Public Alerting

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• Handout
• Evolution of alerting
• How Ohio’s system works
• Hit the high points of IPAWS
• IPAWS limitations compared to claims of capabilities
• Discuss the NY Wireless Alert from Sept. 19
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- 1951-1963 CONELRAD
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• 1963-1997 EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM
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• 1997-PRESENT EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM
• 2006 IPAWS

Advent of social networking and cellphones
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Ohio’s System

- Ohio utilizes county based local alerting
- Sheriff and County EMA Director
- County defined by FIPS code for IPAWS
- 11 local areas in the state for conventional EAS radio broadcast using LP1
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IPAWS The Details

- 7 Basic parameters for alert:
  - identifier
  - Alert type
  - Expiration time
  - Location
  - Message text
  - Select WEA yes/no then 90 character message
  - send
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IPAWS

- Transmitted to Federal Government via internet
- Requires software and digital certificate for access
- Alert is sent to all radio stations in the country simultaneously
- Radio station filters the alert to local area
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WEA

• Cellphone alert - Wireless Emergency Alert
• Uses notification function in phone
• There are two levels of public alerts
  – Warnings and advisories.
  – Only Warnings can be issued via WEA using the IPAWS system.
  – Advisories cannot use the WEA system.
  – 3 items qualify a warning:
    • Immediate threat, verified threat, location of threat
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IPAWS limitations

- Internet based
- WEA 90 characters only - soon 360?
- Cannot draw true polygons/radio propagation limited
- No paging or limited distribution/groups
- Cannot test the WEA system
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IPAWS is Not

- Not a subscription based mass notification system
- Not an Emergency Telephone Notification (ETN) system or reverse dial system
- Not a Short Message Service (SMS) or email sign-up system
- Not a paging or limited distribution notification system
  - e.g. can’t send a recall notice to a select group of employees

IPAWS is for:

- **Emergency** Alert and Warning information dissemination to the Public
  - For example - urgent information impacting public safety
  - Not meant for messaging about changes to the trash collection schedule
- Alerting all citizens in an given area

IPAWS Can:

- Activate EAS Radio and TV stations
- **Alert** all (WEA capable) cell phones in a defined geographic area, even when cell networks are congested
- Send a warning message for broadcast over NOAA Weather Radio
NY City WEA Alert

- Sent September 19, 2016
- 7:54 am Saturday morning
- Electronic wanted poster
- "This is the future," NYPD commissioner James O'Neill said of the system, which enables authorized local, state and federal authorities to target emergency alerts to mobile phones in specific geographic areas.
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NY City WEA Alert

Emergency Alert now
WANTED: Ahmad Khan Rahami, 28-yr-old male. See media for pic. Call 9-1-1 if seen.
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NY City WEA Alert

- The perpetrator was found sleeping in doorway in Linden NJ by a worker.
- Ironically, the worker didn’t recognize the man as the “armed and dangerous” subject of the massive manhunt, rather alerted authorities to a possible vagrant.
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QUESTIONS

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