

2013 Annual Report

Cowley County **Emergency Management**



Cowley County Emergency Management's second annual report is now available. This report will highlight activities, accomplishments and an overall review of the Emergency Management program.

The Emergency Management field is always changing and developing which requires a proactive approach. A vast amount of commitment from the staff along with a tireless dedication from numerous volunteers is needed to fill this need.

Emergency Management strives to work with all agencies within the County in order to help agencies and individuals become more aware of our hazards and to be as prepared as we can be.

COWLEY COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAFF



Brian Stone, CEM®, KCEM – Coordinator

Principle advisor to the County Administrator and the Board of County Commissioners on emergency management issues and operations; directs all activities of the department, including all planning.

John Stradal, KCEM - Asst Coordinator

Responsible for the exercise program, county-wide sirens and communications for the agency. Assists in all planning efforts. Directs the department in the absence of the Coordinator.



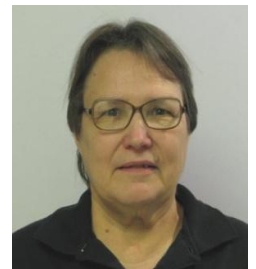
Jolan Csukas - Volunteer Coordinator

Responsible for the recruitment, activities and sustainability of all four volunteer programs (Emergency Auxiliary, Community Emergency Response Teams, Medical Reserve Corps and County Animal Response Teams).



Lynn Nichols – Administrative Assistant

Responsible for maintaining day to day activities in the office including answering phones, working with volunteer groups, dealing with governmental entities, processing and documenting all expenditures and grant tracking.



Staff Accomplishments:

Brian Stone completed his one-year term as the Kansas Emergency Management Association (KEMA) President in September 2013. He will now serve the Board as Past-President and will also fill the role of the Awards Committee Chairperson.

Brian was a co-presenter on two separate occasions for the field of Emergency Management. Brian and Erin McGinnis, Training Officer for the Kansas Division of Emergency Management presented a program called “Emergency Management 101 – Planning Today for What WILL Happen” at the annual KAC Conference. Brian and Rick Shellenbarger, Emergency Management Planner for Sedgwick County Emergency Management, presented the EM portion at the 2013 South Central Kansas Health and Medical Symposium.

John Stradal traveled to the federal Center for Domestic Preparedness facility in Anniston, AL in February of 2013. While there, over the course of a week he received intensive hands on training in Incident Command, and response to incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive materials.

In April of 2013, John also completed all training requirements and received full certification as a Type III All Hazards Communications Unit Leader (COML). This certification signifies that the recipient has received the necessary training and possesses the experience to effectively establish and support interoperable communications during a large scale incident.

John continues to serve as the re-certification officer for the Kansas Certified Emergency Manager (KCEM) Program for KEMA.

Jolan Csukas was named the Outstanding New Emergency Management Professional by her peers at the 2013 Annual KEMA Conference held in Topeka, KS in September. This award is given to an EM professional who has been on the job for less than 24 months. Jolan was nominated and selected for the award based her work with the NOAA weather radio project, the creation of the Cowley County Emergency Response Volunteer group and for her advocacy in personal preparedness.



Jolan receives her award at the Annual KEMA Conference in September 2013. Pictured are KEMA President-Elect Garry Berges, Director for Geary Co. EM, Jolan Csukas, Cowley Co EM Volunteer Coordinator and KEMA President Brian Stone, Cowley Co EM Coordinator.

**Criticism is something we can
avoid easily – by saying
nothing, doing nothing, and
being nothing - Aristotle**

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VOLUNTEER GROUPS

When emergencies occur or disasters strike, volunteers are a welcome sight for EM Staff and a vital resource for all agencies. Volunteers are a crucial part of the Emergency Management program as they are willing to endure the worst conditions to help out when needed. Volunteers give of their time and effort without expecting anything in return. EM volunteers performed 2,073 hours of work in support of training, outreach and response to events in 2013.

COWLEY COUNTY EMERGENCY AUXILIARY (CCEA)

The Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary is a volunteer based group that acts under the direction of Cowley County Emergency Management in Cowley County, Kansas. The group dates back to August 8th 1985. Prior to this time the Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary was known as the Cowley County Civil Defense. The CCEA's primary role at this time is to provide trained storm spotters for Cowley County. This elite group of volunteers donate their valuable time and provides a commitment to ensure the safety of Cowley County residents through early warnings. The group also works closely with other public safety agencies within the county. The group averages 900 volunteer hours to this community per year. The Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary continues to be a big part of this community by working with the public in weather and personal safety.



