

Alaska Smart Communities Forum – Meeting Notes
February 15, 2022 8:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Slide presentations and links by presenters are posted on the Alaska Smart Communities Forum (<https://akscf.matsugov.us>). Notes contain information not shared on presentation slides.

Update on Smart Community efforts and partnerships

Doug Miller
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- Forum Focus Areas: Identify data, services, education and partnerships among the communities within Alaska so everyone works smarter, easier and more efficient.
- Link to Smart Cities Dive (newsletter) with information and insights on what other communities are doing. <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/signup/>

Mat-Su Emergency Services “Common Operating Picture” (COP); single point of information for EOC events and damage assessments

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- Goal of the dashboard was not to reinvent the wheel, but pull data from various resources to one place for Borough staff to be able to view key information quickly.
- Worked with Emergency Services staff to build a useful dashboard on the Borough’s SharePoint site. Interface also built for public to report property damage and find information for applying for assistance.
- This platform was built to help coordinate with State and pass information off if the incident escalates.

Questions:

How are you accessing the transportation data (that shows traffic status)?

We access that from ESRI's living atlas data.

Public “Snow Removal Operations Dashboard”; real-time public information through innovative, easy-to-support tools

Conor Muldoon / Joanna Bailey
City of Syracuse, NY-Office of Accountability, Performance & Innovation
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Questions:

- *There’s a lot of innovation and data that you’re making happen. What was the compelling reason to make this investment with all the city had to invest in?*

This tool helped to solve three simultaneous challenges – public communication, fleet tracking, performance measures reporting with historical/analytical tools to leaders.

- *Does the city have a history of trying innovative projects? Is this particularly a unique time when you’re able to do this innovation/data gathering/visualization?*

We do have a pretty strong history of leveraging data driven decision making and innovative processes to solve the city’s challenges. We have a mayor who is very dedicated to data driven

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approaches and part of his platform, Syracuse Surge, our Smart City platform focused on leveraging these types of technologies/services with both city-wide perspectives and place-based focused investments to provide solutions to the residents.

- *I noted the contractor vehicle fields. Do the contractors provide the GPS data to the city?*
Part of the bidding process to contractors to service is that they had to accept the city installing GPS units into their vehicles. GPS sensors are purchased by the city to install in the vehicles the contractors are using.
- *With this investment, do you see that the benefit outweighs the cost?*
Two different perspectives: (1) Hard ROI calculation that we can do and are starting to collect that data to do so. A lot of that is materials based, so how are we more efficiently and effectively plowing our streets in ways that reduce time, lane miles travel, gas, salt/brine, etc. The tradeoff on that is that we don't want to be taking such an aggressive approach to reducing materials usage that we end up reducing the safety of our streets. We are looking for where we are, across the board, making efficiencies that are good. (2) Strategic Perspective: able to dive into information during events to see why streets are not being plowed and share that information with residents when they call to report such issues with time stamps on when it was attempted but unable to due illegally parked cars. That is worth its weight in gold to be able to communicate that to residents that the City is dedicated to providing the services they are supposed to, but that things that outside their control. Following a snow event, it is also information that is quickly and easily provided to the decision makers.
- *What do you see in the next couple years for projects that this project may have elicited new ideas from decision makers?*
Yes. We are in the process of revamping the City's IoT strategy; there have been a number of pilot projects/use cases that have been slow to get off the ground as they make sure that they align with their department's business needs. Specifically within the Winter Weather Operations tool there are a bunch of easy win use cases by taking this same technology/sensors and mapping things like our construction activity, leaf/yard waste, sanitation trucks for waste/recycling pick up. Related, there are other things different types of sensors that we have that operate off other network that they can use for tracking sensors in vacant buildings, flood prone areas, water mains leak detection. Working with Esri how to leverage Velocity for their 311 system and other potential use cases moving forward.
- *How do you get the word out to residents, what type of campaign did you have?*
Partnered with Communications Team to do an effective public communications blitz on the first big snowstorm in January. He and the Mayor went to their DPW barn/headquarters to give every local news outlet a preview of the system to share the value to the citizens; it became a front page story in the local paper. Within the first weekend they saw 12,000 views of the tool, and since have had 30-40,000 views of the tool. This effort takes working across city government with the various partners to make sure they are timing the announcement effectively, so the morning of a storm that would start that evening, residents and that the local news outlets are also aware the tool is up and available, which is a message repeated with each new weather event.

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- *Where is historic data stored?*

Part of the tool we bought was in Velocity, so the data is stored up there; everything comes from SAMSARA so our data is also technically backed up in the as well, so we can always pull an API call historical data from there as well.

