

**BARRON COUNTY  
LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
THURSDAY, January 30 – 9:00 a.m.  
BARRON COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER (EOC)  
1420 State Hwy 25 North, Barron, WI, 54812  
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**AGENDA**

- 1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER
- 2) PUBLIC NOTIFICATION\*
- 3) PUBLIC COMMENT
- 4) APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Oct 31, 2024)
- 5) SPILL REVIEWS
- 6) RESPONSE REIMBURSEMENTS
- 7) FACILITY REVIEW
  - o (Saputo by Josh Miller)
- 8) EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT
- 9) LEPC MEMBER UPDATES
- 10) COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS
- 11) NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 24<sup>th</sup> IN THE EOC AT 0900 HRS
- 12) ADJORNMENT

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**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

\*I, \_\_\_\_\_, have complied with open meeting Public Notification Laws. Meeting notices are posted on the electronic meeting notice boards on the first and second floor of the Government Center and the main floor of the Justice Center. A hard copy is in the Public Meeting folder just inside the County Clerk's office window and I have verified the proper posting of the meeting as specified in the notice.

Any person who has a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires the meeting or materials at the meeting to be in an accessible format, must contact the County Clerk's office at 715-537-6200 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting so that arrangements may be made to accommodate your request.

PC: County Administrator, County Board Chair, Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Emergency Services Director, Highway Commissioner, Public Health Officer, Conservationist/Technician, Medical Examiner, Dispatch Lead, Public Health Specialist, Emergency Management Office Specialist, Webmaster, Four Public Postings

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# *BARRON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT*

## *OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES*



### **LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (LEPC)**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.  
BARRON COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER (EOC)

#### **ATTENDEES**

- o Louie Okey, Barron County Board. Mike Judy, Emergency Services Director. Nate Dunston, Emergency Management. Karla Potts-Shufelt, Barron County Public Health. Tyler Gruetzmacher, Barron County Soil & Water. Barry Kuenkel, Cumberland Fire. Melissa Miller, Mayo Clinic Health System Northland. Travis Klukas, Mayo Clinic Health System Northland. Luong Huynh, Red Cross. Dave Paulson, McCain Foods Inc. Terry Puolter, Barron Area School District. Sue Dau, Barron Electric Cooperative. Craig Turcott, Barron County Board. Jamie McCready, Cumberland Healthcare & Barron County Board. Rebecca Ekenstedt, Cumberland Healthcare. James Williams, Wisconsin Emergency Management. Dave Putnam, Rice Lake Fire. Josh Miller, Saputo Cheese.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

- Louie Okey at 09:00.

#### **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

- Read by Louie Okey.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None.

#### **APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: January 25, 2024; April 25, 2024; July 25, 2024**

- Motion Made by Melissa Miller, Seconded by Craig Turcott. Motion Carried (Unanimously).

#### **SPILL REVIEWS**

- Henry Repeating Arms – July 29, 2024
- Jet Fuel – August 14, 2024
- All State Asphalt – August 22, 2024
- Wastewater Sludge – August 23, 2024
- Saputo – September 10, 2024
- Scheps Dairy – September 11, 2024

#### **RESPONSE REVIEWS**

- None.

#### **APPROVE LEPC BYLAWS & APPROVE TO KEEP THE STATE OF WISCONSIN AS THE COMPLIANCE OFFICER**

- Motion Made by Craig Turcott, Seconded by Jamie McCready. Motion Carried (Unanimously).

#### **INTEGRATED PREPAREDNESS PLANN (IPP) WORKSHOP**

- A brief overview and history of IPP.
- Identified Threats, Hazards, and Risks from the newly updated county Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Reviewed the preparedness priorities for 2023-2025 planning cycle.
- Mike Judy and Nate Dunston discussed the current completion status of identified projects for 2024-2027.
- The committee held a discussion on IPP planning for 2025.

#### **EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS FOR DAMS**

- Agenda item postponed until January 30, 2025 meeting.





# *BARRON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT*

## *OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES*



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### **FACILITY REVIEW**

- Dave Paulson gave a brief overview on McCain Foods.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT**

- Mike reviewed the highlights of the quarterly report.