Jeff Soukup – CCEA President

Jeff oversees the daily operations of the CCEA program, which include monthly meetings, training, and program expenditures. He assumes an EOC response role as needed to assist during severe weather. Jeff is employed full time by the Kansas Dept. of Corrections at the Winfield Correctional Facility.

COWLEY COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

By joining CERT, people from all walks of life have teamed together to volunteer in emergency situations. The initial training provides basic life skills so they can help themselves, their family, and neighbors in case of a disaster. Further training is readily available to enhance these skills and broaden understanding of how to prepare for various disasters. The goal for CERT this year was to improve the levels of training in order to be better prepared for assignments to assist local first responders. The membership voted to create a Training Facilitator position for this purpose. Steve Williams, who has a background as a volunteer firefighter, accepted this responsibility. He provides monthly trainings and will take an active role in designing training exercises. As we see more and more disasters throughout the world, both natural and manmade, we acknowledge the importance of knowing what to do if such a disaster should occur locally. Members are aware that deployment for major disasters may happen when local emergency services personnel are unable to get to everyone affected. CERT members will act as a team, under direction of emergency services, to do the most good for the most disaster victims possible. CERT members also assist with local community functions by providing traffic control, conduct safety fairs, and present emergency preparedness programs throughout the county. Monthly meetings are held to keep members aware of upcoming events and for ongoing training.



Cheryl Underwood – CERT President

Cheryl joined CERT in 2009. She and her husband had been aware of and actively working to be prepared for emergencies and wanted to do more for local preparedness and sharing information that could help others. Cheryl retired in 2013 after a 40 year career teaching students with special needs. She now does substitute teaching and is part of a Testing Team that does Progress Monitoring tests in elementary schools three times each school year. The Underwoods have three adult children and four grandchildren. Cheryl has served in many leadership capacities in her church, in schools, and in education related organizations. This is her second year as the President of Cowley County CERT.

COWLEY COUNTY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS (MRC)

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a community-based network of medical volunteers that assists public health efforts in times of special need or disaster, e.g. during a major communicable disease outbreak, an earthquake, flood, or an act of terrorism. Members of an MRC may also volunteer their time throughout the year in order to promote community public health and education. Further, Cowley County MRC volunteers can provide relief for overworked workers in the event of an emergency. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists.



David Brazil – MRC Advisory Board Member

David is the Public Health Administrator and Public Health Officer for the City-Cowley County Health Department. David is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist. Day to day operations of the MRC fall under the direction of the Health Department.



Jason Kazban – MRC Coordinator

Jason is the City-Cowley County Health Department's Public Health Emergency Response Program Coordinator. He is a retired Master Sergeant from the US Air Force and has an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice and working toward a Bachelor's Degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management.



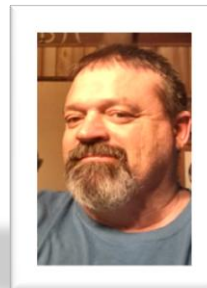
COWLEY COUNTY ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM (CART)

Time after time, during natural disasters, we hear reports of people refusing to leave their homes when advised to do so because they will not leave their pets behind. As a result, states, and then counties, began to form animal response teams (SART and CART). Cowley County introduced the concept to interested citizens in the spring of 2012. The goal is to: identify shelters that will accept owners and their pets; arrange flexible visiting schedules if pets and owners cannot shelter together; and provide transportation and shelter for large animals.



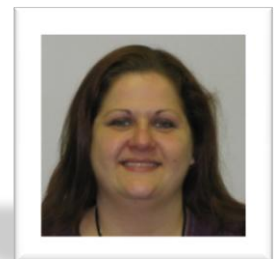
Bill McKinley, DVM – CART President

Bill is a veterinarian who lives and works in Cedar Vale and has been serving the Cowley County and Chautauqua County area for 20 years. He is the first President of the newly-formed CART program.



