

Emergency Preparedness Committee  
Bel Air Ridge Center - 2760 Claray  
Wednesday March 18, 2015 7:30 pm

**Call to order:**

8:00 pm (Meeting relocated back to Bel Air Ridge from Les River Community Center.)

**Roll call**

**Present**

**Affiliation/Title**

Chuck Maginnis	Bel Air Resident, BABCNC Safety Chair
Hildreth Simmons	Residents of Beverly Glen
Dan Palmer	Residents of Beverly Glen, EP Chair
Maureen Smith	Bel Air Resident
Ron Cornell	Bel Air Ridge, EP Chair
Susan Reuben	Holmby-Westwood Property HOA, VP
Michael Schlenker	Bel Air Crest Resident, EP Chair
Jonathan Zimmerman	LAFD Auxiliary Communications, Battalion 14, Fire Station 108.
Cathy Palmer	BABCNC Administrator

**Special Guest Speakers**

Rick Polehonka, Sr. Project Manager, LA-RICS project  
Fritz Rote, Assistant Manager, LA-RICS project

**Introduction of Attendees:**

Everyone introduced themselves and their association or residential area.

Jonathan Zimmerman is from North Hollywood. He is a member of LAFD Auxiliary Communications, Battalion 14; Fire Station 108, interested in Emergency communications. He uses amateur radio and is a licensed ham operator. He has repeaters up at Verdugo Peak, Tree People, and a 220 link on Mulholland Drive. These could provide cell tower assistance for our area. He can provide some useful communications to our groups on their frequencies. He related that the City of LA has just built them a new tower. We can credit Michael Schlenker for his attendance.

Michael Schlenker is the new Chair of Bel Air Crest EP Committee. They are set up with Motorola radios, a portable radio system; 13 block captains are assigned radios. They do drills; and have ham operators that tie in and have intercommunications with HOAs. He and Ron Cornell started the ham radio EP subcommittee group and Michael is now leading this group, with Ron still heavily involved.

Ron Cornell is EP Chair at this HOA at Bel Air Ridge. Ron described their intra-radio needs, their CB Radio Network and the ham radio subcommittee project. He is a licensed ham radio operator who is trying to tie in hillside groups along with the LAFD.

Susan Reubin is VP of Holmby-Westwood Property HOA, which includes 1145 homes. She is writing the LA Community Emergency Disaster Plan. Susan related that they will be needing a repeater and is seeking help and information on this. She would like to divide the area into three areas, with 3 captains. She asks what kinds of radios, frequencies, channels to use, and requests input. Ron offered information on their Kenwood system. Rick Cole mentioned someone in Victorville was very good.

Maureen Smith is a Bel Air Resident who stated that she is here to learn.

Dan Palmer introduced himself and is EP Chair for Residents of Beverly Glen. He described their radio communication system going from Mulholland to Sunset. They use UHF radios. He is getting ham radio certified.

Hildreth Simmons is with Residents of Beverly Glen. She stayed on at Les Rivers to direct any latecomers to the meeting at this location due to a logistics problem at the Community Center.

Guest speaker, Rick Polehonka, gave detailed background information on himself, including but not limited to his having worked in law enforcement as a homicide detective, and has 40 years of radio communication experience. He moved into various aspects of safety communications with large companies like Northrup culminating at this point in the technology. He was recruited by LA-RICs in 2008. As to older technology, Rick stated that “ham will never go away” and that “CB and ham will be here forever!” He also referred to cobalt which continues to be used.

Fritz Rote introduced himself as Assistant Manager of the LA-RICs project. He was brought on board by Rick. He is from Virginia and has worked for 30 years in this industry. He has joined LA-RICS recently.

**Approval of minutes:**

Maureen moved to approve the January 21, 2015 minutes, Ron seconded, and minutes were unanimously approved.