### **RESPONSE REIMBURSEMENTS**

- None.

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### **PARTNER REPORTS**

- Luong Huynh – Has recently accepted a promotion and will be our second contact. Jenny Legaspi will be our primary contact going forward.
- Karla Potts-Shufelt- Invited all members of the committee to attend the training exercise "The Flood that Launched 1,000 Stomach Upsets" which will be held at the government center on January 29, 2025 9am-12 pm. Contact Karla for more information and for a head count.

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### **COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

- Emergency Action Plans for Dams – Tyler Gruetzmacher
- Saputo Facility Presentation – Josh Miller
- EPCRA Background / LEPC Presentation – Mike Judy

### **NEXT MEETING**

- Scheduled for Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup> 2025
- Location: Justice Center EOC at 1420 State Highway 25 North, Barron

### **ADJORNMENT**

- Louie Okey to adjourn at 10:23 a.m. Carried.



2024

# Emergency Management 2024 Annual Report

Each quarter, the Barron County (WI) Sheriff's Department – Office of Emergency Management publishes a quarterly community report that outlines activities completed over the previous three months, and identifies active initiatives over the next three months.





## GRANT FUNDING

### GRANT FUNDING AWARDED

Emergency Management has applied and been awarded the following grants this year (pending receipt):

\$44,258	2024 Emergency Management Performance Grant Closeout (EMPG)
\$13,308	2024 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know (EPCRA) Grant
\$9,504	2024 Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) Grant
\$7,510	2024 Computer & Hazmat Response and Equipment (CHREG) Grant

**Grant funding awarded (2024): \$74,580**

### GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED

Emergency Management has applied and received the following grants this year:

\$55,418	2023 PSAP/ESINet – NextGen911 Grant from WI Department of Military Affairs
\$44,739	2023 Emergency Management Performance Grant Closeout (EMPG)
\$36,000	Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (BRIC) Grant
\$21,473	Federal Hospital Preparedness (Admin for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR Grant)
\$12,954	2023 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know (EPCRA) Grant
\$7,550	2023 Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) Grant
\$7,234	2023 Computer & Hazmat Response and Equipment (CHREG) Grant

**Grant funding received (2024): \$185,368**

### 2024 FUNDING TOTALS

Totals from previous sections above:

\$74,580	Total Grant Funding Awarded (awaiting receipt)
\$163,895	Total Grant Funding Received
N/A	Total Response Reimbursement Received
N/A	Total Disaster Reimbursement Received

**Grant funding totals (2024): \$259,948**

## PREVIOUS INITIATIVES

### OFF-SITE PLAN UPDATES

Emergency Off-Site Plans were updated for the 18 chemical facilities in Barron County. These plans play a crucial role in accordance with the provisions of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA). They encompass vital information specific to each facility; such as chemical identification, hazard exposure profiles, and release management practices. These comprehensive plans serve as a valuable resource for both facility personnel and local emergency responders in the event of a chemical spill or release.

### EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN UPDATES

Municipal Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) for 31 townships, cities, and villages within the county have also been updated. These plans are designed to effectively guide local government and elected officials throughout the response and recovery phases of disasters and large-scale incidents that directly impact their respective communities. Once the municipal board updates their plan, a copy is kept at the municipal level and with Barron County Emergency Management so it can be referenced during disasters and large-scale incidents such as floods, windstorms, tornadoes, hazardous materials incidents, etc.

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Barron County is also updating the county emergency operations plan, through a review and sign-off from multiple department heads and several external support agencies and organizations. Similar to emergency plans at the municipal level, the county plan identifies how disasters and large-scale incidents will be managed, resources that are available at the local, state, and federal level; and emergency contacts to support local operations.

This also includes the update and maintenance of the Barron County Strategic Plan. This plan consists of the county's vision, mission, values, and strategic outcomes that expand into goals and metrics for those outcomes. The plan basically serves as a community's roadmap and is used to prioritize initiatives, resources, goals, and department operations planned over the next 5 years.

Once the draft plan is created, it is provided to county administration and area stakeholders for input and overall approval. It is then incorporated into many day-to-day planning initiatives throughout the coming years.

