

# **Emergency Management Annual Report 2015**

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

**January 2016**



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Assistant Coordinator

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EM Specialist

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**Ben Dobbs**  
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CCEA Secretary-Treasurer

**Cheryl Underwood**  
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**Glenda Schmidt**  
CERT Treasurer

**Crystal Merz**  
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**Steve Williams**  
CERT Training Coordinator

**Ray German**  
MRC President

**Michelle Crane**  
CART President

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2015 marked the end of a career for one Emergency Management employee and the beginning of another. On June 30, Lynn Nichols retired after serving 15 years for Cowley County, with the last 9 as the Emergency Management Clerk. She was a well-known face of the office for years and her services will be missed.

On July 1, Jason Kazban began with his career with Cowley County Emergency Management, but with the title of EM Specialist. Jason came to EM after 2 ½ years at the City-Cowley County Health Department as their BT Coordinator. Jason is a retired Master Sergeant/E-7 after serving 20 years in the US Air Force. Prior to joining Emergency Management, Jason was already a KEMA member and a KCEM. He recently completed his Master Exercise Practitioner certification in June 2015. We welcome Jason to the team.

## **Emergency Management Volunteer Groups**

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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 their time and effort without expecting anything in return. EM volunteers performed 2,343 hours of work in support of training, outreach and response to events in 2015.

### **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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 provide a commitment to ensure the safety of Cowley County residents through early warnings and works closely with other public safety agencies within the county. The Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary continues to be a big part of the community by working with the public in weather and personal safety.

### **COWLEY COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)**

CERT training is available in Cowley County at least once a year for anyone interested in learning how they can make a difference in the lives of their family, their neighborhood, their community and beyond in case of a natural or manmade disaster. Our local CERT group is open to anyone who desires to receive such training, whether or not they choose to use the information gained to help themselves and family only, or are willing to be available for other volunteer opportunities. Monthly meetings are held to discuss opportunities where members can help with local community functions such as traffic control, health and safety fairs, drive-through flu clinics, parade route safety, programs to enhance the public's understanding of emergency preparedness, and many others. These volunteer hours often free up local police and others who would be paid for their time. CERT members receive monthly training to enhance or refresh skills learned in the original CERT training. Our goals this next year are (1) to learn more about the other emergency response groups in order to coordinate efforts effectively in an emergency, and (2) to gain training that will make our team more useful to the local first responders, such as police and fire departments.

We want everyone to know how to MAKE A KIT – MAKE A PLAN – BE PREPARED – STAY INFORMED

### **COUNTY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS (MRC)**

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a community-based network of volunteers with or without medical backgrounds 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.

