

NATCA Safety & Tech Update Week of December 10, 2018

ATO OPERATIONAL CONTINGENCY GROUP (ATOC): Jason Grider (ZFW) is the Article 114 Representative for NATCA. Also, included in Mr. Grider's duties is Article 114 representation for the Business Continuity Plan (BCP). Mr. Grider's report for this month is below.

The Contingency Operations group met with the national ATOP workgroup at the WJHTC to continue work on contingency plans for ZOA and ZAN oceanic airspace. The plans right now call for controllers to work the airspace non-RADAR with strips. It was discussed that this is not a good option and they need a better plan. The group scheduled a two-week workgroup meeting in Anchorage to work through both facilities plans. Since the ideas being looked at require each facility to support each other during an ATC-0 event, there will be representatives from each facility on site.

The group has begun reaching out to ZTL to schedule an initial visit to begin work on their plans.

The training workgroup has completed work on a training video to introduce controllers to contingency plans and what would be required of them if it were ever enacted. The video will be part of annual refresher training starting next year.

Mr. Grider joined a team on an introductory site visit to ZNY as a kickoff to reworking their plans. ZNY NATCA members and management were very helpful in giving them insight into the many challenges their unique airspace has. The group will be meeting with N90 on Dec 12th to gather information for how they can support ZNY in their plans.

DATAComm: Chad Geyer (ZLA) is the Article 114 Representative for DataComm. Below is his update.

Controller Pilot Data Link Communication (CPDLC) sites are now sending over 52,000 clearances a week. All sites are on Version 12.5. Version 12.6 is planned to be deployed to key sites on April 2 and deployment to the remaining sites the following week assuming the build passes key site acceptability. Version 12.6 not only provides fixes and enhancements for towers, but also provides support for Center Tech Refresh for certain processors that interact with TDLS. The program office is working with IFCET (Inter-Facility Communication Engineering Team), the support team for TDLS, to take over the work that the program office has been doing. There has even been a request from IFCET to provide an Article 114 Representative to assist with:

- Trouble Reports- Tracking, Ranking and deployment

- Enhancement Requests - Tracking, Ranking and deployment
- Future Enhancements to D-ATIS and FDIO Emulation- IFCET is planning to deploy a new D-ATIS, hardware and software in 2019.
- Interface with TFDM- This will include functionality and CHI changes
- Assisting with updating legacy training and future delta build training for controllers
- Ops evaluation for new builds
- Key Site selection
- Field Communication to include conference calls with sites, software releases, ATC question on adaptations and maintaining site personnel communication for adaptation issues and airline questions.
- ATSAP/Safety review coordination

The program office has also submitted an enhancement request to ERAM for an indication to be printed on a tower departure flight strip to show that the aircraft has filed for a CPDLC departure clearance.

The majority of the work lately has focused on CPDLC in the En Route facilities. ZKC, ZID and ZME are the key sites for CPDLC. The automation system is working as designed and enhancements and fixes are planned for later releases. The main issues that have been seen at these sites have been with network issues and avionics issues. Since the key sites have been testing with the aircraft, Harris Corporation has identified many of the avionics and network issues and there are plans to address each issue and develop a plan to fix those issues. There are issues that are associated with ARINC, SITA and also with different airline radio and FMS configurations. There will be a plan in place to address each issue and some will take much longer than others to get a fix. One of the biggest issues is when an aircraft transitions from one radio tower to another. Just like with your cell phone, if the correct handoff to another tower is not done correctly, your call will drop. We have noticed a higher than expected failure rate for Southwest Airlines FMS and CMU configurations. The issues do have a fix, but certification to install the fix has not been approved yet and a plan will have to be developed to bring the operator back on line. The same fix has been approved for the Airbus airframe and has been installed. Southwest is the largest operator participating in DataComm and because the issue is affecting their avionics equipage type, the sites are seeing a large number of AIMS tickets on the SWA fleet. The program office has decided to remove SWA from En Route operations until a plan is developed to fix the aircraft and bring them back into CPDLC operations at a manageable pace to verify that the problem has been fixed. This path forward should reduce the workload on the controller to document the issue and reduce the work associated workload with removing the indication when a message does fail.

ENROUTE AUTOMATION MODERNIZATION (ERAM): Julio Henriques (ZNY) leads the ERAM efforts for NATCA. Rex Jackson (ZDC) provides this update.

- Due to issues within the CPDLC infrastructure all three key sites, ZID, ZKC, and ZME, have fallen back to, or remained in, Limited DFV testing. FTR's, and National and Local SME's at the sites continue to support the test activities. Forward plans are being developed to continue and progress CPDLC deployment.