**LA-RICS presentation on Improved Radio & Broadband for Public Safety Providers**

Guest Speakers are Rick Polehonka, Sr. Project Manager & Fritz Rote, Assistant Manager. Rick started with an overview and the purpose of LA\_RICS being “To engage in regional and cooperative planning and coordination of government services to establish a wide-area interoperability public safety communications network.” In essence they are trying to allow greater communications with LAPD and from LAFD to various communities including HOAs who are first responders. Federal Government kick-started this, and by 2022, budget permitted, there will be a national cellular network, for first responders. This will feature a nationwide public safety broadband. 911 brought to the forefront the lack of interoperable communications and the need for one network. They are trying to do away with public servants having to carry multiple radios. This goes against interests of vendors who enjoy competition. Cellular technology and radio will converge. There is a great range of prices for radios, from \$100 to \$7,000. There are 34 million that live in Canada and 38 million that live in California. Out of this 38 million 10 million live in LA. The goal is to support 34,000 first responders protecting 10 million residents across 4,000 square miles. This places first responders at the core of their mission. This will be governed by a single, Joint Powers Authority (JPA) representing 86 jurisdictions and 81 separate agencies.

Below, Rick Polehonka & Fritz Rote answer questions while BABCNC administrator Cathy Palmer takes notes.



LA-RICS will provide interoperable communications for all of Los Angeles County. Orange County and San Diego County are on the same radio network. Many counties are regional. In LA, we have 40 separate radio systems. Police, Fire and all the incorporated cities like Beverly Hills and Culver City have their own systems. They have to patch for communications which introduces failure and limitations. We need to build a county-wide radio network.

It will take 250 million dollars to build the infrastructure; then to buy radios for every fireman, policeman/woman, etc., at \$4,000 per radio; needed to look to Federal Government for grants to fund this, and they have a \$154 million grant. This is governed by a Joint Powers Authority, representing 86 jurisdictions and 81 separate agencies.

The Need for Interoperability –This improves operational efficiency of first and secondary responders saving lives, reducing property damage and minimizing economic and social disruptions. The future of public safety voice and data communications is 700MHz and LA-RICS program establishes a viable plan for T-Band migration. Voice and data will be converging. With LTE, LA-RICS provides secure 4G data network for high-speed video & data access. The spectrum will mean different chunks, like different kinds of apples, 700 MHz, UHF, and others. They're different and use T-band UHF analog. When they started to go digital, the Federal Government took it back and gave it to the cities, and to public safety agencies. By 2021, the Federal Government will take T-Band off on auction. LA-RICS has designed it so as to allow them to migrate off T-band and not get stuck without communications. LA-RICS will be two networks: Voice network and data network, one radio versus two radios. They can speak to each other. Fire Departments like analog. Digital cuts out. Analog degrades but you can still hear the voice. Interoperability in Los Angeles County means 81 public safety agencies and 34,000 first responders with the inclusion of 17,000 secondary responders. It plans to replace 40 different localized public safety communications systems

LA-RICS Benefits to Public Safety -Land Mobile Radio (LMR) provides interoperable communications and shared data for multijurisdictional responses. LMR Land Mobile Radio Sites in LA County: 120 sites are being considered; however, expect they will end up with 90. There will be 4 channels at a tower site, it automatically will switch over to another channel, and conversations will resume. Operationally, they set up talk groups; how do the radios get programmed as there are 86 Cities in LA County. Dan asked about jamming ham radios. Rick replied there is no equivalent to the ham radio world. Rick asked if we interface with our Disaster Coordinator in this area here and Chuck responded that there is a new individual and has not been in touch. Ron wants to use the ham radios to communicate with the Fire Department. Jonathan Zimmerman stated that with ham radio you don't need infrastructure; the disadvantage may be the inability to reach the station you are hoping to reach. Testing is needed. Dan Palmer's ham radio needs to be set up. In emergencies, airwaves would be saturated. It eliminates need for multiple localized public safety communications systems. Long Term Evolution (LTE) of data information is critical for the efficiency of public safety. The broadband vision is "To provide emergency responders with the first nationwide, high-speed, wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety." LTE provides a secure data network (4G) technology to provide high-speed video and data access. This will provide live surveillance cameras for Search & Rescue, body cameras for Law Enforcement & Fire, conditions of victims trapped in vehicles and buildings, and in-field video conferencing with EMS & hospitals. Besides, it will be exclusive to public safety response. Chuck clarified that LA-RICs is citywide opposed to intra-community communications which is also needed by HOAs. Chuck asked when this will be operative. They anticipate that in 2018, this program will be realized. The question is whether this will be available to us.