### **COWLEY COUNTY ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM (CART)**

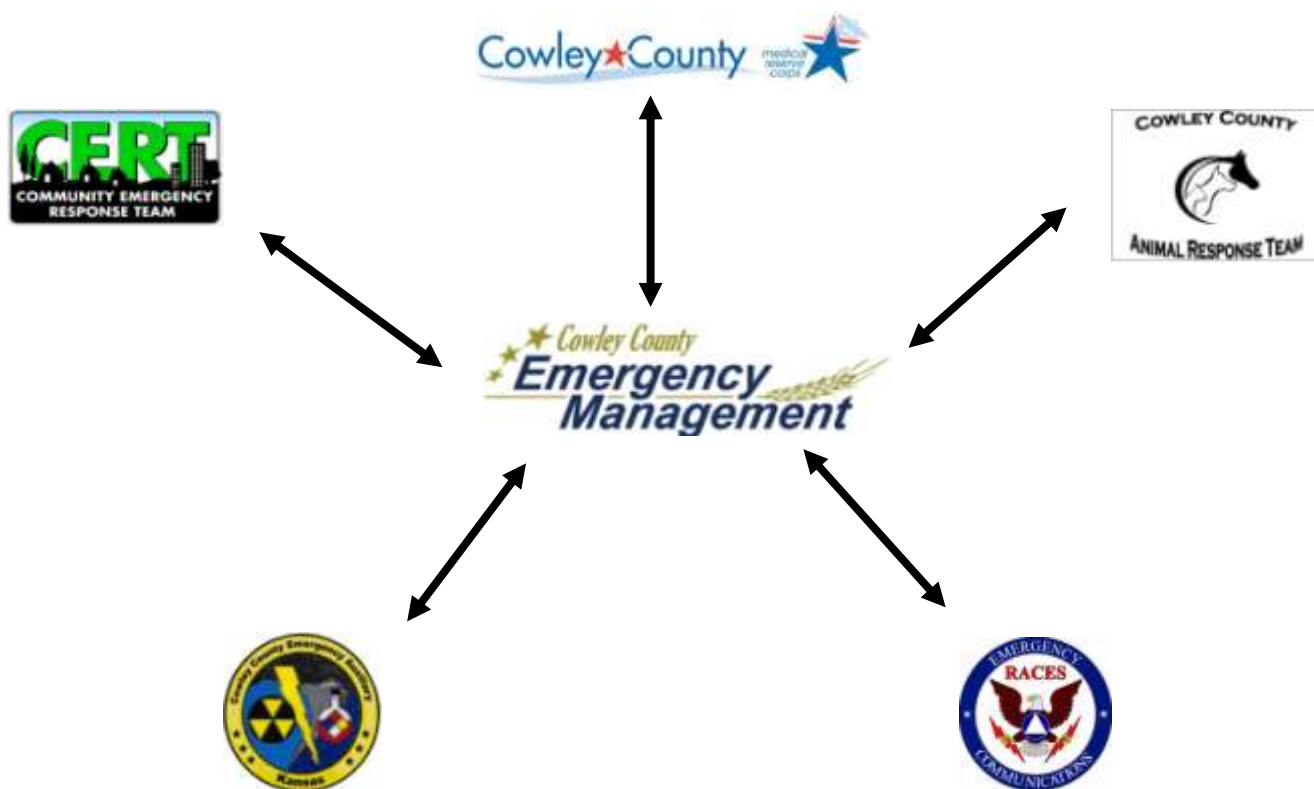
Time after time, during natural disasters, we hear reports of people refusing to leave their homes when advised to do so because they will not leave their pets behind. As a result, states, and then counties, began to form animal response teams (SART and CART). The goal is to: identify shelters that will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

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE VOLUNTEERS, INC (CCERV)

Cowley County Emergency Response Volunteer organizations came together in 2014 to form a 501(C)(3) nonprofit group. Participating emergency volunteer organizations include the Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary (CCEA), Cowley County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Cowley County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and the Cowley County Animal Response Team (CART). CCERV is comprised of two representatives from each organization, plus an at large member to work together providing information and to jointly support the goals of each.

### RADIO AMATEUR CIVIL EMERGENCY SERVICES (RACES)

The year 2014 marked the official charter of a new volunteer program for Cowley County. In an effort to increase the County's ability to communicate in an emergency, a Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) Group was formed. RACES members use Amateur Radio to provide communications links to critical facilities when needed in a disaster, and can also provide additional communications when existing public safety infrastructure is overwhelmed or unavailable. Amateur Radio operators are still able to communicate when other means fail, since they can create their own infrastructure, and operate without having to depend on any existing communications systems. The local RACES group was officially started on July 28<sup>th</sup> with the appointment of Randy Storey as RACES Officer for Cowley County. Randy and the Emergency Management staff are currently working on plans and procedures for the new group over the winter months, and plan to begin actively recruiting members in the spring. According to state records, Cowley County is currently one of only 9 counties in the State of Kansas to have a RACES program.



*"All for One and One for All" ~ The Three Musketeers*

## **Volunteer Activity**

A cumulative list of staff/volunteer activities and events are noted:

### **January**

12<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> official meeting of CCERV, Inc.

26<sup>th</sup> – New CERT class begins

### **February**

13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> - CCEM volunteers assisted Dillon's with Valentine deliveries

21<sup>st</sup> – Final Exercise for new CERT volunteers

24<sup>th</sup> – Fury on the Plains @ Cowley Cinema 8 (CCEA/CERT)

25<sup>th</sup> – Staff and volunteers attended Psychological First Aid training

### **March**

1<sup>st</sup> week of March – Severe Weather Awareness Week – posted tips each day

10<sup>th</sup> – Ark City Women's Fair

24<sup>th</sup> – Winfield Women's Fair

### **April**

7<sup>th</sup> – Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

18<sup>th</sup> – Health and Safety Fair, Ark City

22<sup>nd</sup> - Webinar

### **May**

10<sup>th</sup> – Southwestern College graduation

17<sup>th</sup> – Winfield High School graduation

25<sup>th</sup> – VA Memorial Day Ceremony

### **June**

16-17<sup>th</sup> – Disaster Response Symposium in Salina

27<sup>th</sup> – Amateur Radio Field Day, Pecan Grove

### **July**

7<sup>th</sup> – First Aid/CPR class, Winfield

11<sup>th</sup> – Dexter Fun Run (CCEA/CERT/CART)

### **August**

7<sup>th</sup> – Moving Day to new EOC offices!!!!