#### **BARRON COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN**

The Barron County Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated this year with the support of a hazard mitigation grant. On August 23rd, Barron County received formal approval from FEMA, confirming that our updated plan meets the necessary criteria for a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan. This approval is a significant milestone, as it ensures that Barron County and its municipalities will remain eligible for future grant funding to better prepare for and respond to potential emergencies. As of October 1st, the update has been fully completed, and Wisconsin Emergency Management has also approved the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The Barron County All-Hazard Mitigation Plan is a critical document that identifies and evaluates natural and man-made hazards prevalent in our region. These hazards are ranked based on their likelihood of occurrence and the potential damage they could cause, enabling informed decision-making for risk reduction. The plan also outlines tailored mitigation strategies for each identified hazard, addressing specific vulnerabilities and promoting community resilience. By proactively planning and prioritizing mitigation efforts, Barron County is better positioned to minimize the impact of disasters and protect lives, property, and critical infrastructure. In addition to the county, several of our municipalities use the Hazard Mitigation Plan to steer their hazard mitigation planning and qualify for FEMA hazard mitigation funding.

#### **TRAINING**

On September 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, Barron County Emergency Management held an Incident Command System (ICS-300) course, in coordination with Wisconsin Emergency Management and area instructors Lisa McMahon and Darian Reed. A total of 23 area first responders were in attendance.

ICS-300 provides local responders with training and resources for personnel who require advanced knowledge and application of the Incident Command System. It is a 3-day course that's designed for those emergency response personnel who would function in a Command or General Staff position during a large, complex incident or event, or personnel who are or would likely be a part of a local or regional Incident Management Team during a major incident, whether single agency, multiagency, or Unified Command.

#### **TRAINING PROPS**

In the fall of 2024, Emergency Services of Barron County (ESBC) purchased 13 weighted mannequins utilizing a Federal Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) Grant from the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), for \$21,473. These mannequins range in size and weight from a small child of 14 lbs. to a full-size adult at 125 lbs. These mannequins are available to our regional partners (Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, First Responders, Air Medical, Hospitals, etc) to use as a training resource for field responders.

#### **ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES**

In addition to the projects listed above, emergency management staff coordinated the following initiatives:

- Maintained update of countywide AED database for emergency management and dispatch
- Provided CPR Training for new Sheriff's Department staff
- Provided maintenance to all radio tower sites, including utility fuel refills, generator maintenance, etc.



## **DRILLS & EXERCISES**

In October, emergency management participated in a statewide WebEOC drill, which is required by Wisconsin Emergency Management on an annual basis.

In October, emergency management staff also participated in a comprehensive Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) exercise in Cumberland. The scenario simulated a bus carrying 20 children involved in a collision with a sedan containing two adult occupants. This exercise provided valuable insights and facilitated meaningful takeaways for all participants.

Key lessons learned included the importance of strengthening partnerships between emergency management (EM) and local schools and hospitals. The exercise highlighted how EM can serve as a critical resource for schools and, conversely, how schools can play a pivotal role in emergency preparedness, particularly in facilitating family reunification processes.

One of the most significant outcomes was the collaborative effort across all participating agencies. Each department actively contributed to the success of the exercise, fostering a shared commitment to improving readiness and response capabilities. The positive engagement and coordination demonstrated throughout the drill ensured that it was both effective and beneficial for everyone involved.



## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS**

Emergency Management participated in multiple community outreach projects over the past 3 months, including:

- Attendance of NW WI Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (HERC) Meetings
- Attendance of Regional Trauma Advisory Council (RTAC) Meetings
- Attendance of multiple Fire Department Meetings

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH THROUGH PREPAREDNESS EDUCATION**

Every month, emergency management publishes an article in The Barron County Review to help our community stay informed about emergency preparedness and disaster readiness. With approximately 4,500 copies distributed throughout the county, along with posts on our social media platforms, we aim to reach as many residents as possible.

Throughout 2024, our articles have covered a variety of important topics, including "Preparing for Spring Weather," "Understanding Severe Weather," "Tornado Preparedness," "Emergency Preparedness for Seniors with Mobility Issues," and "Preparing for the Upcoming Winter Season." These publications are written with the well-being of our community in mind, offering practical advice and relevant information to help individuals and families be better prepared for emergencies.

