Interagency Dispatch Implementation Project (IDIP)
IT Network Congestion During Surge Periods
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Problem Statement

Interagency Dispatch and Coordination Centers have multiple network systems within each facility to meet individual agency-specific IT requirements. Network access is only allowed for respective agency specific secure computers. While the network systems are separate within the facility the generated "traffic" travels jointly over a single commercial entry and exit point outside the facility known as the "last mile". During periods of surge operations the combined center internet traffic over the last mile increases causing degraded system performance and application crashes.

Key Issues

- Loss of critical applications including, aircraft and personnel tracking software, compromises safety and decision-making processes that ultimately increases personnel risk exposure and increases incident costs.
- The USFS, DOI and state partners use different vendors to supply internet connectivity at the facilities which causes competing objects and conflicts between service providers.
- Federal and state agencies use varied contract instruments resulting in different service level commitments.

Recommended Steps to Implement Resolution

1. Wildland Fire Information and Technology (WFIT) request that individual agency Chief Information Officer (or equivalent) perform system stress tests on each dispatch center last-mile network connectivity. State agencies should be encouraged to consider the same analysis of their network.
2. Use a single vendor solution (common ISP) within individual dispatch centers to provide WAN backbone / last mile.
3. Implement vendor solutions to provide additional capacity during surge operations based on trigger points to activate additional broadband capacity.
4. Establish emergency redundant service through cable, DSL, satellite or other broadband solutions.

Benefits to Implementation

- Improved efficiency of center operations gained through reliable network performance and stable applications during periods of surge activity or heavy use.
- Improved incident response and safety of the public, aircraft and employees.
- Interagency cooperation creates efficiencies for IT support, uses a single network and leads to cost savings.
- Reduce overall helpdesk requests (vendor and agency-specific).
- Improved compliance with agency and state IT standards and security policies.

Additional Information

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