NAAD System Governance Council Update

Public Summary of the October 8, 2019 Meeting

October 22, 2019

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide Last Mile Distributors (LMDs) with an update regarding key NAAD System activities and discussions following the most recent NAAD System Governance Council meeting that was hosted by Pelmorex on October 8, 2019.

Operational Update

Test Schedule

- The NAAD System Test Message Policy version 3.0 was approved. It includes changes to align the frequency of Alert Ready public tests to two per year: one during Emergency Preparedness Week in May and the second during the 4th week of November. These public awareness tests are distributed on TV, radio and Wireless. The updated policy can be found here.
- The next Alert Ready public test is scheduled for Wednesday, November 27, 2019. The most up-to-date schedule with test times for each province and territory can be accessed here.

Wireless Public Alerting (WPA)

- Wireless Service Providers (WSPs) are working together to propose a unified agreement to connect to the NAAD System through AirGate at renewal. The connection to the WPA service via AirGate is used to deliver emergency alerts to Canadians using cell broadcast technology.
- A working group comprised of all WSPs, Pelmorex, the cell broadcast vendor and selected alert issuers have identified improvements to increase the effectiveness of WPA. It includes 1) removing the event code restriction in the cell broadcast system, 2) supporting non-numeric geocodes, and 3) improving the support of text characters in the cell broadcast system.
- The removal of the event code restriction will occur in February 2020.
- The WPA working group will continue to review regularly feature requests as part of the yearly release process as identified by the working group.

Ku-Band Satellite Feed

The NAAD System Ku-Band satellite signals from Toronto and Montreal stations were terminated as planned on August 31, 2019. There were no changes to any other alert feed (e.g. socket, RSS and C-Band satellite signal). As always, Pelmorex recommends for all LMDs to establish a connection to at least two alert feed types or connection points in order to have redundant means to receive public safety messages.

Text-to-Speech (TTS)

Following recent tornado alerts in various parts of the country, feedback was received regarding the pronunciation of some location names being incorrect. Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is reviewing their lexicons in order to identify necessary improvements.

NAAD System Development Roadmap

Over the past year, the NAAD System team worked primarily on adding functionality to the component of the system used by authorized government agencies to manage their users in the system. The team also focused on improving internal tools to augment our monitoring capabilities of the socket feeds. Throughout the year, maintenance and security updates were completed to ensure the appropriate operation of the NAAD System.

Over the next 6 to 12 months and as approved by the NAAD System Governance Council, development work will focus on redesigning the interface used by authorized users to issue public safety messages (emergency alerts and non-Broadcast Immediate messages). This will provide issuers with better tools in order to issue effective alerts. These changes to the alert interface will not impact LMDs.

National Public Alerting Update

- Partners are reviewing the process to issue Amber Alerts in Ontario based on public feedback received after several Amber Alerts were issued over the past six months in the province.
- National Resources Canada is working on a project to build an earthquake early warning system.
- Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) is leading a research project divided into three phases:
    - People - To better understand how to increase alert effectiveness with the public.
    - Process - To allow for alerting partners to better work together in alerting the public (particularly across geographical borders).
    - Technology - To identify new distribution channels where to make alerts available.
- Members of the NAAD System Governance Council discussed the need to update the CAP-CP location references in order to address gaps with geocodes and polygons to better meet the current and future needs of emergency management officials. The objective is to include necessary changes and updates as part of the CAP-CP 1.0 standards. No date has been determined yet regarding the adoption of CAP-CP 1.0 and its implementation by all alerting partners in Canada.

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For more information, please submit your questions to our Pelmorex Public Alerting Support team by completing the following form.