Melissa Shaw, KCEM, MEP – CART Vice-President

Melissa is the Public Health Emergency Preparedness/Training & Exercise Coordinator for the Butler County Health Dept. She resides in Winfield and volunteers her time in Cowley County.



COWLEY COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE VOLUNTEERS, INC (CCERV)

Cowley County Emergency Response Volunteers, Inc. (CCERV) was established in October 2013 to coordinate efforts of Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary, Community Emergency Response Team, Medical Reserve Corps, and County Animal Response Team. Representatives from each of these groups, as well as a member-at-large from the community, have created a non-profit entity for the purpose of raising operating funds. All of these groups operate within the boundaries established by the Cowley County Emergency Management agency. CCERV, Inc. joined with the Legacy Foundation for the purpose of gaining 501©3 status. The non-profit status is needed to enhance donations and make the organizations grant eligible to support their ongoing efforts and trainings.

Orlan Underwood – CCERV President

Orlan has been a CERT member since 2009. He retired from 38 years of teaching for the Cowley Co Special Education Services but now works as a para-educator for the Winfield Intermediate School. He is an active community member and also serves in numerous capacities in his church.



CRISIS CITY EXERCISE

CERT volunteers were offered a unique experience this past spring. CERT groups were invited to participate, for the first time ever, in the state-wide first responder exercise at Crisis City on May 29-30. Crisis City is a site set up just south of Salina as a place for law enforcement, firefighters, EMT's and SWAT teams to practice response to a variety of scenarios. To make the experience seem very realistic, Kansas weather complied by providing severe thunderstorms during the exercise days. The training was a valuable experience for the Cowley County CERT members in attendance. Even more satisfying was the evidence that our CERT group and all of the Cowley County first responders have already established a good working relationship, invaluable during times disaster events.