Each topic is selected and carefully researched to address the specific challenges our residents might face. Whether it's preparing for seasonal weather or supporting neighbors with mobility issues, our goal is to empower everyone with the knowledge and tools they need to protect themselves and those they care about. By sharing this information, we hope to increase our community's overall preparedness, fostering a safer and more resilient Barron County. Together, we can be ready for whatever challenges come our way.



The previous section outlined projects completed within the past 3 months.

The following section identifies initiatives in-progress over the next 3 months.

## ACTIVE INITIATIVES

### **MAJOR INCIDENT PAGE**

To improve situational awareness, a notification group is being established through the "I am Responding" mobile app. This group will consist of carefully selected county department heads, emergency response agency chiefs and directors, hospital personnel, business owners, and key individuals with strong community involvement in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

The purpose of the Major Incident Page is twofold:

- 1) Enhance situational awareness by providing key community stakeholders with early notification of significant incidents or emergencies.
- 2) Mitigate misinformation and rumors during critical events by disseminating verified updates.

When a disaster or major incident occurs—or is anticipated—emergency management can issue alerts via the "I am Responding" app to the designated members of the Major Incident Page group. These alerts are informational only, and recipients are not required to take any direct action. However, due to their roles within the community, group members may begin making preparations or activating resources proactively if the situation escalates.

### **Example Scenario**

In the event of a large-scale tornado, such as the one that struck the mobile home park along Hwy 88 between Cameron and Chetek in May 2017, the Major Incident Page would immediately notify group members about the incident. Although initial information may be limited, subsequent updates would be provided as new details emerge.

This early notification could enable key stakeholders to act quickly behind the scenes:

- Hospitals can begin clearing emergency room beds and mobilizing additional staff, including nurses, physicians, surgeons, and support staff
- EMS agencies can call-in personnel to staff additional ambulances
- Public Health and Human Services could prepare to activate the local Emergency Operations Center if necessary
- County officials could receive advanced notice, allowing them to prepare for media inquiries and provide timely information to the public.

Participation in the Major Incident Page group will be by invitation only, ensuring that notifications are sent to the appropriate individuals with relevant responsibilities and influence. This approach will streamline communication and enhance community readiness during emergencies. Sign-ups for this program are over half-completed with a significant number of key stakeholders already registered and prepared to receive major incident notifications.

### **"I AM RESPONDING" BETA TESTING**

As of today, when emergency responders are dispatched to emergency calls, they only receive the CAD information at the time of their initial dispatch. There's no way to receive any information that changes after their initial dispatch has been sent. Through a multi-year partnership with "I am Responding", we have been selected to beta test their new platform that allows responders to receive information that is added to the CAD after responders have been dispatched, and throughout the rest of the call. Such information could include address changes, crew/responder safety information, patient condition changes, and much more.

Barron County has also collaborated with IamResponding to beta test a way to map the exact location of 911 callers. This concept will have a significant improvement over today's current operations. For example, this capability will greatly enhance our response to missing children, kidnappings, lost/missing hunters, patients with recent history of a stroke, and more.



## **BACKUP 911 CENTER**

Barron County is taking a proactive step in enhancing emergency response capabilities by establishing a new mobile backup 911 center. Leveraging today's advanced technology, this mobile center can be set up anywhere with a reliable internet connection, providing unparalleled flexibility and resilience during emergencies. A mobile backup center ensures continuity of operations if the primary 911 center is compromised due to natural disasters, power outages, or other unforeseen events.

This capability allows dispatchers to maintain communication with first responders and the public without interruption, safeguarding critical response times. Additionally, a mobile backup center can be deployed to major events or incidents, serving as an on-site command post to improve coordination. By creating this resource, Barron County demonstrates its commitment to public safety, ensuring reliable and effective emergency services under any circumstances.

## **EMERGENCY ACCESS**

Emergency Management recently facilitated a tabletop exercise at the Barron County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in collaboration with staff from Boy Scout Camp Phillips in Haugen. The simulation focused on a significant windstorm scenario, resulting in widespread tree blowdown that obstructed access to injured campers across the property. Participants included Camp Phillips staff, Bear Lake/Haugen Fire, DNR/Fire Wardens, and Rice Lake Fire.

