

EMERGENCY SERVICES QUARTERLY REPORT

July 1 2024 to September 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:

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

Grant Funding: \$55,418

GRANT FUNDING AWARDED

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

\$9,900	EPCRA State Computer and Hazmat Response Equipment Grant - 2024

Grant Funding: \$9,900

GRANT APPLICATIONS

- Over the past three months, emergency management staff has applied for the following grants
 - FY2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)
 - FY2024 State Computer and Hazmat Equipment Grant (EPCRA)
 - FY2025 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Grant
 - FY2024 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Training Grants

GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED & AWARDED:

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

Grant funding received & awarded (this quarter): \$ 65,318

Grant funding received & awarded (year-to-date): \$ 250,686



PREVIOUS INITIATIVES

BARRON COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The Barron County Hazard Mitigation Plan has recently been updated 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 an important step, as it ensures that Barron County (and its municipalities) will remain eligible for future federal grant funding to help us better prepare for and respond to potential emergencies. As of October 1st, the update has been fully completed. In addition to FEMA, the Hazard Mitigation Plan has also been approved by Wisconsin Emergency Management.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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 Business Meetings

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. 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 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.

TRAINING

On September 11th-13th, 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.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

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

- Maintained update of Barron County Emergency Operations Plan
- Maintained update of Municipal Emergency Operations Plans
- Coordinated emergency planning for 19 off-site facilities containing onsite hazardous materials
- Maintained update of countywide AED database for emergency management and dispatch
- Provided CPR Training for new Sheriff’s Department staff
- Attended WebEOC Training and Drills

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

EMERGENCY RESOURCE LIST

To enhance awareness of available local resources, emergency management will compile a detailed inventory of assets that can be mobilized during specific emergency situations. This inventory will encompass specialized equipment such as utility terrain vehicles (UTVs), boats, rehabilitation trailers, drones, heavy machinery, and other critical resources.

In addition, supplementary lists will be developed to catalog personnel with specialized skills, including but not limited to:

- Grain bin rescue
- Cold water rescue
- Confined space rescue
- High-angle rescue
- Rope rescue

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

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 SS 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 (EOC) 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.



DRILLS & EXERCISES

This quarter, emergency management personnel are scheduled to participate in a safety and security training at a local hospital (name withheld pending official announcement by the facility). The training is designed to provide staff with a comprehensive refresher on effectively managing emergency situations involving disruptive or uncooperative individuals within the facility.

EMERGENCY ACCESS

A recent safety assessment identified a significant access limitation at Boy Scout Camp Phillips in Haugen, which relies on a single, long, winding access road. The road is densely lined with trees and brush, posing a serious risk of becoming blocked by debris or fallen trees during a tornado or windstorm. Such obstructions could delay emergency response and hinder access to injured campers in critical situations.

To mitigate this risk, establishing a secondary access point is essential to ensure alternative entry for emergency responders. Emergency management is working in partnership with Camp Phillips staff and Barron County officials to develop an additional access route on the south side of the property, connecting to 13-¾-16th Street. The proposed trail will be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles and will be maintained by camp staff to ensure year-round accessibility.

The proposal is currently under review. However, wet ground conditions have temporarily delayed forestry staff from conducting the necessary site assessment. Once conditions permit, forestry staff will complete the review and present their findings to the Property Committee, which will make a final determination on the project. This collaborative effort reflects the shared commitment of all stakeholders to enhance both the safety of campers and the efficiency of emergency response operations at Camp Phillips.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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 partnership with "I am Responding", we have been selected to beta test their new platform capability that allows responders to receive any 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.

The second program that Barron County has partnered with "I am Responding" is to beta-test is a way to map all 911 callers. This will allow responders to see the physical location of the patient. This concept will have a significant improvement over today's current operations. For example, this capability will missing children, kidnappings, lost/missing hunters, patients with recent history of a stroke, and much more.

911 DISPATCH

In late 2022, Barron County was awarded an ESINet 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, also enabling text-to-911 capability. The grant totals \$69,273, with the State contributing \$55,418 and Barron County matching \$13,854.

We are finalizing the ESINet equipment installation phase and will be conducting full system tests during the week of November 4th through November 8th in the 911 Center.

The first 3 days (Nov 4-6) of equipment installation will require an onsite dispatcher to assist the ESINet crew with testing procedures to ensure all systems are operational. Once all parameters are checked-off as successfully installed, the formal Go-Live has been scheduled for Tuesday, November 12th. As soon as ESINet has been formally installed and the Go-Live date has occurred, we will begin working on signing MOUs with the various phone carriers (AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, etc) so that text messages can be routed to the Barron 911 Center.



GRANT INITIATIVES

We recently received the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NoFo) for the Radio Communications Grant that we had been waiting for from the state. Many of our sources had hyped-up this grant and we were looking forward to seeing what it has to offer our local response agencies. After reading the NoFo, we now understand this radio grant to be very limited and constricted.

An example includes a highly limited amount of \$650,000 in statewide funding for the entire project. When that amount is divided against 72 counties that leaves approximately \$9,000 per county. With current prices hovering around \$8,000 per mobile radio, this grant will not go very far.

COMMUNICATIONS

Based upon our last update meeting, the Simulcast Public Safety Radio Upgrade Project is on-time and on-budget. Our combiners were made in Canada and have been shipped. Most have arrived and have been installed, as we are just waiting on a few remaining combiners to arrive. The majority of our network equipment has been installed at our radio tower sites and we're just waiting on a few remaining sites to complete their network rack installation.

Regarding radio reprogramming, we have the code plugs for all departments. We will start testing frequencies in mid-November. We are looking at a go-live date in December, after deer hunting and before Christmas. Please keep in mind that these dates can easily change and move forward if installation is completed earlier. We don't want to wait until the last minute to go-live if we can switch over sooner.

Our goal is to have all agencies reprogrammed by the end of November, as Simulcast is scheduled to Go-Live in December.

The Barron County Highway Department will be coordinating with Barron County Emergency Management to utilize the "I am Responding" phone app to communicate and coordinate with their winter plows. This capability has not been created through the "I am Responding" platform yet, however Emergency Management will be working with them to create the concept over the next few weeks.

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.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

In addition to the projects listed above, emergency management is planning to complete the following initiatives:

- Finish EMPG/EPCRA Plan of Work
- Close Out Computer and Hazmat Response Equipment Grant
- Close Out 2024 EMPG/EPCRA Grants
- Upload remaining offsite plans in WHOPERS, obtain WEM approval on remaining plans, and distribute completed plans to local fire departments
- Finish IPP Plan for 2024 grant cycle

QUARTERLY DISPATCH STATS

10,197 CADs Created	3,651 Wireless 911 Calls	9,416 Non-Emergency Calls	3 Seconds Average Call Answered
------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------------

END OF REPORT

