

EMERGENCY SERVICES QUARTERLY REPORT

JULY 1 2023 TO SEPTEMBER 30 2023

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 planned over the next three months.

BARRON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



RADIO MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

To maintain Barron County's extensive public safety radio network infrastructure, an annual maintenance agreement has been secured each year with a local communication vendor. Due to the high cost of this service, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was released for 2023, soliciting bids from our area communication vendors. "GenCom" from Eau Claire won the bid and will be providing annual maintenance for Barron County's public safety radio network from this point forward. This move saved several thousand dollars per year.

NEXT-GEN 911 (also known as "Text-to-911")

In 2019, the Barron County Sheriff's Department 911 Center operated an Airbus-911 call handling system supported by CenturyLink. At the time, the Airbus phone system, including all workstations and backroom networking equipment had passed its end-of-life status and could no longer be repaired or replaced. Barron County applied for, and was awarded, a grant in the amount of \$127,015 from the Wisconsin Office of Emergency Communications, Department of Military Affairs to begin an upgrade toward NextGen911 compliance. This consisted of upgrading the Airbus Call Handling System to a Vesta Platform, which is fully NextGen911 compliant.

In October 2022, the 911 Center applied and was awarded another grant from the WI Office of Emergency Communications, Department of Military Affairs in the amount of \$69,273. This project funding provided the interface, firewalls, and ORT testing that were needed to connect Barron County to the statewide NG911 EsiNet system, which will facilitate text-to-911 services. Throughout the remainder of 2023, Barron County will be installing the Phase 2 equipment provided by this grant. An onsite state assessment will also be conducted to ensure Barron County is prepared to begin the final Phase 3, which consists of signing agreements with area phone service providers to route NextGen911 information into the Barron County 911 Center via text messaging.

When Barron County began its journey toward NextGen in 2019, contracts and agreements were secured through specific vendors to provide equipment, supplies, support, and maintenance throughout the project lifecycle. Last month, Barron County unexpectedly received a letter from Lumen (CenturyLink) advising they will not be renewing their annual contracts or agreements, as they are discontinuing service to all northern Wisconsin customers. This left Barron County in a unique position as Lumen had already provided equipment bids that were used to secure future project funding through the use of state grants.

Due to this abrupt change, Barron County is now signing with AT&T as the new provider of 911 services. This also includes signing agreements with AT&T to replace Lumen as the provider partner of NextGen services. New service and equipment bids have been received and the project timeline has been re-established. Although the change in vendors created a setback, the project completion goal of July 2024 should still be met.

GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED: \$88,120

OCTOBER UPDATE

The state recently changed from a fiscal year payout to a calendar year payout, so grant funding will not show in this quarter as it did in previous reports.

Office of Emergency Services applied and received the following grants this quarter:

\$64,599	FY22 Emergency Management Performance Grant Closeout (EMPG)
\$12,341	FY22 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know (EPCRA) Grant
\$3,663	FY22 Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) Grant
\$7,517	FY22 Computer & Hazmat Response and Equipment (CHREG) Grant

Grant funding received (year-to-date): \$88,120



SIMULCAST RADIO UPGRADE

OCTOBER UPDATE

A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been published for the Simulcast project and all area communication vendors were contacted and offered a chance to submit their bid. As soon as all bids are received, Barron County will begin reviewing to select the most appropriate communications vendor. Once the final vendor is selected, a project timeline will be created and published for awareness. Best case scenario, project completion may be reached by summer of 2024.

ORIGINAL INFORMATION

Barron County is in the process of upgrading its countywide radio network infrastructure by incorporating a Simulcast System, which has several benefits to the various response agencies:

For law enforcement in Barron County, there are 4 towers that use 4 different radio frequencies. A user needs to manually select the closest tower to hear dispatch. The sheriff's dept overcame this by purchasing new portable radios with a "multicast scan" option. Not all radios have this capability and it is an additional cost for those that have capable radios. A simulcast system would provide better coverage overall and we would be able to add lower power transmitters at sites such as Prairie Farm or Dallas that would improve coverage in the southwest corner of the county. The Sheriff's department radios have 4 zones that are used depending on the area of the county an officer is in. A simulcast would bring that number to 1.