13-15<sup>th</sup> – K&O Steam Gas and Steam Engine Show

30<sup>th</sup> – Block Party @ Cornerstone Bible Church

### **September**

September is National Preparedness Month.

Preparedness hints posted daily.

12<sup>th</sup> – Burden Dayz

22<sup>rd</sup> – CCEA tabletop exercise on new emergency warning system

30<sup>th</sup> – National Preparathon Day

### **October**

5-6<sup>th</sup> – Reality U in Ark City and Winfield

9<sup>th</sup> – WHS Homecoming parade

12<sup>th</sup> – Ark City Drive-thru Flu Clinic

17<sup>th</sup> – Southwestern College Homecoming parade

22<sup>nd</sup> – Winfield Spooks parade

23<sup>rd</sup> – Winfield Drive-thru Flu Clinic

27<sup>th</sup> – CCEA training exercise on new emergency warning system

31<sup>st</sup> – Arkansas City Arkalalah parade

### **November**

10<sup>th</sup> – Combined Severe Weather training exercise

14<sup>th</sup> – ABATE Toy Run – Winfield to Arkansas City

17<sup>th</sup> – WHS CERT Lite class

20-21<sup>st</sup> – To Garden City to do training with new CERT group

21<sup>st</sup> – Red Cross/Westar Fire Safety Campaign in Arkansas City

### **December**

8<sup>th</sup> – Holiday social – CCEA, CERT, CART

12<sup>th</sup> – Winfield Christmas Parade of Lights

## **A Word From CERT by Steve Williams**

As the Training Officer for Cowley County CERT I have enjoyed myself the last two years. It was been an honor to help our CERT team improve and move forward to try and meet our goals. I have spent about 150 hours this year in training from the state of Kansas. It has been eye opening what you can learn from the different people in Kansas who want to help when an emergency happens.

For the year 2016 I am working on making sure we keep up on our training and preparedness. I am going to try having three exercise this year. The first is light search and rescue on Feb. 13th. The second is a practice deployment, seeing how long it will take to respond and see what our team members have in their CERT bags. The third would be an exercise with other first responders in Cowley County.

I want to thank everyone helping me with idea's for training and the great response I have had to the training.

Stephen Williams

Training Officer Cowley County CERT

## **Citizen Corps Leadership and Sustainability Symposium by Cheryl Underwood**

One of the most important activities that CERT members can participate in is continuous training and updating of skills. In April 2015 a group from Cowley County CERT and CART attended a Citizen Corps Leadership and Sustainability Symposium in Topeka. The objectives of this course were to individually learn of management and leadership styles, identify the style that is most suited for our own roles, review styles that we don't use and determine if they would be useful in different situations, and discover what impact different leadership styles have on an organization. As we participated in the training we discovered the style we were most comfortable with and learned that different situations would require different leadership styles. A side advantage of attending training opportunities is networking with leaders from around the state and getting to know them and share ideas and knowledge. Those attending were: Cheryl and Orlan Underwood, Steve and Kathy Williams, Brian Cunningham, and Michelle Crane. It should be noted that Bob Stamey does actively check with the participants on a quarterly basis to ask them how they are using the different leadership styles in their groups.

## **Communications Officer by Brian Cunningham**

As the Communications officer for the CERT group, the focus this past year has been on making sure everyone is comfortable with the use of the radios and that common language and protocol is practiced and used between the volunteer groups. As the groups grow and the equipment gets older, the mission is to raise funds to update and expand communication capabilities. Communication capabilities are vital to the safety of volunteer responders, the first responders they will interact with, and the people they will assist in times of emergency.



## **2015 Community Disaster Response Symposium by Kathy Williams**

It is hard to imagine a Disaster Symposium can be a fun, educational and resourceful event but it was. The event was held on June 16-17 at Crisis City in Salina, Kansas.

