

## 2017 EMAG Conference Abstract Submission

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- Type of Presentation: Oral
- Program Categories: Emergency Management
- Presentation Title: A New Age of Alerting?

- Presentation Description:

Are we on the cusp of a new age of alerting? Perhaps so, says an alerting writer and advisor to FEMA, the FCC, and local agencies. “Most of the pieces are in place to make alerting ubiquitous to reach people no matter who they are, where they are, and what they’re doing”, according to session speaker Rick Wimberly. He’ll explain how local communities can expand their alerting channels dramatically without investing in new technology, using little-known capabilities of FEMA’s Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

Topics include recommendations to the FCC on complementary alerting strategies to Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and the Emergency Alert System (EAS) made by a sub-committee of the FCC advisory group Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council (CSRIC), which Wimberly chaired. He’ll also address practicalities of making recently announced substantive changes to WEA.

- Abstract:

The science and technology for emergency alerting are evolving. No longer are emergency managers reliant on one or two channels for alerting. Virtually everyone recognizes that multiple channels are needed to reach the public effectively. However, these common alerting channels may not be enough, particularly considering the ever-changing complexity of individual communications preferences. The good news is that, without buying new technology, potential exists to dramatically increase the channels being used for local alerting through capabilities offered by FEMA’s Integrated Public Alerting System (IPAWS).

In this session, the evolution of alerting will be explained leading up to the current status of system-of-system of alerts and including the evolving status of ubiquitous alerts. Practical steps will be presented for local emergency managers to exploit little-known capabilities that can dramatically expand the alerting channels at their disposal.

Imminent changes in Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) will be discussed. As well, recommendations to the FCC on “Complementary Alerting Strategies” to WEA and the Emergency Alert System (EAS) will be presented by the chairman of the subcommittee of the FCC’s Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council (CSRIC) that focused on complementary alerting strategies. Discussion will follow to answer questions and tackle issues that could result.

- Learning Objectives:

- Understand the evolution of alerting to help prepare for a “new age” when alerts become ubiquitous.
- Create awareness of FEMA capabilities that can dramatically expand channels used for alerting by local authorities.
- Understand imminent changes to the national cell broadcast system Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), and create familiarity with complementary alerting strategies as recommended by the FCC’s Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council (CSRIC).

- Short Biography:

Rick Wimberly writes and advises on alerts and notifications. His blog for Emergency Management magazine is widely followed. Wimberly has been working with alerting technology and approaches for almost two decades. He has been involved in many alerting deployments across the country, including in some of the most challenging environments.

Wimberly has advised both FEMA and the FCC on alerting matters. For FEMA, he was the senior consultant under contract to develop the outreach plan for the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). He then led a team that supported FEMA’s efforts to engage stakeholders with IPAWS, which resulted in widespread adoption by state and local authorities. For the FCC, Wimberly chaired a sub-committee focused on strategies to complement Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The effort resulted in recently published recommendations to the FCC by the Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council (CSRIC).

Wimberly serves as the lead for public safety and other solutions to be provided via a new broadband network being created in conjunction with rural electric co-ops. He also serves as President of Galain Solutions, Inc., a consultancy focused on alerting.