

~~~ Conference Session Descriptions ~~~

**Tuesday, March 3, 2026**

**Conference Opening** - Color Guard from Lakeshore 119 Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol, U.S. Air Force Auxiliary.

**Opening Address from MPSCS** - An update on the progress and challenges of the MPSCS over the past year. Speaker: Mr. Brad Stoddard

**Opening Address from EMHSD** - An update on the progress and challenges of the EMHSD over the past year. Speaker: Capt. Kevin Sweeney

**FEMA Region 5-Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group** – Updates on activities in FEMA Region 5. Speaker: Dr. Karl Arriola

**Signal Boost: Finding Your Frequency in Public Safety** - Strong communication starts with strong connections. This session offers a chance to meet others working in public safety and emergency communications, share perspectives, and explore how relationships across agencies and disciplines can improve coordination and outcomes. Whether you're new to the field or have years of experience, you'll walk away with fresh insights and a broader network to support your work. Speakers: Mr. Brad Stoddard and Ms. Jaclyn Barcroft

**Work Group Updates**

An update on the progress and challenges of each Work Group over the past year.

**AUXCOMM Work Group** - Speakers: Ms. Monica McAlister and Mr. Max Schneider

**Building RF and Paging Work Group** - Speakers: Mr. Greg Farrer and Mr. Greg Janik

**Communications Unit Work Group** - Speakers: Mr. Ray Hasil and Mr. Nick Carpenter

**Encryption Work Group** - Speakers: Mr. Chris Kuhl, Mr. Tim Jones

**Public Alerting Work Group** - Speaker: Ms. Monica McAlister and Rob Dale

**Security Work Group** - Speakers: Capt. Kevin Sweeney and Mr. Brad Stoddard

**State 911 Office** - An update on the progress and challenges of the State 911 Office over the past year. Speaker: Ms. Amy Magirl

**State GIS Update**- An update on the activities at the state Geographic Information Systems (GIS) office. Speaker: Mr. Mark Holmes

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026**

**MPSCS Technology & Infrastructure Update** - Update on current infrastructure and technology changes within Michigan's Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS).  
Speakers: Ms. Anastasia Ferguson-Nelligan, Mr. Rod Anway, Mr. Greg Farrer, Mr. Randy Williams

**Connected in Crisis - Stronger Signals, Faster Response by Verizon Frontline** - Overview of Verizon Frontline's new and existing solutions that heavily impact first responders and interoperability. Introduction to our Frontline Network Slicing for First Responders, satellite technology, deployables as a service, etc. Speakers: Ms. Danielle Warner, Mr. Bob DeRosa, Ms. Allison Pemberton

**We Don't Do Big Very Often, So...** - A moderated panel looking at communications challenges summarized by the phrase: "We don't do big very often, so we don't do big very well." Many times, we find when looking at After Action Reviews of incidents that are unusually large, unusual in nature, and/or span multiple jurisdictions and disciplines, that communications did not go as well as we wanted. We often express great resolve to do something to avoid them the next time, but our intentions are lost over time as the resolution seems out of reach. The panel will discuss some of these challenges and present ideas on how to move forward. Moderator: Mr. Charles Cribley Panelists: Mr. Francis D'Huyvetter, Ms. Dominique Clemente

**FirstNet** - Program and Solutions Updates in Michigan - Review of FirstNet progress updates in Michigan with a review of evolving products and solutions available on the nation's public safety network. Speaker: Mr. Robert Jabkowski

**Developing Exercises for AUXCOMM** - An introduction to how the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is being applied in the development statewide exercises. Speaker: Mr. Max Schneider

**Communications Infrastructure and Interoperability Challenges Within an Airport** - The presentation will include a brief introduction to the Gerald R. Ford International Airport and how it is operated. The discussion will also include information regarding the radio specific infrastructure and the equipment that was installed and utilized to make the radio system function within airport boundaries. The presentation will also touch on the interoperability experienced when public safety agencies outside of the airport are responding during emergencies and for training exercises. Speakers: Ms. Jill Haarman, Mr. Josh Shepardson

**From Michigan to the Nation: Lessons Learned in Building and Modernizing Public Safety Communications Systems** - My career began at MPSCS, where I gained foundational experience in statewide radio, P25, and interoperability. In this session, I'll share lessons gleaned from decades of leading public safety communications initiatives: P25 migrations, NG9-1-1 ESInet transitions, CAD/RMS integrations, and multiagency interoperability. Attendees will hear real-world successes and challenges, and walk away with actionable strategies for governance, stakeholder collaboration, technology adoption, and sustaining long-term system