Being a member of CERT from Cowley County I was anxious to obtain knowledge, see past acquaintances from other counties while making new contacts. I had no idea how much information would be presented at the symposium. The event was sponsored by the American Red Cross, Kansas Wesleyan University, Medical Reserve Corps, Salina Regional Health Center, Saline County Emergency Management, Saline County Health Department and the Volunteer Connection.

We introduced ourselves giving an idea of what each organization offered and how we functioned. Many ideas were exchanged between the organizations. The teaching focus was on a desk top scenario. We were divided into groups then given a disaster scenario which we were to organize as if it were real.

Our instructors made it fun in between the serious lessons we were there to learn. Our CERT team brought in balloons tied as light sabers and helmets, to remind us to always relax, rely on others to help by knowing the people that you may someday find yourself working with. Our goal is to be the help that is needed in a situation where our training comes to fruition.

### **Putting the Training to Work**

The focus of CERT training has always been to prepare members to deal with whatever unexpected situation/emergency/disaster may arise. For the most part, the trained volunteers expect the call to assist will come about due to a natural disaster. Recently, Steve and Kathy Williams realized that their training would come in handy on a sunny Sunday morning on the way to church.

Witnessing an explosion a ways ahead of them on Hwy 77, they soon came upon a car accident and realize there's much at stake. Fortunately, there was no gas leaking and the smoke was coming from the radiator, not the engine. After a quick 360 assessment of the scene, Steve began his assessment of the driver in the car. In the meantime, Kathy has sprung into action to get Steve his CERT response bag and then to begin traffic control procedures. Prior experience and Disaster Medical Ops training helps Steve realize that, in spite of blood on the driver's face and a deep cut on his arm, the most serious situation this young man faced was a broken neck. Again, the training kicked in to make sure the neck was stabilized to minimize further injury.

This was a situation that most of us would prefer to avoid. However, CERT volunteers know that if it does happen, they can respond appropriately to save lives and prevent further injury. This is a training that is of benefit anywhere, anytime, any day. Steve and Kathy are a great example of using their skills for the "greater good."

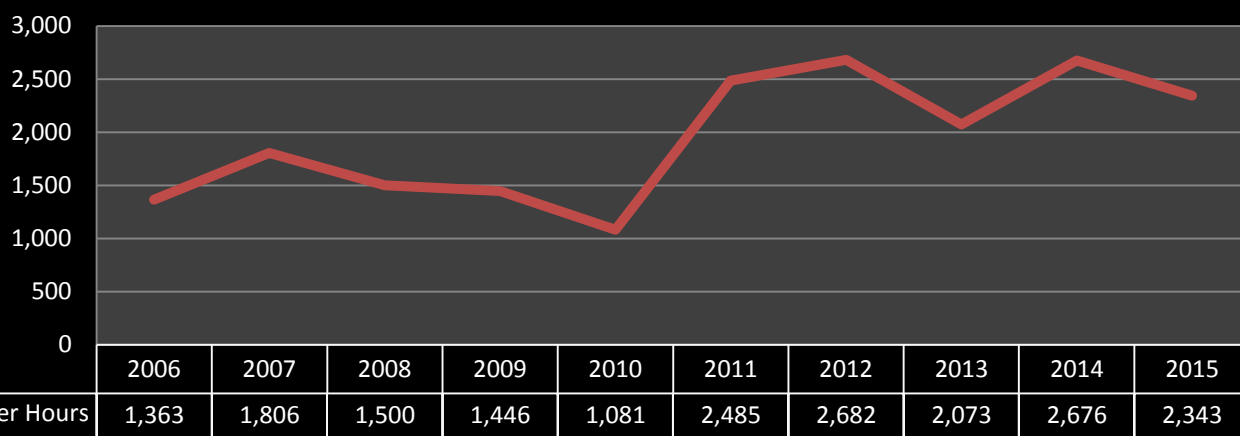
### **Christmas Get Together**

The December meeting for all of the volunteer groups was a joint Christmas party held at the Physician's Pavilion. Staff members provided hot dips, chips and drinks. The volunteers brought in their favorite finger foods to share. The time was spent reviewing the activities of the past year and suggestions for more joint trainings and activities in the year to come.

