

EMERGENCY SERVICES QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL 1 2023 TO JUNE 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



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 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 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 1-5 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 year.

NEXT-GEN 911

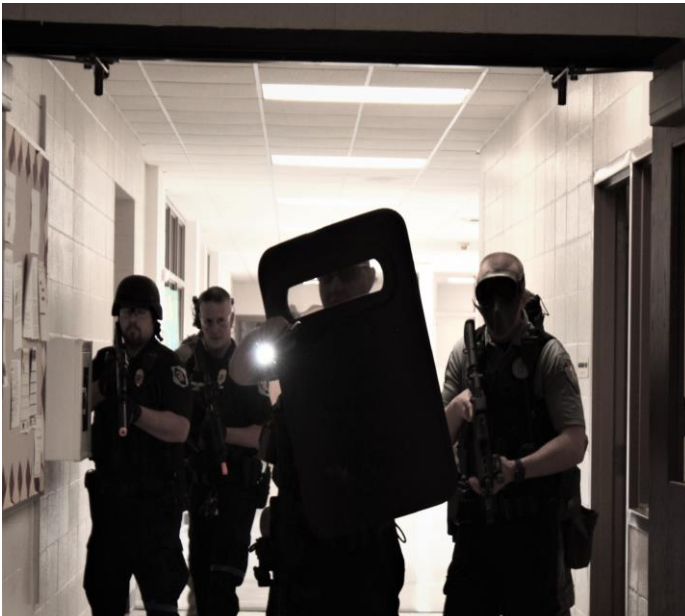
In 2019, the Barron County Sheriff's Department (911 Center) operated an Airbus 911 call handling system supported by CenturyLink. At the time, the Airbus phone system, including all workstations and backroom networking equipment had passed its end-of-life status and could no longer be repaired or replaced. 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 our 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/SMS system. Throughout the remainder of 2023, Barron County will be installing the Phase 2 equipment provided by this grant. We will also complete an onsite state assessment to ensure we are prepared to begin the final Phase 3. Once signed-off for Phase 3, we will begin signing agreements with our area phone service providers to route NextGen911 information from the field into our 911 Center through text messaging. Which is also called "Text-to-911" service.

Once the text-to-911 capability is installed and fully operational, we will be looking ahead at "video-to-911" capability. This service has not been fully built-out in our industry so there's still some time and growth that needs to occur before this capability is available at the agency level.



DRILLS & EXERCISES



On Wednesday, June 28th, a functional exercise was held at the Turtle Lake High School to promote operational command, control, and coordination, between Barron/Rusk ERT, Polk County ERT, and the Rescue Task Force. The exercise was a success as it tested many different aspects of our operational procedures in a real-world environment.

The exercise consisted of an active shooter gaining access into the school and shooting 12 patients before barricading himself on the second floor for a shootout with law enforcement. While ERT had confined the shooter to a specific area, the Rescue Task Force (RTF) entered the facility under the protection of additional law enforcement officers.





COUNTYWIDE FIRST RESPONDERS

Emergency Services of Barron County currently rosters seven personnel to provide administrative, planning, and logistical support. The first responder roster currently consists of 35 first responders throughout Barron County. Administrative personnel is still working toward streamlining many areas of operations, as many areas have already been streamlined and tested to ensure accuracy and efficiency. To assist with span of control and project responsibility, additional administrative personnel have recently filled positions to manage specific positions. We welcome our new team members, which include:

Julie Helstern – Treasurer
Tony Allen – Gear & Supplies
Travis Sewilo – New Member Onboarding

Mutual Aid Agreements have been signed with Rusk County and talks are occurring with Polk County.

CPR TRAINING

Emergency Management provided CPR training for Cumberland Police Department patrol officers. This training is available to countywide departments by contacting Barron County Emergency Management.

EMS TRAINING

Through a partnership with Northwoods Community College, a 16-hour Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) class was held in the Barron Justice Center EOC on February 16, 17, 18 with seven responders attending. Another 16-hour EMR class was held at the Turtle Lake Fire Hall on January 12, 13, 14 with 11 responders attending.



QUARTERLY REPORT

FIRE TRAINING

Barron County Emergency Management applied for the Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) grant and was awarded \$2,480 to fund Hazardous Materials and Confined Space training classes for five area fire departments, which consists of 9 classes and training over 125 responders.