Cowley County CERT members in action at Crisis City

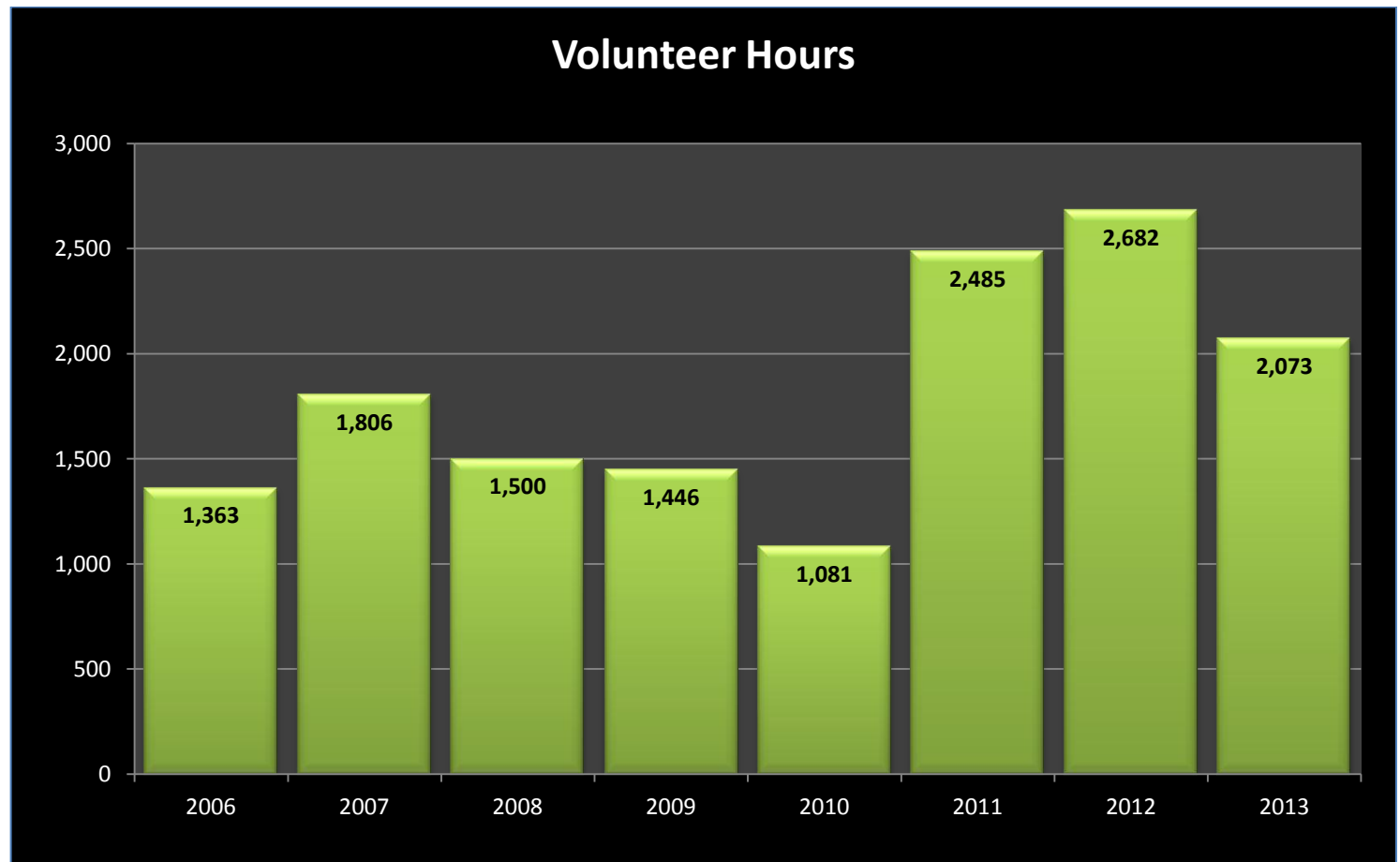
BUTLER COUNTY EXERCISE

Cowley County CERT and CART members were invited to participate in an emergency response exercise in Butler County on Oct. 19. Groups from Butler, Cowley, Sedgwick, Reno and Kingman counties participated. The scenario was a plane crash in a field. CART and K-9 rescue teams were dispatched to search the fields for victims and CERT members were at the scene to rescue victims inside and outside of the fuselage. Cowley CERT members were involved in the planning of the exercise and the training of volunteers as well as participants in the search and rescue event. Exercises of this type help our volunteer groups be better prepared for a variety of events and help them evaluate their training and preparedness.



DRIVE-THRU FLU CLINICS

Cowley County CERT, Auxiliary volunteers, and Emergency Management staff participated in the City-Cowley County Health Department annual Drive-Thru Flu Clinics on October 18th and 25th. These flu clinics, held in Arkansas City and Winfield, give clients a quick and easy way to be immunized, and allow volunteers and staff the opportunity to practice skills that would be utilized should mass prophylaxis be required.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Storm Fury on the Plains

The annual storm spotter training was held again at the Cowley Cinema 8 Theater near Strother Field on Saturday, March 16, 2013. The event was scheduled for the last Tuesday in February; however a snowstorm created dangerous travel conditions that day so the event was postponed. The Saturday program brought in 150 interested viewers and weather fanatics.

Severe Weather and Safety Presentations

Each year, EM staff and volunteers work hard to bring education out to the community. This year, we were able to reach out to a total of 1,265 citizens by providing presentations on Severe Weather and Safety, Continuity of Operations, Basic Preparedness and School Preparedness. Our outreach went into schools, police departments, civic clubs, private businesses, housing units, nursing homes, and DARE Camps.

CERT Lite

Emergency Management staff works with USD 465 – Winfield to provide a “CERT Lite” course to freshmen and sophomore Health students. The concept is a community project for the students and is simply a compacted crash course of the CERT program. It promotes safety and preparedness thinking among the students and gives them an opportunity to decide if they would like to take the full course at a later date. Two separate classes were held in 2013 with 15 students completing the class on April 16 and 14 students completing the class on October 17.

Health and Safety Fair

This year’s program was held at the Arkansas City Fire/EMS Dept. Representatives from Emergency Management and all volunteer groups were on hand to interact with the public, explain the programs and to recruit. It is estimated that nearly 1,000 citizens attended the fair with the majority of those having contact with one or more of our groups.

All-Hazards Weather Radio Grant

Thanks to a mitigation grant from FEMA and donations from local businesses, we were able to purchase a total of 400 NOAA All-Hazard Weather radios for distribution. CCEM used this opportunity to visit all of the communities in Cowley County and give a severe weather preparedness presentation. Eligible county residents in attendance were given a weather radio programmed to their area of the county. FEMA rules dictated that the radio recipient must be a Cowley County resident and there could only given out per household. Two program presentations were made in Winfield and Arkansas City and one presentation was made in each of the following smaller communities and areas: Atlanta, Burden, Cambridge, Dexter, Parkerfield, Udall and Tisdale. Many of the smaller communities made this a social event, complete with food and drink. Several volunteers were present at each presentation to assist with programming and sign in. A total of 212 radios were given away in 2013.