## **Noon Meetings**

Many of the CCEM volunteers are not available to attend evening meetings due to work schedules and other commitments. These volunteers are well trained and dedicated in their desire to assist when needed. In order to keep them in the loop and engaged, monthly noon meetings for the combined groups were added to the schedule this year. Each volunteer receives the agenda and minutes of their group's meeting and is brought up to date on all activities, events, trainings and other group decisions made at the meetings the evening prior.

**Volunteer Hours By Year 2006-2015**



*What volunteers bring is the human touch, the individual, caring approach that no government program, however well-meaning and well-executed, can deliver. ~ Edward James Olmos*



## **Volunteer Appreciation Dinner**

With over 2,500 hours logged by CCEM volunteers, we honored those volunteers with a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner in April. The event was held at the Physician's Pavilion and catered by Paddlefoot BBQ. Approximately 57 volunteers and their guests attended. Special guests included County Administrator Jeremy Willmoth, County Commissioner Wayne Wilt and Kansas Citizen Corps Coordinator Bob Stamey. During the course of the evening, highlights of the past year's events were presented in a slide show. Volunteers were each presented with a flash drive preloaded with forms, information and web sites used for training and documentation.



Addressing the group during the volunteer appreciation dinner  
Left: Bob Stamey and Right: Wayne Wilt

## **Fund Raisers**

Several years ago, the volunteers were given the opportunity to sponsor the Fun Run at Dexter's annual BBQ in July. Again, members from CCEA and CERT planned the event, signed up sponsors and were on site by 6 AM on Saturday, July 11 to set up and register runners and walkers. All participants who pre-registered for the event were given a tee shirt. First, second and third place medals were given to runners in 10 categories. There was a drawing at the end of the race for prizes generously donated by businesses in Cowley County.

Cowley County Emergency Management volunteers had several successful fund raisers during the year. Spearheaded by CCERV, Inc., the non-profit organization formed by the four volunteer groups, members from CCEA, CERT and CART held three raffles. The first raffle was for a smoker built by members of the Dexter High School shop class. The second raffle gave two people the opportunity to win a Yeti cooler and cup each. The final raffle of the year was for a 48" smart TV.

All funds raised this year were placed into the CCERV, Inc. "general fund" as the group works toward adding to and replacing older radio communication equipment.



Runners on Grouse Creek Road



Registration table



Turn around point/hydration station



Smoker built by Dexter High School student Riley Thom (far right).

### **Anonymous Donation**

Santa surprised the Cowley County Emergency Management volunteer groups again by leaving a donation of \$1,500 in the stocking hung with care at the Legacy Foundation. This much appreciated anonymous donation moves the group another step closer to being able to purchase new and additional communication equipment. When activated for any community or emergency event, having the necessary equipment to communicate with the team and/or the incident commander is vital to safety and appropriate response capability. The groups hope to one day purchase equipment that will give them a wider communication range and compatibility with other first responders units.

# Community Outreach and Education

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## **2015 CERT Class**

There's an easy way to overcome the doldrums of winter – sign up to take the CERT training classes. That's exactly what 18 people did last January 26 when they attended the first of eight training sessions to become Community Emergency Response Team members.

Classes were held every Tuesday and Thursday at the First Christian Church in Winfield for a total of four weeks. On the Saturday morning following the final class, a mock exercise was held. The purpose of the exercise was to give the new trainees an opportunity to practice their skills and get a better understanding of their role in the scheme of things.

Instructors for the courses included personnel from both the Winfield and Arkansas City Fire/EMS departments. Fire Safety and Disaster Medical Operations presentations were done by Chad Mayberry, Patrick Ramirez and Brad Klein of Winfield FD/EMS. Ken Corcran, ACFD/EMS, instructed the group in light search and rescue skills. Ray German presented Terrorism facts and also reviewed the Incident Command System (ICS700) for the class. CERT volunteers assisting with training included Steve Williams, training coordinator for the group; Kathy Williams, CERT volunteer; Brian Cunningham, CERT VP and communications officer; Cheryl Underwood, CERT president; John Stradal, CCEM Asst. Coordinator; and Jolan Csukas, Volunteer Coordinator.

For the final exercise, members of the Cowley County drama club served as disaster victims. CERT and CCEA volunteers served in a variety of positions during the exercise. Several instructors from the Winfield and Ark City fire departments also served as evaluators for the exercise. After the exercise, 13 people were given certificates of completion for the course.

