

# Orr Makes Career in Interoperability

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## What is the most important development in public-safety communications?

From my perspective, it has been the launch of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Project 25 (P25) Compliance Assessment Program (CAP). For decades, public-safety agencies have been purchasing and using equipment developed to the P25 standards without a formal compliance program providing purchasers confidence that equipment adhered to critical components of the P25 suite of standards.

To address this issue, Congress called for the creation of a P25 compliance program. NIST/OLES and DHS Office of Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) built a coalition of public-safety users and communications equipment manufacturers to create the independent CAP. The program, launched in May, allows P25 equipment suppliers to formally demonstrate their products' compliance with a select group of requirements through testing in recognized labs.

## What is the status of the P25 CAP program?

On May 6, DHS/OIC recognized eight laboratories to conduct equipment testing. P25 manufacturers will soon begin to submit their equipment through the testing process and will release standardized summary test reports from these recognized laboratories, along with declarations of compliance. This documentation will be available at [www.rkb.us](http://www.rkb.us) to help equipment purchasers make informed decisions. The response community can select from multiple vendors that build products to the same standards. The documentation will increase the confidence in the performance, conformance and interoperability of P25 equipment.

The test laboratories demonstrated their competence through a rigorous and objective assessment process, conducted by NIST/OLES and based on internationally accepted standards. More laboratories can apply to the program and will continue to be assessed.

After a six-month grace period, equipment delivered to

grantees receiving funds following Safecom grant guidance will be required to comply with the DHS P25 CAP and have the supporting supplier's declaration of compliance (SDoC) and summary test report (STR). Currently, the DHS P25 CAP is limited to the P25 Common Air Interface (CAI); however, DHS and NIST are preparing to incorporate the pending Inter-RF Subsystem Interface (ISSI).

## What are CAP's benefits?

Immediately, the program will provide a level of information regarding P25 radio systems never before available in a standardized format across all manufacturers. In addition, because the published results are obtained from formally recognized laboratories, public safety will have improved confidence that the equipment purchased meets P25 standards.

The expected long-term benefits will be improved operability and interoperability of P25 equipment, increased marketplace competition, and accelerated adoption of P25 equipment because of the availability of test information and improved confidence in standardized equipment.

## What is the most significant communications technology on the horizon?

The pending commercialization of the ISSI is the most significant public-safety technology on the horizon. The interface allows agencies to interconnect systems on their wired networks (intranets). RF subsystems from different suppliers can be interconnected through an ISSI to form a wide-area network. An ISSI allows interoperability among different P25 systems from different agencies and manufacturers. DHS/OIC and PSCR are working to ensure that the ISSI is rolled into the P25 CAP before products are released.

## How will PSCR help with the latest set of 700 MHz broadband system requirements?

PSCR, on behalf of DHS/OIC, is participating in the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) Broadband Task Force (BBTF). The task force is composed of three subgroups — governance, operations and technology. PSCR is leading the technology group and is participating in the operations working group.

## What do most people not know about you?

Public service is a family tradition. My grandfather was an undersecretary at the Department of Labor during the Kennedy Administration. ■