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>TRAINING CLASS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Chetek Fire	Hazmat Ops Refresher	Jan 25 & Feb 2
Cumberland Fire	Hazmat Ops Refresher	Jan 23 & Feb 13
Rice Lake Fire	Hazmat Ops Refresher	Jan 19 & Jan 26
Cameron Fire	Confined Space Ops Refresher	Feb 15 & Feb 16
Dallas Fire	Hazmat Ops Refresher	Jan 16 & Jan 18
Chetek Fire	Confined Space Ops Refresher	Feb 1 & Feb 15
Dallas Fire	Confined Space Ops Refresher	Mar 20 & Mar 22
Rice Lake Fire	Confined Space Ops Refresher	Mar 15 & Mar 29
Dallas Fire	HM Ops Refresher & Confined Space Refresher	Jan 15 & 17 / Mar 18 & 20

GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED: \$88,294

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

\$64,599	FY22 Emergency Management Performance Grant Closeout
\$12,341	FY22 Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know (EPCRA) Grant
\$3,837	FY22 HMEP
\$7,517	FY22 Computer & Hazmat Equipment Grant

Grant funding received (year-to-date): \$ 88,294

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Through a partnership between Emergency Management and Maranatha Church, presentations were conducted at Cameron Middle School and Cumberland High School to discuss the benefits of incorporating safety and emergency planning into high-risk events such as sports and recreation. These presentations focused on the importance of assessing hazards, preplanning actions, preparing gear, utilizing the buddy system, demobilizing and cleaning gear, and proper storage. The topics of this presentation can be used in any emergency or preplanned situation.

TORNADO PLANNING

Emergency Management held an emergency planning meeting with a group of Pastors from various churches in the Chetek area. This meeting reviewed local emergency preparedness programs that would benefit from local church involvement. Several facilities signed up as Warming/Cooling Centers, and Temporary Shelters. Other facilities created a calldown tree to be enacted during a local major event.

The group of pastors were very excited about learning the different ways their involvement would benefit the community. Subsequent meetings were planned to continue building upon the discussion.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAFFING

Emergency Management Assistant Julie Helstern accepted a full-time position with the City of Cumberland. To fill her part-time vacancy, Nate Dunston was hired in September.

Nate holds a Bachelor's Degree in emergency management and his background includes 17 years in EMS, former Director of Sawyer County Emergency Management and Sawyer County EMS. Nate also retains his part-time position as Barron County Chief Medical Examiner.



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

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. Due to the extensive amount of work involved, the final project update is scheduled for completion toward the end of 2023.

Changes to the plan format are being made to integrate the new FEMA planning guidance and to make the plan more accessible and user friendly. A second meeting with the Planning/Steering Committee was held on January 26th, which included the review of the initial risk survey results, hazard risks/trends, and barriers. A hazard assessment survey was distributed to all towns in early March. Public educational institutions were invited to participate, including a webinar on February 28th. City and Village meetings are being conducted and a brief, web-based capabilities survey has been distributed to each community. This project also included heavy involvement from school districts, fire departments, and several other local community groups.

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.

STORM SHELTER

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 commission that we contracted with for the storm shelter at Prairie Lake Estates. The draft application is expected to be submitted to Wisconsin Emergency Management by July 21st with the Village being the applicant.

AEDs

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.



QUARTERLY REPORT

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: Would be assigned to selected administrative personnel within each school. Instead of being divided into individual districts, this alert would include all school districts so that wide area notifications can be made. As an 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 what is occurring and to go on immediate lockdown.
- EOC Activation Alert: Would be assigned to personnel specifically responsible for staffing and operating the Barron County Emergency Operations Center during an 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: Would be reserved for specific individuals that would 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.

TORNADO PLANNING FOR SCHOOLS

Tornado planning walk-throughs were completed at five area schools to assist administrators with severe weather and disaster planning. Crisis response plans were also updated to identify preparedness and response strategies for emergency situations; such as injured students, emergency situations, and weather related incidents.

EMERGENCY DRILLS & EXERCISES

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 two tabletop exercises, one at Haugen School and the other at Prairie Farm School.

COMMUNICATIONS

Emergency Management is applying for grant funding to install a ROIP Dual Radio Gateway in dispatch. This gateway is specifically designed to allow Law, Fire, EMS, and First Responders to communicate on their respective radio channels through their cell phones by utilizing a push-to-talk (PTT) feature. This will enhance traditional radio communications by providing better service to areas that may have radio coverage gaps but strong cell coverage.

As an example: A fire department responds to a crash at an intersection that is known for having limited radio coverage, but has solid cell coverage. Instead of using their traditional radios, responders could use the PTT feature on their cell phones to communicate to dispatch and other responding units. Other benefit examples include facilities such as schools, hospitals, retail businesses, and other buildings that have poor radio reception, but have great cell coverage for customers. Total project funding needed is approximately \$4,400.



COMMUNICATIONS

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 responders 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 part of the county and 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.

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.

911 DISPATCH

During storm season each year, the 911 Center becomes inundated with phone calls reporting power outages, local flooding, trees down, wires down, etc. When notifying the electric company of an incident and requesting a co-response, dispatchers are required to stay on the phone to answer many questions from the utility company's call center representative.