The exercise underscored a critical safety concern: Camp Phillips relies solely on a single, long, winding access road heavily lined with trees and brush. This route is vulnerable to blockages from debris or fallen trees during severe weather, potentially delaying emergency response and jeopardizing lives.

To address this issue, participants collectively emphasized the need for a secondary access route. Emergency Management, in partnership with Camp Phillips staff and Barron County officials, is proposing the allocation of a portion of the Barron County Forest Trail (south of Camp Phillips, Map: C-10) as an emergency access route. Camp Phillips has committed to widening the trail to accommodate emergency vehicles and maintaining it year-round to ensure continual accessibility. The new route would connect to 13-<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-16th Street, providing an alternative entry point for responders.

While the proposal is under review, wet ground conditions have temporarily delayed a site assessment by forestry staff. Once conditions permit, the assessment will be completed, and the findings will be presented to the Property Committee for a final determination.

This initiative reflects the collaborative efforts of Emergency Management, Camp Phillips staff, and Barron County officials to enhance camper safety and optimize emergency response capabilities. Establishing a secondary access route will mitigate risks and ensure reliable emergency access during severe weather or other critical events.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

- LUMEN (CENTURY LINK) to AT&T
- NEXT-GEN TEXT-TO-911 & ESI-NET

In 2019, the Barron County Sheriff's Department 911 Center operated on an Airbus call-handling system supported by CenturyLink. At the time, the system, including all workstations and backroom networking equipment, had surpassed its end-of-life status and could no longer be repaired or replaced. To address this, Barron County applied for and was awarded a grant of \$127,015 from the Wisconsin Office of Emergency Communications, Department of Military Affairs. This funding initiated the upgrade to NextGen911 compliance by transitioning the Airbus platform to the Vesta platform, which supports NextGen911 capabilities.

In October 2022, the 911 Center secured a second grant of \$69,273 from the same state office. This funding covered the installation of interfaces, firewalls, and ORT testing, enabling the 911 Center to connect to Wisconsin's statewide NG911 ESINet/SMS system.

In 2023, Lumen (formerly CenturyLink) announced it would cease operations in Wisconsin, leaving 911 Centers, including Barron County, in a unique position. Lumen had previously provided equipment bids essential for securing project funding through state grants. To address this challenge, Barron County transitioned to AT&T as the new provider of 911 services and NextGen911 infrastructure. Although this change created a temporary setback, the project remained on track for completion by July 2024.

Throughout 2024, Barron County will install Phase 2 equipment funded by this grant and undergo an onsite state assessment to prepare for Phase 3. Upon approval, the 911 Center will begin signing agreements with regional phone service providers to route text messages to the center through the Text-to-911 service.



## **RADIO COMMUNICATIONS**

Marshfield Medical Center EMS will soon transition their field radios, including portable and mobile units, from their private frequency to the countywide Simulcast public safety radio network. This change is aimed at improving radio reception and transmission, ensuring clearer communication and enhanced coverage across the county.

By integrating into the Simulcast network, Marshfield Medical Center EMS will benefit from the county's robust infrastructure, designed to provide superior signal strength and reliability, especially in remote or challenging areas. Additionally, combining the two radio networks promotes streamlined communication between Marshfield EMS and other first responders, fostering better coordination during emergencies.

### **ESINET PROJECT OVERVIEW and NEXTGEN 911**

The ESINet (Emergency Services IP Network) is a critical component of the NextGen911 system, connecting the Barron County 911 Center to the State of Wisconsin via AT&T-managed hardware and software. ESINet serves as the technological backbone, enabling the center to transition fully to NextGen911 and receive text-to-911 calls, and eventually video-to-911 calls. The current project status is as follows:

- AVPN circuits are pending completion
- Motorola is awaiting assignment of a Project Manager for its part of the initiative
- A site survey was successfully completed on January 10, 2024
- AT&T router installation is pending the completion of AVPN circuits
- The first GIS training session was completed on January 8, 2024

The ESINet hardware and software installation phase has been completed and testing has been finalized.

### **Next Steps: Text-to-911 and Beyond**

Following the ESINet Go-Live, Barron County has begun signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with major phone carriers such as AT&T, Sprint, and Verizon to enable the routing of text messages to the 911 Center.