LA-RICS LMR and LTE Systems -Land Mobile Radio (LMR) System (Voice Radio System), Digital Trunked Voice Radio Subsystem (DTVRS), Analog Conventional Voice Radio Subsystem (ACVRS), Los Angeles Regional Tactical Communications Subsystem (LARTCS), and Narrowband Mobile Data Network are the various systems that can be deployed. Long Term Evolution (LTE) System, 4G Data, Voice over LTE (Cellular Telephony), Push-To-Talk Voice LA-RICS LMR and LTE Systems are future technologies with 120 sites considered in LA County and with up to 90 included in the proposed system design. The final site count will be determined by vendor's final system design with the remaining 30 intended as potential alternate locations. Locations will be widely dispersed across the greater Los Angeles Region. Sites can include antenna support structure for new & existing locations. Lattice towers that are 90 to 200 feet tall, monopoles that are 20 to 180 foot tall and building mounts (roof, facade) LMR are considered.

From left to right, front: Jonathan Zimmerman, Ron Cornell & Michael Schlenker. Back row: Dan Palmer, Susan Reuben, Maureen Smith and Hildreth Simmons attentively listen to the presentation.



Sites in LA County will be considered. Chuck asked if line of site was needed and Rick responded yes. There is a plan. Jonathan will give the website information. Rick mentioned there are two that will go in over the next two years, in Council District 5, on the Century Plaza rooftop and at Beverly Glen & Mulholland. They are trying to use sites with existing infrastructure in place. They are building 4G to be up and running by August 2015. It is a broadband Verizon type network, with microwave and fiber optics. They are building a public safety network which offers 99.99% coverage. They will later have to put in more towers to get more coverage. Monopole (windmills) are ATT cell towers. They are public safety grade, 70 feet tall, thicker and stronger. Towers are on government ground. Publically owned property can earn a CEQA exemption. Monopoles can be no higher than 70 feet, and can't be on wetland as historical significance comes into play. They are going to use mostly Fire, Police, Sheriff Stations and courthouses to place these poles. Dan asked how the poles are being powered, by solar and battery backup? Rick replied, electricity, backup #1 battery, #2 generator, and built on site where the poles are, which will run 24 or 72 hours depending on the location.

LMR Sites in Council District 5 –Nineteen LMR sites are LA City operated sites, 13 City owned sites and 6 Proprietary Department owned sites. Sixteen sites are shared system sites containing both LMR & LTE system equipment while there are 2 LMR sites in District 5: Century Plaza, 2049 Century Park East and a private site in Beverly Hills. SAA is required with One Hundred Towers. A map was shown with the District 5 sites.

Public Safety Broadband Network (PSBN) - Funding: Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) means \$154.6M awarded to LA-RICS PSBN with a cutoff date of September 30, 2015. First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) and independent authority within NTIA plan to be implemented. The mission is to build, deploy, and operate NPSBN. Authorization is needed to create the first high-speed nationwide interoperable broadband network

dedicated to public safety where Long-Term Evolution (“LTE”) wireless technology standards and 20MHz in the 700 MHz band will be used.

LTE Sites in LA County -There are 231 monopole sites identified for the LTE network in all of Los Angeles County and all sites are CEQA exempt qualified sites. NEPA clearance is required for all sites with heights from 28’ – 70’. Stealth and standard monopoles will be deployed. Of the 231 LTE sites, 59 sites are in the City of Los Angeles with 50 City owned sites, 8 Proprietary Department owned sites and 1 U.S. Army Corp of Engineer site. There are a few more sites.

LMR and LTE Cellular Coverage Differences – The types of technology being used are a Land Mobile Radio system which reaches 25 miles. Cellular doesn’t travel long distances as a cell tower doesn’t cover three miles. A 45 foot monopole, painted in a midnight green magic color developed by Dunn Edwards and Disney easily camouflage into the green environment and is hard for anyone to detect. Pole sites camouflaged by palm trees and the like are more acceptable to neighbors. Cellular is no good for this application as commercial cellular sites shuts down when overloaded.