“Cybersecure Alaska”; new non-profit to help Alaska be the most cybersecure business community in America

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Mike Messick, Deep Forest Security
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- Addressing this issue requires education and legislation. Having employee training/education in place can be free; cyber security insurance is not free, but it is a really good idea. Insurance carriers are getting pickier about who they will insure and how that will affect the rates; they are asking a lot more questions, like employee education, MFA, encryption on devices/endpoints, for example. If denied, and then you apply again, the first question is if you have ever been denied before. That is a position they don't want to see business owners in.
- An assessment performed is important.
- What do you do after you are hit? No matter the size of the organization, Risk Management is important; important to have a written Cyber Security Incident Response Plan, who to call if there is an event is important. It's not if, but when, and being prepared.
- Want to work with State Legislators to pass legislation that will address this response, like the Safe Harbor programs some states do have set up.
- There is a perception that people are aware of cyber security and prepared; that is not the reality. Evaluations for businesses has shown most businesses do not realize how insecure they are or understand the need to become more secure

Questions:

- *What is next step, membership, services? How do people get info, get involved?*
Have pulled a number of cyber security professionals and vendors at the Board level and task force. Right now holding task force/board meetings to develop a set goals for 2022 and quarterly. The first goal is developing a message and figuring out how to get that message out, as well as working with the State Legislature to set up “Safe Harbor Program”. If interested in helping, folks can get hold of Todd/Mike.
- *How does a business owner with about a dozen employees get a right-sized program?*
There are things that are cheap, and even free. The goal is to make this information available to those who are interested so that they can protect their businesses. There are right-sized security solutions for all businesses, just a matter of figuring what they are. Cyber Secure Alaska is not an organization to implement; goal is to help business decisions makers know their solution options and point them in the right direction for their IT team to implement.

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“Cybersecurity for Critical Infrastructure”

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- It is not if, but when. Important to work with partners to build technical and procedural controls to bring systems back up as quickly as possible.
- Many organizations have no cyber security staff; they rely on their IT staff.
- Partnerships are only possible when organizations step up to become part of the network.
- Mark is Alaska contact for CSA. CSA helps do assessments, advise, partner at no direct charge to the organization.
- Large group tabletop exercise can be arranged if there are enough organizations to participate.
- Cloud solutions can cause more issues; important to have the correct policies and contracts in place and ensure it follows local/state/federal laws for sensitive data.
- VADR; High level/in-depth architecture review
- Agreement with Assessment that CISA cannot share any information; after final report is completed, CISA destroys their copy.

Questions:

- *(Question not heard)*
He meets with various organizations: weekly with the state. APIP, monthly; JIAPG (National Guard) building a cyber-capability. There is an Alaska Cyber Group, trying to form a statewide governing solution. Criteria for funding from Infrastructure Bill is being determined; grant funding will require 80% for local government, but will have to go through the States. A lot will be dependent on the state grant process. Part of the gap is no cyber legislation in the State of Alaska; he is working with state to advocate HB3 that will allow cyber-attacks to be listed as a declared disaster. Have that in legislation would put the burden and responsibility on the State DHS to add a Cyber Annex to the state disaster plan. A much broader cyber plan needs to be drafted by the State which will need to happen through legislation or executive order. Need to coordinate efforts by all groups that are trying to do this. If we can do this for Alaska it is really going to help.
- *Any work on updating the Stafford Act to include cyber as well?*
He has not heard.
- *What is the best way for the college/university to collaborate with these security initiatives?*
Mark: AK Cyber Group being put together, Shawn Hagen is a member – CISO for University. MSBSD is also part of that group. If there are others that would like to be part of this group, contact Mark to become involved.

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What's in store at Mat-Su in 2022
for digital services and more
information for citizens

Eric Wyatt, IT Director
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- When AKSCF began, it was as a small nucleus with public sector. It has grown to include public and private sectors. Partnerships have been formed from this group. Goal is to continue to share what the Borough is doing through this Forum, as well as hear what others are doing.
- Group being formed to work together to get cyber security grants being offered by the Federal government through the State government.

Closing/Announcements

Doug Miller

- Open to ideas/topic of interest, let Doug know; can set up a conference call for small group discussions.
- Topic suggestions (presentation style) for future Forums can be emailed to Doug Miller (doug.miller@wostmann.com).
- Partnering Agreements are available.
- Doug would like to hear how members are ensuring the public is aware of the tools and information available to them.