## **CERT Lite**

Each semester, students from Lynne Hunter's Winfield High School Health class have the opportunity to attend a three-hour class giving them an overview of CERT and personnel emergency preparedness. For the past several years, Cameron Groom, a member of Cowley's storm spotters, has assisted Jolan with teaching the class. This year, he developed a slide presentation to show students the different cloud formations that can develop into dangerous thunderstorms and/or tornadoes and explained how to interpret radar images. A total of 18 students attended the March and November classes.

## **Health and Safety Fair**

The annual Health and Safety Fair was held in the Agri-Business Building in Arkansas City on April 18. All four volunteer groups set up information tables and answered questions about the responsibilities and requirements of each group.

## **Assisting Ford/Finney County**

Citizens in Ford and Finney Counties expressed an interest in creating a joint CERT team to assist their communities during emergency situations. Jolan Csukas, Volunteer Services Coordinator for Cowley County, communicated and

shared ideas and information with Emergency Managers from both counties and discussed trainings with them. Once the basic trainings took place with their local first responders, she and Brian Cunningham (CERT V-P and Communications officer) traveled to Garden City in November to meet with the group. They presented trainings on the CERT organization and Terrorism. After the training was complete, they spent time talking to the group about the various ways they can assist their communities with various activities and how to keep volunteers engaged. They stressed visibility of the group within their communities and continued cooperation with first responders to help build the bond between the groups.



Jolan Csukas facilitating discussion with the Finney and Ford County CERT students.

### **Webinar**

A FEMA sponsored nationwide webinar pertaining to CERT Resource Development was held on April 22. Cowley County Volunteer Coordinator, Jolan Csukas, was asked to be a contributor. The moderator was Dante Raindazzo, FEMA and other contributors were Brian Maier of Ohio and Dave Nichols from Mississippi. Topics of discussion included recruiting, training and funding the CERT program. At the end of the one hour presentation, questions were taken from audience members across the country. As with all FEMA webinars, the presentation can be accessed on their website.

### **Drive-Thru Flu Clinic**

Volunteers from CERT and the CCEA, along with Emergency Management staff assisted the City-Cowley County Health Department during two Drive-Thru Flu Clinics. The first was held at the Agri-Business Building in Arkansas City on October 12th and the second was held at Barn 4 of the Winfield Fairgrounds on October 23rd. During both events, a total of 226 vaccinations were administered which is an increase from 100 vaccinations given in 2014.

### **All-Hazards Weather Radio Grant**

CCEM was able to once again give away a number of NOAA Severe Weather radios to qualifying citizens in Cowley County. During the Fury on the Plains presentation in February, 20 winners were drawn. Other opportunities to win a radio were during the Health and Safety Fair in Arkansas City last April and during the Arkansas City and Winfield Women's Fairs in March. The radios were made available through a FEMA grant and the sponsorship of Cowley County businesses.

### **Storm Fury on the Plains**

The annual storm spotter training was held again at the Cowley Cinema 8 Theater near Strother Field on Tuesday, February 24, 2015. Once again, two separate presentations were given by Chance Hayes, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Wichita. The 3pm presentation had 147 attendees and the 6:30pm presentation had 163 attendees for a total of 310 attendees. This is the largest number of participants in Cowley County since the inception of the program. In addition, 11 weather radios were given away to Cowley County citizens.



### ***Severe Weather Operations***

*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.*

*In 2015, the EOC was activated 11 times for severe weather. Cowley County was placed under 9 Severe Thunderstorm Watches and a total of 14 Severe Thunderstorm Warnings. 5 Tornado Watches were issued; however, a Tornado Warning was never issued for Cowley County. There were 3 reports of severe hail (1" or larger), but no official reports of severe wind (58+mph).*

*There's always another storm. It's the way the world works. Snowstorms, rainstorms, windstorms, sandstorms, and firestorms. Some are fierce and others are small. You have to deal with each one separately, but you need to keep an eye on what's brewing for tomorrow." — Maria V. Snyder, Fire Study*

### **KAKE and Dillon's Weather Radio Event**

On May 26, 2015, Jay Prater, Meteorologist with KAKE-TV in Wichita and Chance Hayes, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the National Weather Service paid a visit to the Dillon's store in Winfield. During this visit, they met with citizens, programmed new Weather Radios, re-programmed older Weather Radios and talked Severe Weather.