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

Channel 1: 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.

Channel 2: 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.

Channel 3: 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 coordination.

Most of our fire repeaters are several years past their end of life status and parts are no longer available for repair. Radio service providers have been keeping parts from equipment that is replaced to repair other equipment. Equipment should be replaced with modern equipment that has parts available and is capable of simulcast.

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 would be a good time to program our equipment to eliminate that interference.



QUARTERLY REPORT

FIRE TRAINING

Barron County Emergency Management submitted for the Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) grant to fund Hazardous Materials and Confined Space training classes for 6 fire departments, which consists of 10 training classes for 231 responders.

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>TRAINING CLASS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Barron Fire Department	Confined Space Ops Initial	10/10/23 - 10/21/23
Cameron Fire Department	Confined Space Ops Refresher	2/20/24 - 2/21/24
Cameron Fire Department	Hazmat Operations Refresher	12/19/23 - 12/20/23
Chetek Fire Department	Confined Space Ops Refresher	3/6/24 - 3/20/24
Chetek Fire (incl Rice Lake FD)	Hazmat Operations Refresher	2/7/24 - 2/21/24
Cumberland Fire Department	Confined Space Rescue Technician	2/12/24, 2/17/24, 2/26/24
Dallas Fire Department	Hazmat Operations Refresher	1/15/24 - 1/17/24
Dallas Fire Department	Confined Space Ops Refresher	3/18/24 - 3/20/24
Barron Hwy Dept & WTE	Confined Space Ops Initial (Industrial)	2/14/24 - 2/15/24
Rice Lake Fire Department	Confined Space Technician Refresher	3/13/24 - 3/27/24

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Emergency management personnel attended a Railroad 101 training, which was an awareness-level course designed to provide an overview of primary agencies and entities involved at rail incidents. Participants also reviewed the resources and support personnel are available for rail-based incidents.

AEDs

UPDATE AS OF OCTOBER

The AEDs have arrived and are being assembled and distributed at this time. Adult electrodes have also arrived and are included in each AED kit. However, pediatric electrodes are still on backorder. When these arrive, they will be distributed.

ORIGINAL INFORMATION

In late 2022, Barron County received notification that two models of our AED's (Phillips HeartStart FR2 and FR2+) were approaching end-of-life status, meaning they would no longer be supported by the company or other vendors. This includes replacement electrodes, batteries, hardware, software, etc. Once the current equipment expired, the device would need to be trashed as it would be worthless. Staff conducted an inventory of AEDs and found that the county maintained 37 AEDs that are now classified as end-of-life.

Through government rates and a bulk discount, replacement AEDs were purchased, however the model was changed to the ZOLL AED PLUS, which is compatible with the heart monitors carried by our local ambulances.

Instead of EMS crews having to rip off the sticky Phillips HeartStart AED pads, only to replace them with pads that are compatible with their heart monitor, EMS crews will now be able to simply plug the Zoll pads into their heart monitor and move on. The new AEDs will also have adult/pediatric electrodes, an accessory kit (razor, alcohol prep pads, gloves, CPR mask, etc), and a protective case.

Once the order was placed, we were informed that ZOLL AED's were on back-order and shipping is estimated to be around the end of Summer.



The previous section outlined projects completed within the past 3 months.
The following section identifies initiatives in-progress over the next 3 months.



HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

OCTOBER UPDATE

Due to the extensive amount of work involved, the final project update is scheduled for completion toward the end of 2023. Once the update is complete, emergency management and planning personnel can use this document to determine and prioritize hazard mitigation projects and funding needs. This will significantly help the county status from FEMA's perspective since it will provide written and researched documentation that prioritizes the need for hazard mitigation grant funding which is released several times throughout the year.

ORIGINAL INFORMATION

Emergency Management applied for and was awarded a \$36,000 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant in February 2022 with the purpose of updating the Barron County Hazard Mitigation Plan. A contract was secured with Chris Straight at the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to facilitate updating the actual plan.

