get started at NORCOM, and complete the transition of tasks from Kirkland to NORCOM. The NORCOM team appreciates all that Jeannie has done.

Without the great support from **Sarah Jacobs** at Eastside Communications you would not be reading *NORCOM Dispatch*. The NORCOM team appreciates Sarah’s timely reminders, gentle nudging, and skills at making what each of us writes look the way it does when you finally read it.

Greg Grannis, Bellevue PD PIO, handles the distribution of *NORCOM Dispatch* and offers helpful guidance and direction to those who are sorting through the transition to NORCOM. Greg is a reliable go-to person, who is skilled at quickly answering questions and solving problems.

Tracey Dunlap, Kirkland’s Director of Finance and NORCOM’s Treasurer, continues to graciously support the transition of NORCOM’s financial planning, budget, payables, finance committee and all the money-related matters. Gwen’s experience is allowing her to quickly assume responsibility for all of this work, but having Tracey and her team nearby speeds Gwen’s work.

HR Update

Human Resource Manager, Susan Beisheim

On the HR front a lot of recruiting has been going on. We are now in the process of recruiting what will be the final compliment to the NORCOM Management Team, the Professional Standards and Development Manager. NORCOM now has in place the Executive Director, Technology/Project Manager, Finance Manager, Operations Manager and of course, me, the HR Manager. We are also excited to have hired our Administrative Assistant, Tami McNeal to provide all Managers some clerical support and take all those meeting notes and minutes!!

Additional selection processes will include the processes for the Training and Team Supervisors. The selection processes will answer the question of “who” will do what even though it is not our expectation that there will be a change in any positions until the “go live” date or shortly before.

We are continuing to work on the Letter of Interest that will solicit a commitment to join NORCOM from current dispatchers in good standing at both City of Kirkland Police Dispatch Center and Eastside Communications Center. These letters will address the majority of questions and concerns that have been asked over the last few months. It is our hope that with these answers the majority of talented, experienced dispatchers will choose to join NORCOM and be part of what will become an amazing regional emergency dispatch center. Similar letters will be sent to current Public Safety IT Personnel, and those in good standing will be encouraged to commit to join NORCOM. We expect the letters to go out in mid-October.

In an effort to be fully staffed on the day we “go live”, NORCOM will be launching an advertising program to begin to reach out to the various communities and promote careers in 911 emergency dispatch. We will accomplish this in a variety of ways including public education and informational meetings. Having a career in emergency dispatch is an exciting option that much of the general public has limited knowledge about and NORCOM wants to tap into these areas for potential dispatchers.

A lot of behind the scenes work continues with both MEBT and Health and Welfare benefits. These processes, while, in some ways seem slow, are making progress. Our goal is always on getting the best that NORCOM can possibly offer to our future employees and still remain financially responsible to our participating agencies.

While my “plate” is very full along with all the other NORCOM Managers, I am always interested in talking to anyone who has a question or just wants to chat about NORCOM in general. We can accomplish that through e-mail, phone or visits, your place or mine (that would be the NORCOM World Wide Headquarters, aka Station 26 in Kirkland). NORCOM NEWS continues to bring you the most up to the minute (literally) info that we have. As always, take good care, s.

Technology Updates

Technology Manager, Mark Nelson

NORCOM's Joint Operations Board and Governing Board unanimously approved New World Systems as the supplier for NORCOM's integrated technology. The Technology Steering Committee and many others are reviewing the technology requirements while New World is integrating its contract form and NORCOM's various contract forms in to a single document.

NORCOM's requirements for the contract with New World are very specific and very detailed and development of a contract is progressing in an organized and measured way. Prior to presenting a contract to the Governing Board for approval, it will be reviewed and revised by experts in each element of the technology and reviewed by the Joint Operations Board.

The protracted time required to develop the contract negotiation principles, a contract form, detailed requirements, a comprehensive statement of work, interface definitions and test plans means it is unlikely that all of the technology will be available to support the start of NORCOM's operation on July 1, 2009 using a single technology.

Kevin Bostrom has begun planning to support the start of NORCOM operation on July 1 using the existing technologies while the new technology is implemented, tested and made operational.

Marlys Davis, the King County 9-1-1 Program Manager recently met with the NORCOM team. Marlys reviewed NORCOM's transition and start-up plan and shared the latest initiatives for next-generation 9-1-1 which will facilitate the use of text messages, video, voice-over-IP and other technologies to improve the reporting of emergencies. Chris' responsibilities as president of APCO International www.apco911.org frequently require her to respond to inquires from the FCC Congress and others concerning many public safety technology initiatives. Chris and Marlys reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate and coordinate their work. Marlys also reviewed with NORCOM possible funding available from the King County 9-1-1 program to support NORCOM's start-up and ongoing operation.

Planning continues to support NORCOM's operation as a stand-alone entity at Bellevue City Hall. Eastside Communications Center operates as an integrated element within the City of Bellevue's technology and NORCOM and Bellevue are exploring exactly how to separate NORCOM's operation from Bellevue. This planning involves assignment of telephone numbers, connections to state and federal law enforcement and fire station alerting systems and all of the other technologies which NORCOM will utilize.

The technology team is also developing and supporting NORCOM's operation of the project office at Kirkland Fire Station 26. The support and cooperation from the City of Kirkland has allowed NORCOM to focus on NORCOM's operations, implementation and transition planning.

NORCOM's web-site is now operational and is a place where job announcements and position descriptions are posted and where documents are available for public disclosure. NORCOM's use of the web-site for information disclosure is a way of meeting Washington State requirements, and reducing NORCOM's operating costs. NORCOM information on Kirkland's site will be transitioned to the NORCOM web-site in the coming months.

www.norcom.org