resilience. Speaker: Mr. Tommy Thompson

**Leadership at All Levels** - A session dedicated to helping those in attendance understand and recognize the impact each person's leadership has on the teams they work with and for. It will define leadership through actions and not status or title. Speaker: Mr. Chad Connelly

**Record Retention for 9-1-1 Records** - DTMB Records Management Services worked with Michigan Communications Directors Association to review and update the records Retention and Disposal Schedule for 9-1-1 Call Centers. This presentation will discuss the legal requirements for managing government records and best practices for recordkeeping. Speaker: Ms. Caryn Wojcik

**Remote Area Communication – The LSPR Challenge** - This presentation will explore a method of providing wide area communications in a location with limited resources and challenging terrain. The mission is to provide a safety net of communications for the Lake Superior Pro Rally (LSPR) working with 300+ volunteers to ensure the rally is operated in a safe and effective manner. Speaker: Mr. Roger VanDamme, Mr. Adam VanDamme

**Partnerships in the Cold: Building Partnerships Now for Better Communications Later** - This presentation will cover the Cold Weather Exercise in March 2025 from a communications perspective. Discussing the roles of establishing partnerships now for better response results later. It will also cover impacts of the cold on communications, and what we can do now to make future communications better. Speakers: Ms. Jessica Gould, Mr. Brian Hummel

**Information and Intelligence Sharing During the 2024 U.S. Elections** - The 2024 U.S. elections presented one of the most complex threat environments in recent history, marked by a surge in cyberattacks, foreign disinformation campaigns, and the misuse of generative AI. This presentation explores how federal, state, and local agencies—alongside Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs)—collaborated to detect, analyze, and respond to threats targeting election infrastructure and public trust during the 2024 U.S. Elections. The run up to the election will briefly be discussed and the presentation will primarily focus on the use of Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) rooms during the days before the election. Speaker: Mr. Ryan Rich

**2025 Ironman Michigan Public Safety Communications** - Overview of interoperable communications for the Ironman 70.3 Michigan that occurred in Frankfort, Michigan. This was a pre-planned multi-agency event for all response disciplines, including volunteers.

Speaker: Mr. Cory Ellis

**SHARES for the Emergency Manager** - SHARES is a US Department of Homeland Security radio service expressly available for emergency communications. Some of the benefits of SHARES include frequency reservation, encryption for both voice and data, and established stations at the State of Michigan Emergency Operations Center. With Winlink it is possible to send end-to-end encrypted email traffic. SHARES is on the Contingency/ Emergency end of communications PACE plans. SHARES is not amateur radio or AUXCOMM.

Speaker: Mr. Michael Boersma

#### Thursday, March 5, 2026

**2026 Encryption and Standards Update – A National Perspective** - The Project 25 (P25) standards are constantly evolving due to user needs and requests. Join us to hear about the latest news for P25 Standards and encryption updates including a review of the Standards process and how users can get involved. Provided from a national perspective that is driving encryption and the challenges. Additionally, an overview of the P25 standards process from the user needs to introduction to the manufacturers as a standard. Speaker: Mr. Scott Wright

**Building a Unified Voice: Integrating PIOs Into Statewide Interoperable Communications** - Clear, coordinated messaging is as critical as radios and response plans. This session explains how PIOs fit into statewide response frameworks, synchronize messaging during activations, and use social media for communication and real-time awareness. Drawing on recent incidents and exercises, it shows how PIOs and emergency managers can work with partner agencies to deliver timely, accurate, unified information. Topics include social media monitoring, rumor control, rapid approvals, and building a shared communication rhythm across jurisdictions. Speakers: Ms. Lauren Thompson-Phillips, Mr. Clayton Cummins

**Frozen but Connected: Communications during the 2025 Northern Michigan Ice Storm** - Panel discussion with MPSCS, Michigan State Police, and local responses agencies regarding communications during the 2025 Northern Michigan Ice Storm. Moderator: Mr. Randy Williams

**Human Factors** - This presentation introduces Human Factors and their role in strengthening mental health, well-being, and performance in first responder communications. By taking a holistic, systems-based approach, looking at the individual, the work itself, and the environment, Human Factors helps agencies identify stressors, reduce performance barriers, and build healthier, more resilient communication centers. Speaker: Ms. Amanda Winans