



January 2007

AWIN Monthly Newsletter

Send us your story

Do you have a story you would like to share with other end users? Any advice you want to pass along to agencies that are awaiting a cutover in their area? We want to know how AWIN is working for you! Please send your comments to awin@arkansas.gov.

AWIN Support

In partnership with the Arkansas State Police (ASP), the Department of Information Systems (DIS) operates the AWIN Call Center to support all AWIN subscribers (radio users) with technical assistance or AWIN-related requests. Technicians are on call in the event of any emergency. Call (501) 682-HELP (682-4357) or toll-free (800) 435-7989 or e-mail: awin.support@arkansas.gov

Legislative support

Arkansas legislators have shown tremendous support for the AWIN program throughout past years, and they displayed much of that support during the recent budget process. Budgeting is a lengthy process and with the partnership between the Executive and Legislative Branches, members of the AWIN Steering Committee and Local Leadership Council, and the Department of Information Systems, needed appropriations were obtained.

"We're truly appreciative of all the support we received to get this program implemented," said Senator Bobby Glover. "We're very proud of the state of the art communication system

we now have in place. We need to make sure we keep the system working and stay on top of new technology."

"AWIN brings us up-to-date in our communication, and provides rapid communication for many departments, especially those in the far reaches of our state," said Senator Capps.

AWIN Program Management would like to thank all the individuals that worked hard to get the AWIN system in place, including the Arkansas Legislature. Without the support of our legislators, Arkansas wouldn't be one of only four states leading the country in interoperable communications efforts.

Flash upgrade

AWIN users with Astro Spectra Plus radios need to be aware of a needed upgrade. The radios tend to lock on a weaker signal when in areas of overlapping coverage, instead of finding the strongest signal. This issue is limited to this type of radio, both vehicular radios and control stations (mobiles-in-a-tray). Grace Communications will perform the upgrades and will require around 10 minutes per radio to complete.

Users with this radio type will be contacted to schedule the needed upgrade. The effort is scheduled to begin February 1st in the Troop A area. Once the upgrade is complete for all users in Troop A, technicians will move to

another area until all users are accommodated. Time slots within a period of several days will be available in which to schedule the upgrade.

When upgrades are scheduled, users should ensure that all radios are accessible. Please make sure all equipment is cleared from the trunk area, and as a safety precaution, all firearms should be removed. At the time of the upgrade, only work related to the scheduled upgrade will be completed. Also, if users fail to make their chosen scheduled time, they will need to bring radio units to the Grace Communications shop in North Little Rock. Technicians will not reschedule in remote areas after the allotted time period.

Three County Pilot Project

The Three County Pilot Project is in its end stages, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Project Manager. Randy Wilcox dedicated his time to move the project forward, and we appreciate his efforts. Wilcox has resigned his position as a Project Manager

at DIS, and he recently moved into a position in the insurance industry.

If you have any questions about the Pilot Project, please contact David Baker at david.baker@arkansas.gov or 501.682.1185.

System expansion

Technicians recently completed testing on a second SmartZone Controller, and the additional master site is now operating on the AWIN system. AWIN Program Management signed off on the testing and is currently working to perform upgrades to support the system expansion.

The upcoming work will require the same level of coordination as cutovers conducted in 2006, and users may experience some downtime during the upgrades. Current tower sites will be divided between the two controllers to balance the load of users on the system. Prior to the upgrade, all site operations will be transferred to the new controller, allowing for work on the Arkansas State Police (ASP) equipment. After the upgrade to the ASP controller is complete, sites

will be upgraded individually on a daily basis and some moved back to the initial controller. Console operators may be required to operate on control stations for a short period while the upgrades and site transfers are completed. The site adjustments could also impact users roaming or needing access to statewide communication. The link between the two controllers will be down for a short period. Another upgrade to both controllers will be performed when the move of operations of all the sites that is needed is complete.

The upgrades and transfer of sites between controllers is scheduled to begin in February and should be completed by the end of April. AWIN Alerts will be distributed as needed during the process of the system upgrades.

AWIN radios



In conjunction with the upcoming upgrades and site transfers on the SmartZone Controllers, around 800 AWIN radios will require some programming adjustments. The reprogramming will allow radio traffic to be directed to the correct "home-zone". The naming convention entered in the radio must coincide with the controller from which the radio is managed.

AWIN engineers are currently reviewing all radio identifications and developing a priority list for reprogramming. Users will not incur any additional costs for the work, but radios requiring work will need to be taken to a local shop. Coordination efforts are continuing, and reprogramming is expected to begin the first part of February. The work will be coordinated by ASP Troop areas.



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