In order to continue our mission of staying in touch with county citizens, we plan to use the same format of presenting another preparedness message and giving away the remaining 188 radios in 2014. The proposed program for the communities will be “Emergency Planning for Your Family.”

TRAINING

Each year, Emergency Management hosts or sponsors training which is made available to all governmental jurisdictions, response agencies, non-governmental agencies and volunteer groups across the county and region.

Amateur Radio Class

Cowley County Emergency Management in cooperation with the Cowley County Amateur Radio Club hosted a Technician Level Amateur Radio class in March of 2013. Amateur Radio is a form of two-way radio communication where licensed operators may communicate with other Amateur Radio operators both locally and around the world. Amateur Radio operators are often able to still communicate when other means fail, and have been valuable assets during many recent large-scale disasters. Nine new radio operators received licenses as a result of the class. The total number of new operators in Cowley County is now 26.

CERT Class

Class #14 was held during the months of January and February at the South Central Kansas Medical Center in Arkansas City. The class graduated 12 new CERT members. Those who have maintained Level 3 volunteer status have put their new skills to work for the citizens of Cowley County.

Public Assistance (PA) 101

Disaster Recovery is a never ending part of Emergency Management. However, once a jurisdiction has been struck, the process to assist governmental or public entities is called Public Assistance, with help from the Kansas Division of Emergency Management and FEMA. This course, taught by Steve Harsha, the Public Assistance Officer for KDEM, was an overview for local entities. It helped the entities gain a better understanding of the categories of disaster assistance, the documentation required to apply for assistance and the process which must be followed. The class was held at the Tisdale United Methodist Church, one of Emergency Management's most gracious hosts.

Incident Command System (ICS) 300 and 400 - Cowley County hosted ICS 300 and 400 courses in the summer.

ICS 300 – Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents Course is meant for individuals who may assume a supervisory role during an incident which could include Command and General Staff positions as well as Division/Group Supervisors or Unit Leaders. A total of 30 participants completed this course (15 of those from Cowley Co).

ICS 400 – Advanced Incident Command System Course for Command and General Staff, Complex Incidents and MACS is meant for senior personnel who are expected to perform in a management capacity at an incident or event. This course was for those who may serve as Incident Commanders, members of the Command or General Staff, Area Command or in a Multiagency Coordination Group/EOC. A total of 25 participants completed this course (13 of those from Cowley Co).

Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan

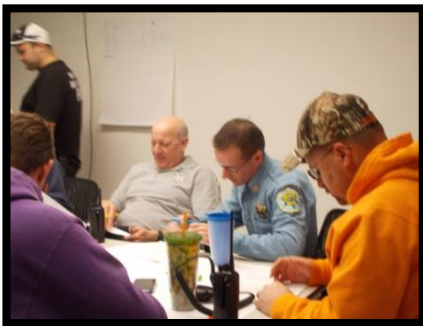
Cowley County, as with all Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) – based counties, worked to complete a multi-year training and exercise plan (during a Training and Exercise Planning Workshop) following the LEPC meeting in December. Entities and jurisdictions from all areas of Cowley County come together and develop a three year plan for training and exercising. Each entity has specific "requirements" for training and exercising. This concept pulls all entities together and works on a collective plan to suit the needs of all participants. This is the third year Cowley County has completed this plan, which is reviewed mid-year.

Severe Weather

Cowley County EM, by use of the Emergency Operations Center, coordinates severe weather response activities. The EOC is the hub for all spotters, fire and law personnel to submit reports. Outdoor Warning Sirens are sounded from the EOC and situational awareness during severe weather is a top priority for the citizens.

For 2013, the EOC was activated 17 times for severe weather. During those activations, the sirens were sounded 11 times – all on May 19th (3 at the Winfield City Lake, 2 in Atlanta, 2 in Udall, 2 in Rock and once each at Strother Field and Winfield). Cowley County was placed under 4 Tornado Watches and 3 Tornado Warnings. 2 tornadoes were spotted, 1 northeast of Geuda Springs and 1 south of Udall. A total of 7 Severe Thunderstorm Watches and 18 Severe Thunderstorm Warnings were issued. There were 2 reports of severe hail (1" or larger) and 10 reports of severe wind (58+mph).

