

Chapter 38 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers

SBE

EL PASO - LAS CRUCES - JUÁREZ

# MARCH 2016

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## NEWS

### LATEST E.A.S. TEST HITS .....POTHOLES !!

**Cancellations, frustrations and some stories of success following latest FEMA EAS test February 26, 2016 by Susan Ashworth**

**WASHINGTON**—The latest scheduled test of the nation's emergency alert system has hit a few potholes and tested a few nerves.

On Feb. 24, an EAS test conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's **integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)** was originally slated to cover a sizable swath of the nation—22 states, two territories and the District of Columbia—equaling a geographic area with five times the number of radio, TV and cable operations than any previous test. FEMA planned to send out the National Periodic Test (NPT) header code to give participating broadcasters the opportunity to confirm that their gear is properly configured to deal with NPT-coded messages.

But a number of stations in several states that were to be involved in the test did not receive the EAS alert, nor were they

given notice that the test would be cancelled.

**LEFT OUT OF THE LOOP**  
Florida, North Carolina and Virginia were dropped from the test at the request of their respective state emergency management agencies, while Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi were dropped upon the recommendation of the National Weather Service due to ongoing recovery activities in those states following severe weather earlier this week.

As a result TV, radio and cable organizations expecting to receive the test—those who were not informed that the test was not forthcoming—were left waiting.

“Engineers and [members of the] State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC) throughout the state had put in many hours configuring the EAS

*(Continued on page 2)*

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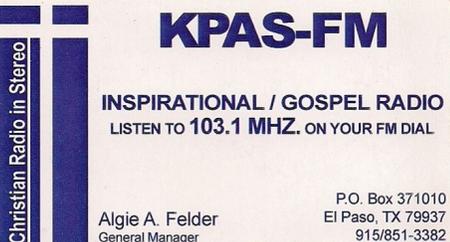


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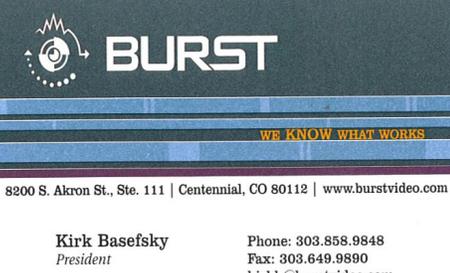
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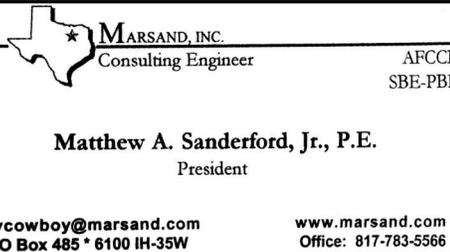
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units to receive and relay the NPT,” said Larry Wilkins, engineer for the Alabama Broadcasters Association. The association is frustrated that its emergency communications committee was not consulted nor informed by the National Weather Service that the test was to be cancelled.

“On the day of the test, everyone sat patiently waiting for 1:20 pm [Central Time] to trigger the NPT. But there was nothing but silence,” Wilkins said.

“As my phone began to ring and email inbox filled up, I tried to determine what had happened,” he said. “Then we discovered that our state was removed from the test and I was left sitting with egg on my face. A simple email or phone call would have saved the day.”

This apparent miscommunication has led to frustration for more than a few broadcasters.

“As president of the Alabama Broadcasters Association, I would like to have known that our state was going to be dropped from the test when that decision was made today,” posted Sharon Tinsley on an EAS exchange listserv managed by the Society of Broadcast Engineers after the

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EL PASO, TX SBE CHAPTER 38 MEETING MINUTE

DATE 02/09/2016 LOCATION: COMO'S ITALIAN REST.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 12:28 PM, BY ANTONIO CASTRO,  
THERE WERE 6 MEMBERS.

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY:** MINUTES IN THE JANUARY NEWS-  
LETTER. ACCEPTED BY DAVID HALPERING, SECONDED BY MARIO  
JIMENEZ.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** \$ 6,385.31 IN THE BANK. ACCEPTED  
BY NORBERT MILES, SECONDED BY OWEN SMITH.

**REPORT OF THE CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE:** NO REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** NO REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE FREQUENCY COORDINATOR COMMITTEE:** THERE  
STILL INTERFERENCE FROM FBI TI FAA. NO FCC, BUT FIXING NOW.

