

EMERGENCY SERVICES QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL 1 2024 TO JUNE 30 2024

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

BARRON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



GRANTS & FINANCES

GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED

Emergency Management has applied, been awarded, and received the following grants this quarter:

\$36,000	Hazardous Mitigation Plan Update (HMPG Grant)
\$7,550	Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP Grant)
\$21,473	Federal Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP Grant)

Grant Funding: \$ 65,023

GRANT FUNDING AWARDED

Emergency Management has applied and been awarded the following grants, awaiting receipt:

\$55,418	PSAP/ESINet – NextGen911 Grant from Wisconsin Dept of Military Affairs
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Grant Funding: \$ 55,418

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT (EMPG)

In early 2024, Congress voted to reduce funding nationwide for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) by 10%, pursuant to the 2024 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act. This will reduce Barron County's annual amount of \$44,739 to an updated amount of \$40,265. This is a reduction of \$4,473.

2023 GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION

To offset the cost of upgrading our radio network to a Simulcast System, Emergency Management has applied for a Non-State Grant in the amount of \$1,395,984. If awarded, the grant requires a 50% local match in the amount of \$697,992. This means Barron County would pay \$697,992 and the grant would award \$697,992.

On July 8th, the grant status was checked and confirmed that all grant applications are still being reviewed, and that no awards have been issued yet. An expected award date has not been provided.

GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED & AWARDED:

The Office of Emergency Management has applied and received the following year-to-date finances:

Grant funding received & awarded (this quarter):	\$ 120,441
Grant funding received & awarded (year-to-date):	\$ 185,368



PSAP/ESINet NextGen911 GRANT

- In late 2022, Barron County was awarded a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs / Office of Emergency Communications (DMA/OEC) to upgrade the hardware and software within the Barron County 911 Center, enabling Text-to-911 capability. The grant totals \$69,273, with the State contributing \$55,418 and Barron County matching \$13,854.

The project is currently behind schedule and over budget due to two primary factors. Firstly, the initial project deadline of June 30, 2024, was missed because Motorola did not assign a Project Manager, resulting in a lack of accountability and progress. Recently, Motorola has assigned a Project Manager (toward the end of June 2024), which is expected to accelerate project development. Emergency Management is working closely with DMA/OEC to ensure that our grant remains unaffected by Motorola's inability to manage their side of the project.

Secondly, the project budget has been exceeded because Lumen withdrew its support for projects in Wisconsin, requiring Barron County 911 to engage a new phone support vendor, Motorola. Motorola's bid was higher than Lumen's, requiring Barron County to accept the increased costs under the original grant terms, creating a financial shortfall not covered by the grant. Emergency Management is seeking to bridge this funding gap with a new PSAP grant in the summer of 2024.

GRANT CLOSE-OUTS

- Emergency Management is currently in the process of closing out our Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) which awarded Barron County with \$36,000 to update our countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan update was a federal requirement through FEMA in order for the county (and our municipalities) to receive any future federal grant funding. The plan update was completed on-time and on-budget, recently being fully approved by Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) and FEMA. Several municipalities throughout Barron County have already passed resolutions to adopt the updated version, making them eligible to receive future federal grant funding.

PREVIOUS INITIATIVES

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Each month, emergency management publishes an article in The Barron County Review that focuses on emergency preparedness and disaster readiness. With approximately 4,500 copies printed monthly, these articles are circulated throughout Barron County in addition to being posted on our social media accounts. In 2024, article topics have included "Preparing for Spring Weather", "Understanding Severe Weather", and "Tornado Preparedness".

The articles aim to educate and inform residents on how to protect themselves and their families during various emergency situations. By providing practical advice and up-to-date information, the publication helps to foster a culture of preparedness within the community. Each article is meticulously researched and written to address both common and unique challenges faced by residents in Barron County. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every resident has the knowledge and resources necessary to stay safe and resilient in the face of disasters.