On March 26, Cowley County EM, with assistance from the Cowley Sheriff's Dept, Winfield Area EMS and the Udall Fire Dept, provided two simulated severe weather EOC activations. A total of 8 new Emergency Auxiliary members participated in the event, which gave them practice in the areas of dispatching (radio communications), spotter tracking, event logging, social media, and decision making.




The ever popular "12 Days of Christmas" took on a new twist this year when the CCEM staff decided to revise it to present a lesson in preparedness. A number of volunteers participated in the rewrite of words, recording the song, gathering items, set up and then taping and editing the video. "The 12 Days of Preparedness," a visual presentation of must have items in an emergency kit, made its debut on You Tube the beginning of December and can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywyE-pf44Og>. It was well received by our faithful social media followers and the link was shared among emergency managers and state agencies. The most often asked question was "what will you produce next?" We're thinking!

Full-Scale Exercise



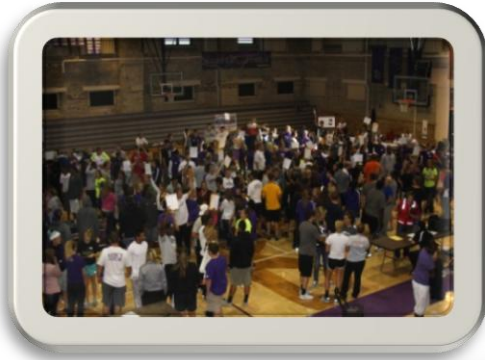
Thank you! - Cierra Ross
 You're great!
 Thanks! - Hannah
 Katelynn Hutala-Grant
 Aedan Goodrich
 Jacob Timmerman
 Caleb Bensen
 Seth Topham
 Dylan Good
 Nathaniel Good
 Thank you! - Sterling Grant
 Thank you! - Cierra Ross

Dear Brian & John,

Thank you so much for all of the effort and time you put into making the "Horse Amidst Disaster" Project a ~~reality~~ reality at SC. We have received a great deal of positive feedback regarding student learning outcomes, and we know none of this would have been possible without your willingness to jump on board a crazy new idea and your dedication to work with community organizations to make it "real." Thank you for being a wonderful community partner!  Xindooay, Cheryl & "The Ships"

Other agencies involved in the MARC Exercise/Southwestern College Service Learning Project: Kansas Emergency Management, Harvey Co. Emergency Management, American Red Cross, United Way of the Plains, Cowley Co. Animal Response Team, City-Cowley Co. Health Dept., Cowley Co. Mental Health and Counseling Center, Children's Miracle Network, Salvation Army, United Methodist Committee on Relief, KSOK Radio, Cowley Co. Commission, Winfield Lion's Club, First United Methodist Church, Kansas Association of Chaplains, Creative Community Living, Helping Hands, Cowley Co. United Way, Albright Insurance, American Family Insurance and Farm Bureau Insurance.

Photos from the MARC Exercise at Southwestern College



FEMA DR-4150-KS

After a dry and drought-stricken 2012, the summer of 2013 proved to be a little different. The rains began to fall on July 22 and continued for several weeks. Localized flooding became an issue causing damage to many of the township roads. Rainfall amounts in Cowley County were not that significant, but flooding issues were caused by excessive rains outside of our County.