To reduce the significant amount of time dispatchers are connected to these phone calls, the 911 Center has partnered with Barron Electric and is working to create an auto-notification program for utility companies by utilizing CAD units and IamResponding. When a response from Barron Electric is needed, dispatch will add the utility providers newly created CAD unit to the call, which will automatically send the call information to their dispatch center through their IamResponding account. This will provide them with the necessary information needed to dispatch power technicians. They will also be able to indicate their "enroute" status, closing the response communication loop. The majority of the program is in-place, the only remaining action needed is to complete the testing phase.



CALL PAGING AUDIO

With several fire departments expressing an interest in adding dispatch audio files to IamResponding alerts, we have made this feature available. This feature will incorporate the dispatch audio file into the initial IamResponding alert notification, similar to what we had through eDispatch. When activated, this feature would continue providing responders with their normal call alerts, it would just give you the option of having the dispatch audio file included with the alert. Once setup, the users can choose to have the audio file automatically play when they open the alert on their phone, or they can choose to press the link for it to play the audio file manually.

This feature is not available to Rice Lake Fire, LMC EMS, or Mayo EMS, since these agencies are dispatched on a different frequency. However, these agencies can opt to set this up on their account with approximately \$350 in additional hardware installed in dispatch. If any department is interested in setting up this feature, please contact the Dispatch Lead at Paul.Brooten@co.barron.wi.us

COUNTYWIDE FIRST RESPONDERS

Administrative Membership involves eight non-responders, which consists of our Medical Director, Board of Directors and special staff such as our Training Coordinator, Social Media Coordinator, etc.

In addition to the eight admin members, ESBC maintains a roster of 35 emergency first responders (EMR's) that are assigned to specific districts based upon their home address. Note that ESBC first responder districts mirror fire department geographical boundaries. Here's the breakdown of members per first responder district:

Almena (x8)	Barron (x7)	Bear Lake/Haugen (x2)
Cameron (x4)	Cumberland (x1)	Chetek (x4)
Dallas (x1)	Birchwood/Town of Rice Lake (x3)	(x5) Turtle Lake

COORDINATOR POSITIONS

- Tony Allen has stepped up to be our new Gear & Supply Coordinator, and he will be coordinating gear bag restocking for all new and current members.
- Travis Sewilo volunteered to coordinate the onboarding process for all new members. This will consist of approving applications, scheduling initial orientation, and guiding new members through the process of getting setup to be able to respond to calls.
- Mary Ricci has announced her retirement from being the ESBC District Director for the Turtle Lake, Almena, and Cumberland first responder districts. She has worked incredibly hard for many years, serving in multiple roles to support first responders across Barron County. Mary will be missed, however she will be taking some much deserved rest and relaxation. The new District Director for the combined districts will be announced soon.

TRAINING

SkyWarn "Storm Spotter" – Emergency Management partnered with the National Weather Service to offer a SkyWarn Storm Spotter class on Wednesday, April 26th, prior to the beginning of storm season. Two classes were offered (afternoon and evening) to accommodate work schedules, and was held at the Government Center, with a total of 83 attendees.

ICS/EOC Interface - Barron County will be partnering with the Wisconsin Regional Public Health Consortium to hold an emergency management class titled ICS/EOC Interface class in conjunction with Wisconsin Emergency Management and area emergency managers at some point in 2023. A training announcement will be published once the date is released from the State.



RESCUE TASK FORCE (RTF)

- Chetek Fire approved the purchase of two Ballistic Gear Sets to be carried on their apparatus for use by Rescue Task Force (RTF) members. These members are specifically trained to respond with law enforcement into active shooter incidents resulting in several victims that are unable to self-extricate. Under the protection of law enforcement officers, RTF teams enter the facility, rapidly stabilize the injured victim and quickly extricate the victim away from the hazard area and to the Medical Triage Area with awaiting ambulances. The Rescue Task Force is a branch of the countywide first responder team, Emergency Services of Barron County, and currently consists of 15 trained members with ballistic gear sets strategically located throughout Barron County to minimize the response time to victims of active shooter incidents.

These gear sets include bulletproof vests and helmets, medical supplies, tourniquets, patient extrication equipment, and much more to effectively facilitate rapid victim rescue.

The equipment has been on backorder since 2022 due to the political environment and supply/demand status of products manufactured in China. Our vendor recently notified us that our order should be received within the next few weeks.

- Over the next several months, the Rescue Task Force (RTF) Team will start training with municipal police departments within Barron County to establish strong working relationships and promote a team approach to active shooter incidents. It's critically important to know how each other react in stressful situations, learn hand signals and other non-verbal communication methods, and being able to function as a team safely and swiftly. Since active shooter incidents typically warrant a response from various types of law enforcement agencies, it's important to train with each of these agencies to establish that familiarity.
- RTF is currently scheduling additional functional drills and full-scale exercises to enhance members familiarity while working with different officers, departments, and teams.



END OF REPORT