Once the Text-to-911 capability is fully operational, the focus will shift to exploring future services, including Video-to-911. While Video-to-911 is not yet completely developed within the industry, it represents a key area for growth and advancement in emergency communications.

This significant initiative has been made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs / Office of Emergency Communications, AT&T, and local agencies. The ESINet grant totals \$69,273, with \$55,418 contributed by the state and a \$13,854 match from Barron County.

Despite challenges such as the transition from Lumen to AT&T, Barron County's commitment to enhancing public safety through advanced technology remains steadfast. The project is on course for timely completion, ensuring the 911 Center is equipped to provide critical NextGen911 services to the community.

### **INTEGRATED PREPAREDNESS PLANNING (IPP)**

Over the course of 2024, Barron County Emergency Management has been working on developing a strategic plan guided by input we receive from our stakeholders. Discussions of this plan, called an Integrated Preparedness Plan, has been with individuals and organizations throughout Barron County. At the conclusion of this planning process, Emergency Management will focus on these priorities over the next three years.

Once preparedness priorities have been identified by the county stakeholders, Emergency Management will conduct an "Integrated Preparedness Plan Workshop". During this workshop, the stakeholders will work with Emergency Management to formulate the path forward to address the top five priorities.

### **LANDING ZONE (LZ) COMMUNICATIONS**

This is a reminder that Barron County has transitioned from coordinating air medical helicopter landing zones (LZs) on MARC-2 to using FG GRAY as the primary frequency and FG BLACK as the secondary frequency. If you have any questions or require further clarification, please feel free to reach out. This frequency assignment is for live flights and for training events.





**EMERGENCY RESOURCE LIST**

To enhance awareness of available local resources, emergency management will be compiling an inventory of assets that can be mobilized during specific emergencies. This inventory will encompass specialized equipment such as:

- Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs)
- Boats
- Rehabilitation Trailers
- Drones
- Heavy Machinery
- Other critical resources

In addition to equipment lists, supplementary lists will be developed to catalog personnel with specialized skills, such as:

- Grain Bin Rescue
- Cold Water Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue
- High-Angle Rescue
- Rope Rescue
- Farm Equipment Entrapment

These resource lists will ensure that the appropriate equipment and expert personnel can be quickly identified and deployed during emergencies, optimizing response efforts and enhancing community safety.

**PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO UPGRADE (SIMULCAST)**

Barron County has completed the process of upgrading the countywide public safety radio network infrastructure by incorporating a Simulcast System, which has several benefits to the various responder agencies:

For law enforcement in Barron County, there are 4 towers that use 4 different radio frequencies. A user must manually select the closest tower to hear dispatch. Several years ago, the sheriff's department overcame this issue by purchasing new portable radios with a "vote scan" option.

For Fire/EMS in Barron County, there are 8 different towers that share a common frequency. Users must select the closest tower to effectively communicate with dispatch. This requires 8 different channels to be programmed in a user's radio. If there are multiple departments on calls in different parts of the county, it is common that users are not able to hear others on the channel and users often talk on top of one another. With a simulcast system, ideally only 3 channels would need to be programmed:

**DISPATCH:** Dispatch outbound only. It is not uncommon that dispatch has to wait to page responders to an emergency because the channel is in use by responders that are onscene and coordinating other incidents. This outbound-only frequency would guarantee the dispatch always has a path to immediately page departments.