**REPORT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE:** NO REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE WEBSITE COMMITTEE:** 2000 HITS LAST TIME, NOW  
2010. ( 10 ). TO POST SBE EXAM DATES

**REPORT OF THE EAS CHAIRMAN:** BOTH TX AND NM MONTHLY  
TESTS WERE PASSED WITH AKNOWLEDGE. NPT, NATIONAL  
PERIODIC TEST WHILE VOLUNTARELY, ALL MUST HAVE..

**REPORT OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE:** WARREN REEVES TO DO  
A PRESENTATION FOR MARCH 2016, UNLESS WE GET ANOTHER PRE-  
SENTER.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS OR ANY ITEMS FOR THE CHAPTER INTERES:** ENNES  
WORKSHOP TO BE HELD ON MAY 26, 2016, THURSDAY, AT THE WIN-  
HAM AIRPORT. MENTIONES THAT ATSC.3 WILL BE ONE OF THE  
MAIN ISSUES

**NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION:** MARCH 8, AT 12 PM. PLACE:  
COMO'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** AT 13:10 PM.

**EL PASO ENNES WORKSHOP,  
MAY 26, 2016**

**THURSDAY THIS TIME !!!**

# MARCH PROGRAM

**There is no presentation for march, but here are some highlights from SBE.**

## 2025-2110 MHZ Band Sharing Between DoD and Broadcasters

Tomorrow, Thursday, March 3, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET, the SBE, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), will present a live webinar that covers DoD sharing the 2025-2110 MHz Band with broadcasters.

## June 1 Deadline for SNG Transmission Carrier ID May Change

This will be of particular interest to those who are responsible for transportable (satellite news gathering - SNG) uplinks. Section §25.281(b) of the FCC rules states, "As of June 1, 2016, transmissions of fixed-frequency, digitally modulated video signals with a symbol rate of 128,000/s or more from satellite news gathering vehicles or other temporary-fixed stations must be identified through use of an ATIS..." ATIS stands for Automatic Transmitter Identification System, which is also known as Carrier Identification (CID).

## SBE Launches SBE Membership: The Road to Success

This year's member recruitment effort began officially on March 1 with the launch of the society's annual three-month drive. The theme - SBE Membership: The Road to Success.

The SBE would like your help in recruiting new members, and you can win rewards for your efforts. Sponsor a new Member, Associate Member or Sustaining Member between March 1 and May 31, 2016 and you will be eligible for the prize drawings.



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completed. “Our state [emergency management] office was not informed in advance either,” she said. “We've been working diligently with our stations for weeks to make sure they had the NPT code set.”

In Florida, a cancellation notification was sent out through an email to Florida Association of Broadcasters members, said Scott Solko, a consultant for Magic Broadcasting, a Panama City, Fla.-based station group. “but non-members got no notice,” he said. “It is not posted on the FAB website, and I called, and was told that the FAB has nothing to do with the test. Very scary stuff.”

Participating stations were to automatically relay the alert and associated audio and text message to the public and to other stations downstream under their respective state EAS plans. This test was to include both English and Spanish audio and messages.

### **WITHOUT A HITCH**

But for those stations who did indeed receive the test, reports say that the test went off without a hitch.

“The test worked as expected,” said Ken Evans, master control supervisor at television station WMDT in Salisbury, Md., who also serves as member of the Maryland Emergency Communications Committee. “It went off flawlessly.”

WMDT received the NPT code via common alerting protocol, and forwarded on the message. “The vocal was good and well understandable,” Evans said. “The crawl ran twice and listed the multiple states included in the test with a colon in between. The best part is it ran all by itself.

“Overall I think it worked great,” Evans continued, with no delays and impressive audio. “I wish all my EAS worked as well.”

Other stations reported similar smooth sailing, including stations in Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York.

What’s next? Simply put, said Dave Baughn with Red Mountain Broadcasting in Birmingham, Ala.: “They should let us know when they cancel a test so we are not thinking we have something wrong and are going to be fined thousands of dollars.”

TV Technology has requested comment from FEMA officials and will report those when received.

*Also see:*

*Feb. 25, 2016*

### **["Day-After Frustrations Strong Following EAS IPAWS Test" \(Radio World\)](#)**

Reactions continue to come in from stations that participated in Wednesday’s EAS IPAWS test, as well as those that didn’t get a chance.