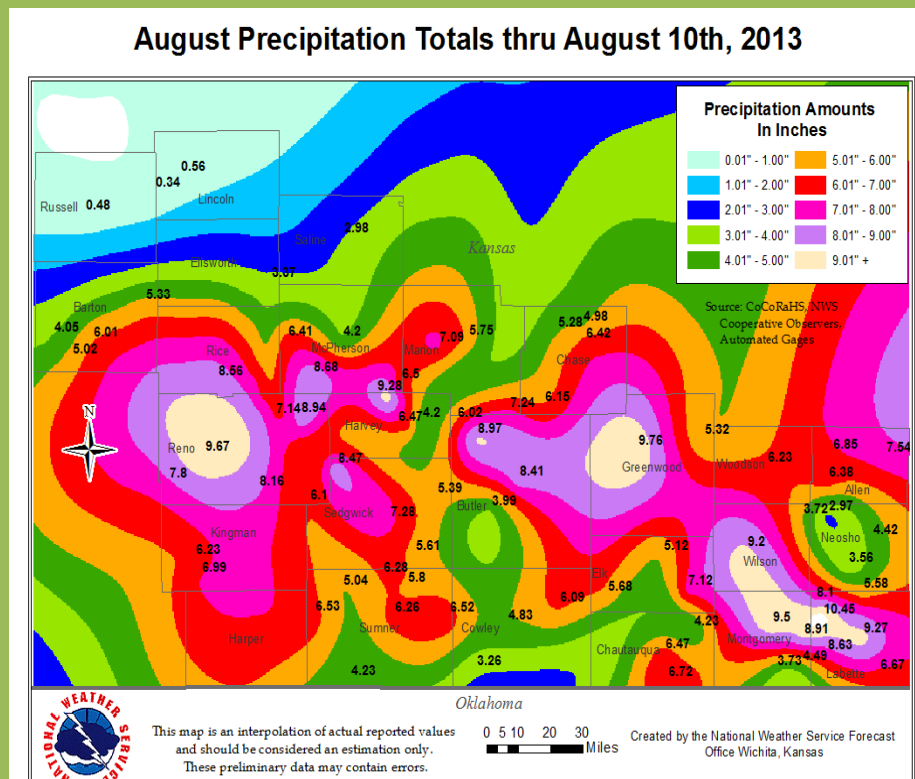
The **Walnut River in Winfield** was above flood stage (18') for one day when it crested at 18.2' on Aug 9.

The **Walnut River in Ark City** was above flood stage (18') for one day when it crested at 18.17' on Aug 10.

The **Arkansas River in Ark City** was above flood stage (17') for eleven days from Aug 5-16. The Arkansas River crested at 21.57' on Aug 10 in the afternoon.

Due to damages incurred to many township roads, a local disaster declaration was issued on August 14. A preliminary damage assessment was conducted and cost estimates were submitted to the Kansas Division of Emergency Management and FEMA. On September 25, a Federal Declaration was requested by the Governor for damages across the State. On October 22, the President granted a Federal Declaration for 46 counties in the State of Kansas which allowed governmental entities to seek financial assistance from FEMA for the damages incurred.

In all, Cowley Co suffered \$596,346.74 worth of damages and losses as result of the rains in July and August. The process to seek aid from FEMA is continuing.



VOAD – Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters

This past year, CCEM took a more active interest in the regional Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters and began attending the quarterly meetings in Wichita. As a result, we felt it would be in the best interest of Cowley County to form a VOAD group on the local level. Interest in this concept grew as a result of the MARC exercise held at Southwestern College in October.

The purpose of a Cowley County VOAD is to pull together all of the agencies necessary to assist community victims of a disaster. Most of these non-profit agencies have specific disaster related services to offer. However, not all of their services are well known to other groups within the county. Another consideration was that, Cowley County being a more rural area, most people are more comfortable working with people they know rather than with groups coming in from outside the area. As a result, our local VOAD was born. Agency representatives from most communities in Cowley County will begin meeting on a quarterly basis in January 2014 with one goal in mind – to better prepared for whatever event may affect this area.



20 Weeks to Preparedness

CCEM began publishing the 20 Weeks of Preparedness in November 2012 and it ran through the spring of 2013. The purpose was to break down the overwhelming task of preparing an emergency kit in easy, weekly steps. We had a strong and faithful following of this information on social media and the county website. A number of people have mentioned that they now have preparedness kits in their home and in their vehicle as a result of the information we provided them. A link to the 20 Weeks list has been posted on the county website at <http://www.cowleycounty.org/20-weeks> for people to refer to and we continue to recommend it at preparedness presentations.



Cowley County LEPC Wins Award

On July 27, 2013, the Region 7 LEPC/TERC Emergency Planning and Response Conference was held in Overland Park, KS. At that conference, the Cowley County LEPC received an award for mid-sized communities for their proactive approach and outstanding achievement in planning, prevention and risk reduction in the community.

Congratulations to the Cowley County LEPC!