DRILLS & EXERCISES

- On June 25th, emergency management attended a safety and security training held at the Mayo Clinic in Rice Lake, designed to provide a refresher for front-end staff on how to handle various emergency situations involving irate, uncooperative, and armed subjects entering their facility.
- On April 4th emergency management facilitated a tabletop exercise in the Justice Center EOC with Barron County Department Head Staff to walk-through a tornado scenario at the Government Center. The group discussed a wide variety of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery topics while learning about the specific roles and responsibilities each department would have during such an event. Key focus areas included communication strategies, resource allocation, and coordination with external agencies. The exercise highlighted the importance of having a comprehensive emergency plan in place and underscored the need for ongoing training and collaboration among all county departments to ensure a swift and effective response to a real-life tornado incident.



911 DISPATCH

- As outlined earlier in the Grants & Finances Section, the Barron County 911 Center is working toward the implementation of Text-to-911 through a grant provided by the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs/Office of Emergency Communications (DMA/OEC). An updated project completion date has yet to be established, however it is expected to be closed out by the end of 2024. We are currently in the equipment installation phase, which is followed by the inspection phase. This is where a State Representative conducts an onsite inspection to ensure all hardware and software meets compliance requirements. Once this phase is complete, MOUs with the various phone carriers (AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, etc) will be signed so that text messages can be routed to the Barron 911 Center. This is slated to be the end of the project, with functional testing being the final step before Go Live.

COUNTYWIDE FIRST RESPONDERS

- Over the past few months, 8 new first responders have been added to the countywide roster, spread across 5 districts. Chetek (x3), Turtle Lake (x1), Cameron (x2), Cumberland (x1), and Haugen (x1). Each responder is equipped with a fully stocked gear bag and a set of operating protocols. These members will begin attending monthly district meetings to meet their fellow responders, receive continuing education training, and be restocked with supplies and equipment as needed.

COMPLETED TRAINING

- Barron County Emergency Management partnered with the National Weather Service to host a SkyWarn "Storm Spotter" class in the Government Center Auditorium on April 30th. Two classes were held on this day (2:00pm-4:00pm and 6:00pm-8:00pm) to accommodate varying work schedules. The classes had a total of 75 attendees.
- On June 25th the National Weather Service hosted an "Advanced Weather Spotter" class, specifically for Barron County Storm Spotter Team members. The course reviewed advanced radar reading techniques, enabling participants to interpret weather patterns more accurately. Attendees also learned about severe weather indicators, such as supercell structures and tornado genesis, enhancing their ability to provide timely and precise weather reports. Additionally, the class covered safety protocols for storm spotting to ensure the well-being of team members during extreme weather events."
- Through the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant, a total of 6 classes were held with 151 attendees. Courses included:
 - Confined Space Rescue – Operations Level - Initial Class
 - Confined Space Rescue – Operations Level - Refresher Class
 - Confined Space Rescue – Operations Level - Initial (Industrial) Class
 - Confined Space Rescue – Technician Level – Initial Class
 - Confined Space Rescue – Technician Level – Refresher Class
 - Hazardous Materials - Operations Level – Refresher Class

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Emergency Management participated in multiple community outreach projects over the past 3 months, including:
 - National Weather Service Annual Storm Spotter Training with approximately 75 in attendance
 - Attendance of NW WI Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (HERC) Meetings
 - Attendance of Regional Trauma Advisory Council (RTAC) Meeting
 - Attendance of multiple Fire Department Business Meetings

TRAINING EQUIPMENT

- Through a Federal Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) Grant from the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), in the amount of \$21,473, Emergency Services of Barron County (ESBC) purchased 13 weighted mannequins. These mannequins range in size and weight from a small child of 14 lbs to a full-size adult at 125 lbs. These mannequins will be used as a regional training resource for field responders, hospitals, EMS agencies, law enforcement agencies, etc.