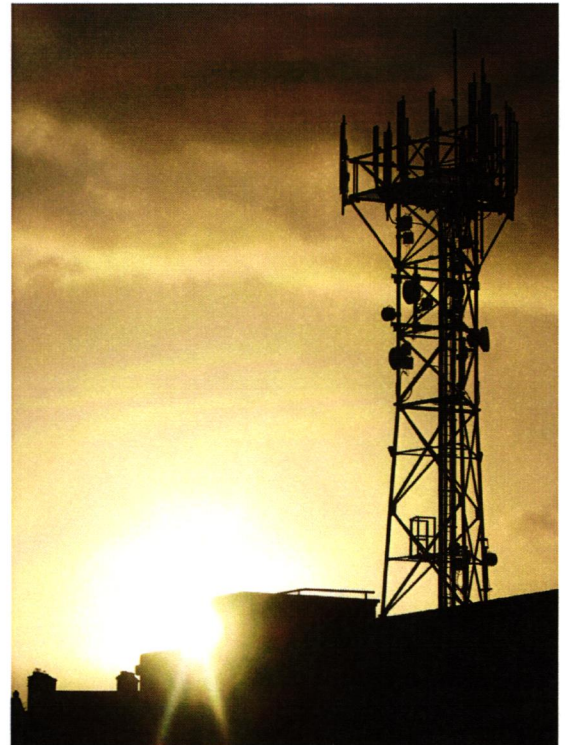
**OPS-1:** Normal day-to-day response coordination. This frequency would be used by all departments that are assigned to less-critical calls such as a car accident with minor injuries, a small outside fire, etc. These are the common low-level calls that can be stacked on one frequency.

**OPS-2:** Major incident coordination or pre-planned events. This frequency would be reserved for disasters and major incidents such as tornadoes, wind storms, multi-agency fires, mass casualty incidents, major hazmat, search & rescue, etc. These are the high-acuity incidents that involve multiple agencies requiring heavy logistics and coordination.

Most of our fire repeaters are several years past their end of life status and parts are no longer available for repair. The Simulcast upgrade will bring our equipment into the modern era of radio communications without worrying about 20-year-old repeaters needing replaced.

Barron County also often receives interference from Buffalo and Douglas County. Since the installation of Simulcast would require all radios in the county to be reprogrammed, this gave us the opportunity to program our equipment to eliminate that interference.

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## **SIMULCAST (continued)**

Since the project's go-live date, we have encountered several challenges related to coverage, reception, transmission, and other system functionalities. These issues are fully expected when deploying a system of this size and complexity. Our team has anticipated such scenarios and is actively monitoring and addressing each identified concern. Radio Technicians are diligently working through every reported issue to determine root causes and implement resolutions. It will take a little time to ensure the new system achieves optimal performance and meets all of our operational requirements.

## **HAZMAT RESPONSE**

Due to the close proximity of the Jennie-O facility to Barron's City Center, as well as the nature and volume of chemicals housed at the site, Emergency Management has partnered with multiple emergency response agencies to evaluate and discuss automated emergency response strategies. Recognizing the critical importance of timely and effective response actions, our goal over the coming months is to develop a comprehensive plan that enhances response efficiency and incorporates automated decision-making for initial response scenarios.

The planning phase is scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2025. During this time, we will collaborate with key stakeholders to ensure the plan is robust, inclusive, and reflective of best practices in emergency response. Once a draft is complete, it will be distributed to all involved parties for feedback and refinement. By prioritizing innovation and collaboration, this initiative aims to bolster community safety and readiness in the event of an incident involving the facility.

## **UPCOMING TRAINING**

**Farmedic** – With agriculture being one of the most dangerous industries in America, significant injuries and deaths occur to farmers, family members, and rescue personnel each year. These types of emergencies require specialized knowledge of farm machinery, chemicals, and specific rescue techniques. The National Farmedic Program allows responders to participate in hands-on field training involving tractor rollovers, PTO entanglements, pesticide exposures, common farming chemicals, silo fires, and dealing with livestock. A training flyer will be published when training dates are confirmed.



### **First On The Scene**

(this training is geared toward the general public)  
Considering the hazards surrounding the farming industry, traumatic injuries occur on a frequent basis. In these types of incidents, critical decisions and actions need to be made and implemented in a logical order. If not, risk of further injury or death to the victim is increased.

"First On The Scene" is a program that teaches farm family members, farm employees and the general community how to make important decisions at the scene of a farm emergency prior to the arrival of emergency responders.

The program is designed to lead participants through various scenarios that will force them to think about typical injury incidents and make proper decisions and reactions. Topics include tractor overturns, machinery entanglements, grain bin emergencies, silo emergencies, chemical emergencies, and electrical emergencies.

The training is intended for all farm groups such as farm managers, employees, spouses, 4-H and FFA groups, etc. Participation as a family or as a farm work group is encouraged. A training flyer will be published when training dates are confirmed.

**END OF REPORT**