# Communications

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## Amateur Radio Class

Cowley County Emergency Management, in cooperation with the Cowley County Amateur Radio Club, once again held a Technician Level Amateur Radio class in 2015. 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 large-scale disasters. Classes were held in March, and resulted in 10 new operators. Through classes held since 2011, the total number of new operators in Cowley County is now 62.

## Field Day

Every year around the country during the last weekend in June, Amateur Radio operators, or Hams, participate in an event known as field day. The purpose of this event is to test the emergency communications capability of local Hams, usually from a location where no existing equipment exists. In 2015, the Cowley County Amateur Radio Club again worked together with Cowley County Emergency Management to participate in the event. The group set up and operated from the Winfield Fairgrounds using the Cowley County Mobile Command trailer for shelter and generator power. The event was a success, as the group was able to contact other participants nationwide, and learned a few valuable lessons along the way.



A communications plan is more than just having equipment. It is about having training, planning, preparing, practicing and continually trying to improve. The biggest failure of an exercise or a disaster is the "lack of communications." Cowley County is working hard to maintain a communications program and to integrate all agencies and jurisdictions into that program.

# Preparedness

## StormReady®

Emergency Management is proud to call Cowley County a StormReady® County since 1999. To remain a StormReady® community, Cowley County must adhere to the following guidelines:



- 1) Communication: establish a 24-hour warning point (CCEC) and establish an EOC;
- 2) NWS Information Reception: have 4 separate ways for the EOC/WP to receive NWS alerts;
- 3) Hydrometeorological Monitoring: have 3 separate ways to receive hydrometeorological data
- 4) Community Preparedness: have a minimum of 3 weather safety talks annually, train spotters and dispatchers biennially, and host an annual NWS spotter training; and
- 5) Administrative: have a formal hazardous weather operations plan, biennial visits by the Emergency Manager to the NWS, and an annual visit by NWS official to the community.

As of the end of 2015, Kansas has 45 StormReady® designations, with 32 of those being Counties.



StormReady®  
Communities in Kansas.  
Image courtesy of The  
National Weather Service

## Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador

As a Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador, Cowley County serves in a role in affecting societal change by helping build a nation that is ready, responsive, and resilient to the impacts of extreme weather and water events. As an Ambassador, we are committed to the following:

- 1) Promoting Weather-Ready Nation messages;
- 2) Engaging with NOAA personnel on potential collaboration opportunities;
- 3) Sharing our success stories of preparedness; and
- 4) Serving as an example by educating employees on workplace preparedness.



Cowley County was the first County in the South Central Region (and the 26-County Wichita Forecast Area) to become a Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador. To date, there are 31 different agencies/entities in that State of Kansas that are Weather-Ready Nation Ambassadors.



# EXERCISES

The Cowley County Emergency Management department is dedicated to the training and exercising of the local community. Two exercises were performed with numerous community agencies and also state and federal partners. These exercises test capabilities from the National Preparedness Goal and were written to Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) standards. The lessons learned from these exercises are reviewed and a specific training program is authored to address the needed area. This progressive approach enriches the community and ensures that Cowley County is ready to respond and recover from disasters.



On Sept 22, 2015, Cowley County Emergency Management conducted the first exercise in the new facility. This exercise was beneficial in showing the infrastructure of the new Emergency Operation Center. Existing plans, policies and procedures were tested to find areas of improvement and give the core staff and volunteers a better understanding of the integration of efforts during a disaster.



On November 10, 2015, a functional exercise was performed. This exercise is an operations based exercise that evaluated the mission area of response. There were 12 agencies represented in this exercise. Representatives from the city, county, state and federal level actively participated in the exercise. The exercise built upon the lessons learned from the prior exercise and showed the value of training in a real world setting.

### **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.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## **Recognizing One of Our Own**

On October 18, 2015, Brian Cunningham was the recipient of the Sonny Slater Award for Service to Community and Station. Brian is the Operations Manager/Chief Engineer for KSOK Radio in Arkansas City and he received the award from the Kansas Association of Broadcasters (KAB).

Brian devotes a lot of his time to the Emergency Management Agency by volunteering for the Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary (CCEA) and the Cowley County Emergency Response Team (CERT). In addition, he is a member of the local Amateur Radio Club and the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).

Cowley County Emergency Management is extremely fortunate to have Brian as a volunteer for our department. He brings with him expertise, knowledge, energy and a great attitude. Thanks for all you do and CONGRATULATIONS!!