STORM SHELTER

OCTOBER UPDATE

The draft application has been submitted, now waiting on FEMA to review the application and decide if they will provide the funding. The Village of Almena is the grant applicant.

ORIGINAL INFORMATION

As part of the County's hazard mitigation plan update, meetings occur with each city and village. During the Village of Almena meeting, participants discussed the need for a community safe room (storm shelter) and the opportunity to include such as safe room as part of a community center/pavilion project being considered for Shadyside Park.

In addition to hosting events, the Park is fairly centrally located in the community with convenient access for nearby RV camping and slab-on-grade residential units. The Village of Almena is working with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to prepare a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) application to assist with costs for incorporating a safe room within the new community center with a tentative capacity of 320 persons, so this shelter will be relatively large in size. This is the same Planning Commission that was contracted to manage the grant process for the storm shelter at Prairie Lake Estates.

EMERGENCY DRILLS & EXERCISES

OCTOBER UPDATE

This fall, Emergency Management will be conducting a tabletop exercise at the Boy Scout Camp in Haugen to create emergency access plans for Camp Phillips in the event of a windstorm or tornado. The exercise will have a strong focus on emergency access such as ingress, egress, and alternate routes to extricate injured patients following a significant event.

This fall, Emergency Management will also be conducting a tabletop exercise at Saputo Cheese in Almena, to review emergency response plans to incidents that involve hazardous materials.

ORIGINAL INFORMATION

To brush-up on disaster planning and response, emergency responders frequently plan and conduct tabletop, functional, and full-scale exercises. These exercises bring together agency leadership, field responders, specialty resources, and all area stakeholders, to review a specific scenario and discuss how their community plans to respond to specific types of disasters and large-scale incidents. Later this summer, emergency management is looking into the holding tabletop exercises, locations to be determined.



EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

To enhance communications during disasters and critical incidents, emergency management is currently expanding the capabilities of our “I am Responding” program, to include additional special notification lists:

School Administration: This notification is being designed for selected administrative personnel within each school. This alert will include all schools so that wide area notifications can be made quickly. For example; if an active threat is occurring at one school, an alert can be sent to this group, which would notify all schools in Barron County of what is occurring so they can initiate an immediate lockdown.

EOC Activation Alert: This notification will be assigned to personnel specifically responsible for staffing and operating the Barron County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during an emergency incident. This would save time over using a call-down tree and would provide everyone on the team with the same information at the same time.

Major Incident Alert: This notification will be reserved for specific individuals that will benefit from having a heads-up that a disaster or major incident is imminent or actively occurring. Recipients would include administration, transportation, highway, public health, certain department heads, and others. This would be a “heads-up” notification only and would not warrant a physical response unless indicated.

Additional lists may be created in the near future as needs are identified.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TRAINING

INCIDENT COMMAND (ICS-300) COURSE

Barron County is working toward holding an Incident Command System (ICS-300) class in Barron this winter. The state request will be submitted during their open enrollment timeframe in December. If approved, the course could be held in January or February. A training flyer will be published once details are confirmed.

EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK TRAINING

Barron County Emergency Management has partnered with UW-Madison Division of Extension to hold a Planning Emergency Livestock Transport Response (PELTR) Course at the Justice Center on October 27th.

Responders will learn the appropriate methods when responding to livestock transportation crashes. Topics covered will include:

- Animal handling, movement, and containment
- Biosecurity issues
- Extrication of animals from trailers
- Euthanasia decision-making process

This is a ½-day virtual and ½-day in-person course and the training flyer has been published for sign-ups.



QUARTERLY REPORT

GRANT FUNDING AWARDED: \$64,927

Office of Emergency Services applied and received the following grants this quarter:

\$44,739	FY23 Emergency Management Performance (EMPG) Grant
\$12,954	FY23 Emergency Planning & Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Grant
\$7,234	FY22 Computer & Hazmat Response and Equipment (CHREG) Grant
\$ Pending	Awaiting for HMEP Grant Award Notification

Grant funding received (year-to-date): \$64,927

INTEGRATED PREPAREDNESS PLANNING (IPP)

Over the course of 2023, 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.

END OF REPORT