Why These LMR and LTE Sites - Coverage and capacity are the main two reasons being Interoperable LMR communications for LA area public safety agencies and for mutual aid services. Broadband service to Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) like law enforcement, fire stations, hospitals and court buildings are needed. The primary consideration is for sites having a direct relationship to public safety agencies

What’s next for LA-RICS -Complete LMR system design and SAA’s will continue with CEQA and NEPA reviews. Executing on site construction and gaining Site Access Agreements for City of Los Angeles was executed on November 26, 2014. Working with Building & Safety to execute construction permits is important. Everyone applauded Rick and Fritz for their very detailed and thorough presentation.

### **Update from Communications Subcommittee on Inter-HOA Communications**

Michael Schlenker & Ron Cornell were introduced and Michael Schlenker was announced as the new leader of the group although Ron will closely assist him. Michael gave background that they emerged to help with the ACS LAFD CERT plan to provide radio communications from various areas for fire alerts and to distribute information after large earthquakes. There are many types of radios and many use different frequencies. They are trying to use a single ham radio signal through the LAFDs ACS program. As an update he said they have now have 29 ham operators in the group. He mentioned [www.wireless.fcc.gov](http://www.wireless.fcc.gov). Ron and Michael spoke with Susan about information on repeaters as Michael mentioned that they tested and Michael could hear Ron in Holmby-Westwood, but Ron could not hear Michael. Michael is trying to find more ham operators in our areas. Susan is trying to get more information on radios for her community. She expressed appreciation for getting more radio education this evening. They discussed repeaters in the area, including UCLA. Chuck will give Susan the information on the individuals from UCLA who presented at a previous meeting. Susan said their nearest tall buildings are 4 high rises at Beverly Glen and Wilshire where she would like to discuss placing of a repeater. Michael said he can access that repeater from his house in Bel Air Crest, so Susan’s area should be able to receive it, by ham radio only. In searching for more radio operators, a list exists with all ham radio operators and can be accessed by zip code. Ron stated that in September, their committee will host a ham radio class at BA Ridge to help people get licensed. A license costs \$5-\$15. Jonathan mentioned that people can also do self-study. Various classes are out there to get a license which would take one day, while learning to use the radio may take five or six classes. See [www.qrz.com](http://www.qrz.com) for sample tests. Asked if Skirball had a communication tower and Chuck said we have had a presentation from them and Ben was the contact.

Michael Schlenker addresses the group on intercommunity ham radios below, while Jonathan Zimmerman, Ron Cornell & Dan Palmer listen.



Marlene from Bel Air Park was also interested in learning ham radios. Jonathan Zimmerman mentioned the plan that he wrote for CERT at [www.cert-la.com](http://www.cert-la.com) is where you can find a section called “Radio Communications” and a CERT plan supporting documentation that explains things. Continued networking to increase ham operator interest and individuals to join their cause is important as our sub-committee is doing its part.

### **Continued Discussion on Topics of Interest**

With regards to liability issues, Chuck mentioned John Darnell with Paul Koretz’s office just had a baby girl, which may explain why he has been difficult to reach to answer questions on this subject. Susan mentioned that this is a priority and everything seems to stall. Chuck has connected with Tim Pershing of Assemblyman Richard Bloom’s office and Ron recalled that it is not on the state legislation docket for 2015. Ron suggested getting it on the docket for 2016. He has sent letters to the county and to the city with no positive results. Ron recommended everyone calling Paul Koretz’s office. John Darnell has had this for 2 months without any concrete results. They have contacted the city attorney’s office and they cannot give a stance on this subject. Susan said that the City Attorney said he would handle it. Susan recommended calling the County Supervisor. “It’s a gray area.” Susan recommended Emergency Management come up with something that is used Citywide to implement their plan. Ron will call Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Susan noted that the City of LA is asking every community (not necessarily an HOA) to implement this plan. “If you act as an individual, you’re covered under the Good Samaritan law; if you act as a group you are not.” Susan read their non-disclaimer to the group. The HOAs are still cautious to institute CERT and other EP community programs as this may make them open to liability claims according to their legal counsel. Susan says they are acting as a community, as not all residents are members of

their HOA. So it does not directly fall under the HOA. BA Ridge maintains that all residents have to be members. Ron also mentioned that if you are acting as an individual that you are OK, but acting as a group is where the trouble starts. Maureen suggested asking real estate attorneys which might make sense. This subject will be continued at future meetings.

**Adjournment** at 10:05 pm

Chuck Maginnis: CM/cp  
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