Ray German, LEPC Chair, receives the award from Rick Shellenbarger, Planner and LEPC Executive Officer for Sedgwick County Emergency Management.

One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man
cannot make a team –

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

Plans, Plans and More Plans

Cowley County Emergency Operations Plan

Cowley County began updating the Local Emergency Operations Plan in late 2012. Staff worked diligently throughout the year and submitted the plan to the Kansas Division of Emergency Management for approval on December 20th. The EOP describes who will do what, as well as when, with what resources, and by what authority – before, during and after an emergency or disasters. It is required by K.S.A. 48-929 and must be updated and approved every five years. The EOP consists of two separate parts – a Basic Plan and Emergency Support Functions (ESF). The Basic Plan contains general information regarding the county, general capabilities, procedures and history as it relates to the program. ESFs are separated into fifteen different sections that help provide information to decision makers, and support the overall mission of the EOC through assets, statutes and authorities by obtaining resources, performing life safety and property protection and intelligence gathering. The fifteen ESFs are as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Transportation | 6. Mass Care, Housing and Human Services | 11. Agriculture and Natural Resources |
| 2. Communications | 7. Resource Support | 12. Energy and Utilities |
| 3. Public Works and Engineering | 8. Public Health and Medical Services | 13. Public Safety and Security |
| 4. Firefighting | 9. Search and Rescue | 14. Long-Term Community Recovery |
| 5. Emergency Management | 10. Oil and Hazardous Materials | 15. External Communications |

Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Cowley County Emergency Management is tasked with the maintenance and upkeep of several countywide plans. One of those plans is the Hazard Mitigation plan. This plan identifies the hazards most likely to affect Cowley County, and identifies actions that might be taken to lessen the effects should an incident occur. The purpose of this plan is two-fold; it is intended to be used as a reference to help coordinate and prioritize mitigation efforts within the county, and it also is a requirement in order for jurisdictions to receive certain grant funds.

Beginning in March of 2013, this plan was due to be updated, and a new regional approach was used, with Butler County, Cowley County, Harper County, Harvey County, Kingman County, Marion County, McPherson County, Reno County, Rice County, Sedgwick County, and Sumner County all participating to create a new South Central Kansas regional plan.

The first step of the process was to explain the steps required to create this regional plan, and to gather data from stakeholders. Kickoff meetings were held throughout the region, with two held in Cowley County in early April to accommodate as many jurisdictions as possible. Representatives from cities, townships, school districts, and other government bodies attended to contribute information for the planning process. Each entity was asked to review a list of hazards identified on a regional level, and to provide data specific to their jurisdictions. They also contributed specific mitigation actions that they are taking or would like to take to limit the effects of a specific hazard.

From there, this information was compiled and submitted to the state, which helped to coordinate the regional planning effort. A draft of the plan was written, and was distributed to each County Emergency Management office for review and comment in October. After the initial draft was reviewed, a public comment period was initiated, allowing the general public to provide input to the plan.

After comments were received, and a final draft of the plan was created, it was sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in December of 2013 for final review and approval. Once approved at the federal level, the plan will be sent back to each county for final approval and adoption.

This was a massive project, with virtually every jurisdiction within the county contributing in some way. While the project was not without its share of complications along the way, we are grateful for the contributions and patience of all who participated in the planning process, and feel that this will be a plan that will effectively serve the county and the region for years to come.

Social Media in Emergency Management

Cowley County Emergency Management began using social media tools, specifically Facebook and Twitter, in early 2012. 2013 brought out the first YouTube video (more info in the 12 Days of Preparedness section). The intention is to reach out and interact with the public before, during and after emergencies or disasters. As of the end of 2013, we have 1,422 Facebook “likes” and 180 Twitter “followers”. While that may seem like low numbers, the social media world allows all of those users to share and repost our information, which in turn reaches a much larger number of viewers. We share photos, tips, stories, and much, much more. We encourage our citizens to interact with us and provide us with information and feedback. Please be aware that social media outlets are not intended to replace 911 and if anyone has an emergency that requires immediate assistance, please call 911 and do not use social media. We hope to stay connected with our citizens and provide accurate information in a timely, reliable manner.

Cowley County Emergency Management

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Winfield, KS 67156

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E-mail: emergencymanagement@cowleycounty.org

Web: <http://www.cowleycounty.org/em>



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