- EAE130 rebuild completed successful Ops Eval testing and has been released to the three keysites, ZLC, ZSE and ZME. The keysites completed TTL testing the week of October 22nd and will move to the ops portion November 11th. Based on successful testing, EAE130 has a projected national release date of December 11, 2018.

- ERAW received a briefing from Second Level Engineering and the Program Office on the Alternate Display Path in support of R-side Tech Refresh. The goal is to allow the AIX processor to provide data to the glass in the event of an MDM failure due to the new LINUX processors during keysite and waterfall deployment as needed. This will provide display redundancy only and is not considered a back-up system to ERAM. ERAM will need to deploy a separate software release to support the new engineering and testing.

The following issues are examples of what the National User Team worked:

- SE2 Use Case Updates
 - 4th Line – The team discussed and reached agreement on the 4th Line use case reference the ON/OFF switch of functionality. Once all team members concur the use case will be sent to SLE.
 - Airspace Transfer – The team discussed the changes to the use case; a section was added for the “Push” function. The team also decided that language should be added to capture review of national procedures.
- Data Comm CHI

The uplink type for Speed and Route Generic Uplinks were discussed; a recommendation to modify the classification of the Confirm Speed (uM134) and Confirm Assigned Route uplinks from Temporary Generic Uplinks to Permanent Generic Uplinks was discussed. The team agreed with this change and an update to the appropriate use cases will be made.
- ER 195554 AHI and Point Outs

The team reviewed and reached agreement on the problem statement, the desired behavior is to add system functionality that will insert an AHI (Auto Handoff Inhibit) for an aircraft from the initiating sector to the receiving sector after the receiving sector has approved an automated pointout.
- ER 194653 Pending Font and Brightness

The team discussed and reached consensus on the problem statement, its desired behavior is to change the button functions on the SAA Filter Menu so that both hot and pending airspaces can be changed independently.

➤ **Altimeter CAR**

A CAR regarding updating of Altimeters at a more frequent rate was discussed. A task team has been created to work the issue with SLE and respond to the CAR.



➤ **ER 186070 Weather Updates**

The ER was discussed; it describes a situation where the weather report for a specific station did not update yet the old weather remained displayed. A draft problem statement will be created with a desired behavior of reporting weather observations as missing if they are beyond an adapted problem statement will be discussed during the next team telcon. Without this fix OLD weather shows as current every 24 hours based on the time of the old WX report.

➤ **PDRR/ABRR**

Critical AIMS 196440 was written against PDRR and a software fix is needed to correct the issue. The ERAM fix will be delivered in April of 2019 and the TFMS fix in 2020 or later. The initial discussions are to disable PDRR at the facility level until the fixes are deployed.

NAS VOICE SWITCH (NVS): Jon Shedden (ZFW) represents the NATCA membership as their Article 114 Representative to the NVS project. His report is below.

The NAS Voice System (NVS) schedule has officially slipped. The FAA and Harris continue to work on a resolution.

Next Generation Air-Ground Communication (NEXCOM) continues deployment of new CM300/350 V2 radios to terminal facilities across the country. Some terminal facilities in the NAS using very old radios hear a pop back or "squelch tail" when they release their transmitters. The new radios being deployed under NEXCOM Segment 2 do not have this "feature" as the squelch tail is generally regarded as undesirable in radio communications. This issue has cropped up twice now during deployment and the program office should brief future affected facilities prior to install.

The NEXCOM program office has kicked off the **Emergency Transceiver Replacement**. This program is looking to replace aging tunable transceivers at DEN, HNL, PCT, PHX, SCT, and SLC. They also looking to replace approximately 2000 of the grab-and-go style emergency transceivers (e.g. PET-2000).

NAS Voice Recorder Program (NVRP) is the replacement for existing NAS voice recorders (DALR, DALR2, DVRS, DVR2). The Program Office presented to the JRC and received approval to proceed to Final Investment Analysis, leading up to the Final Investment Decision.

We continue to work through vendor evaluations.

The **Tone Mitigation National Workgroup** met in September 2017 to discuss potential mitigations to the number and severity of tone/noise events across the NAS. This workgroup kicked off largely because of the number of tone/noise events occurring at PCT. One of the outcomes from these meetings was exploring the use of new headset bases which incorporate an active limiter. PCT has completed their evaluation of the active limiting headset bases. Houston TRACON (I90) has been identified as the next site for testing in January 2019.

The FAA will be conducting **Time Division Multiplexing (TDM) to Internet Protocol (IP)** conversion in the Bangor, ME area in the coming months. This technology will assist the FAA as local telco providers move away from legacy TDM services to IP services.