ACTIVE INITIATIVES

BARRON COUNTY STORM SPOTTERS

- To increase situational awareness and decrease reporting time, Emergency Services of Barron County (ESBC) is supporting a countywide Storm Spotters Team. This 18-member team is provided with basic and advanced storm spotter training through the National Weather Service. Upon activation, these weather spotters provide real-time updates and detailed observations on severe weather conditions. Their reports are crucial for the early warning system, helping to disseminate accurate information quickly to the public and emergency responders. By leveraging the expertise of these trained individuals, ESBC aims to enhance community safety and preparedness during severe weather events. Team members are activated through IamResponding and coordinate their actions through a private communications app on their cell phones.

EMERGENCY ACCESS

- During a recent safety assessment, it was determined that the Boy Scout Camp Phillips in Haugen has only a single access road, which is both long and winding. This road is densely lined with trees and brush, posing a significant risk of becoming impassable during a tornado or windstorm due to debris and fallen trees. Such obstructions could severely delay emergency response and access to potentially injured campers.

To mitigate this risk, a secondary access point is essential to ensure alternative entry for emergency responders. Emergency management is collaborating with Boy Scout Camp staff and Barron County officials to establish an additional access point on the south side of the property, connecting to 13-¾-16th Street. This proposed trail, suitable for emergency vehicles, will be maintained by Boy Scout staff to ensure year-round accessibility in emergencies. The proposal is currently under review, with all parties working towards a resolution by the end of this summer.

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 also encompass vital information 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 Barron 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 Emergency Management so it can be referenced during disasters and large-scale incidents such as floods, windstorms, tornadoes, hazardous materials incidents, etc.
- 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.



QUARTERLY REPORT

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Emergency management is actively working to increase the number of Code Red subscribers within Barron County. From January 2023 to January 2024, business subscribers increased from 2,915 to 3,162 (247 added). Residential subscribers increased from 13,502 to 16,431 (2,929 added). With a total increase of 3,176 throughout the year of 2023, we are continuing to push subscriber sign-ups throughout 2024 through several marketing avenues, including newspaper articles and social media posts.

911 DISPATCH

- By applying for the 2024 PSAP Grant sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs / Office of Emergency Communications (DMA/OEC), emergency management is working toward purchasing Pro-QA software for dispatch. This software would replace the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) cardset with a software-based system that streamlines caller questioning and making the process much faster and easier for dispatchers to use. The 2024 PSAP grant application period closes in August so it will be several months until we know if we are selected for a grant award.

COMMUNICATIONS

- The Simulcast Public Safety Radio Upgrade Project is on-time and on-budget, with tower site equipment installation beginning the week of July 15th. Existing microwave equipment will be removed from the tower sites and temporarily stored at the Justice Center. Within the next week, a document will be sent to all fire/ems agencies outlining which radio models will work on the new system. This will provide departments/agencies with the information needed if they plan on purchasing new radios before the Simulcast system has completed its installation. In addition, we are currently working on a reprogramming plan in an effort to minimize the impact on departments and responders.
- With Simulcast being the new primary radio system, we are also beta-testing a backup system called Zello. This phone app is designed to allow responders to communicate on their radio frequency without the use of an actual radio, by utilizing a smartphone app. Users must be invited to participate on the network and cannot just install the app to have access. We are exploring all options to maximize the use of this backup system, while still considering security measures. More information will be released as it becomes available.

COUNTYWIDE FIRST RESPONDERS

- To assist with operational costs, Emergency Services of Barron County (ESBC) will be holding a Golf Tournament Fundraiser on two different dates. The first Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, August 17th at Rolling Oaks Golf Course in Barron. The second Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, September 15th at Cumberland Golf Course. Proceeds will be used to cover the costs for workers comp, liability insurance, medical supplies for responders, special projects, and the creation of a countywide search & rescue team.

SCHEDULED TRAINING

- Emergency management has been approved to hold an Incident Command System (ICS-300) course for area responders. This is a 3-day course to be held at the Justice Center in Barron. We are currently working with the instructors to determine the dates. A training flyer will be published once the details have been confirmed.

QUARTERLY DISPATCH STATS

9,691 CADs Created	2,801 Wireless 911 Calls	9,511 Non-Emergency Calls	3 Seconds Average Call Answered
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