## **Mourning the Loss of One of Our Own**

2015 signified a sad year within the Cowley County EM family. Ray German, a valuable volunteer for Cowley County passed away on December 12, 2015 at his home. Ray was the LEPC Chair, the MRC President, and NIMS/ICS and CERT instructor. Ray was retired from a lifetime of service at the William Newton Hospital as a Paramedic, the Director of Respiratory Therapy and their Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. Ray will be missed by all of his family and friends in Cowley County.



# WORKING WITH AND IN THE COMMUNITY

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## Walk Kansas

Each year, the County Commission is gracious enough to offer an incentive to the employees to participate in the Walk Kansas Program offered by K-State Research and Extension. All Emergency Management staff have participated for the last two years. We'd like to thank the County Commissioners for their support and willingness to help County employees become more fit by allowing us to participate in this program.

## Barn Quilt

This year, Barn Quilts became a focus for Cowley First, the economic development agency for Cowley County. The County encouraged its' employees to participate in the creation of a Barn Quilt to be displayed on the Cowley County Courthouse. Two Emergency Management staff members, Brian Stone and Jason Kazban, took the opportunity to help and participate. Barn quilts are topic of discussion in all communities across Cowley County and will continue to grow in popularity. For more information and photos: <http://www.cowleycounty.org/barn-quilt-trail>



## **Reality U**

Reality U is an exercise geared towards sophomores that helps youth understand some of the "realities" involved in preparing for an employable future and adulthood. Reality U provides students the opportunity to learn about those choices that must be made as adults. The program provides a valuable service to teens helping them learn to determine spending priorities and budget their money. The goals of Reality U are to show teens that their performance in school today will affect their future, and give teens a chance to learn and practice personal finance skills in a fun way.

Each year, Cowley County employees volunteer their time to assist with the Reality U in the Arkansas City and Winfield High Schools. It is rewarding not only for the students, but also for the volunteers.



County employees and volunteers from Cowley First, Administration/HR, Youth Services, Clerk's Office, Emergency Management, CERT and the Sheriff's Department helping with Reality U at the Winfield High School.

## **An Added Bonus**

Cowley County Emergency Management received 21 first aid kits from Siemens Energy, Inc in Wichita. The kits have a total value of \$5,575.00. The kits include items such as SAM splint, emergency eye wash, burn treatments and various bandages. This generous donation will amplify the preparedness posture of local government agencies in the Cowley County area and also will be deployed with the Community Emergency Response Team and Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary during disasters and inclement weather situations. The relationship and rapport between Cowley County Emergency Management and Siemens Energy adds to the readiness and response levels of Cowley County.





## **A New EOC**

2015 also marked the end of another piece of history and the beginning of a new one. Since 1967, the Cowley County EOC has been in the basement of the Winfield Municipal Operations Center located at 2701 E. 9th Avenue in Winfield. On August 7, 2015, the EOC moved to Cowley County's South Annex at 321 E. 10th Avenue in Winfield. While the old EOC was functional and provided a home to the EM Department for many years, the staff and volunteers are glad to be moved and we are enjoying the new facility. The EOC is in the basement which we share with the Cowley County Emergency Communications Center (CCEC).



### **Social Media in Emergency Management**

Cowley County Emergency Management began using social media tools, specifically Facebook and Twitter, in early 2012. Our goal is to reach out and interact with the public before, during and after emergencies or disasters. 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.

The Cowley County website is a valuable place to see updated information such as weather situations reports, bridge work, road closings, weekly preparedness tips and special days. To visit: <http://www.cowleycounty.org/em>



Cowley County EM has 434 Twitter followers and have sent a total of 3,278 tweets to our followers.



Cowley County EM has 2,556 Facebook likes. The top cities with the most followers are Arkansas City (899) and Winfield (781). The most popular time to view by our followers is 8:00pm. Posts on two dates generated the most reaches: December 23 (Winter Storm) reached 7,816 viewers and April 7 (Severe Storms) reached 4,847 viewers.

## **Cowley County Emergency Management**

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**Winfield, KS 67156**

**(620) 221-0470 or (620) 441-4569**

**E-mail: [emergencymanagement@cowleycounty.org](mailto:emergencymanagement@cowleycounty.org)**

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



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*There is more power in unity than division ~ Emanuel Cleaver*