

Emergency Management 2016 Annual Report



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



The vision of Emergency Management is that Cowley County, Kansas will be a community of cities and citizens who are disaster aware and disaster prepared.

"There's no harm in hoping for the best as long as you're prepared for the worst."

~ Stephen King, Different Seasons

Emergency Management Staff

Brian Stone, CEM®, KCEM **John Stradal, KCEM**
 Director Assistant Coordinator

Jason Kazban, KCEM, MEP **Jolan Csukas**
 EM Specialist Volunteer Coordinator

Cowley Co. Emergency Auxiliary (CCEA)

Martin Moon **Tyler Gurnee**
 President Vice-President

Cameron Groom
 Secretary-Treasurer

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Cheryl Underwood **Loretta Klamik**
 President Vice-President

Glenda Schmidt **Martin Moon**
 Treasurer Communications Officer

Crystal Merz **Steve Williams**
 Secretary Training Coordinator

County Animal Response Team (CART)

Michelle Crane
 President

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES)

Randy Storey **Ron Upton**
 RACES Officer Deputy RACES Officer

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Cowley County Emergency Management's Mission is:

To save lives, protect property and reduce the impacts of disasters through the mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery phases of Emergency Management.



The Nemaha Ridge fault area cuts a path through the northwest portion of the County.

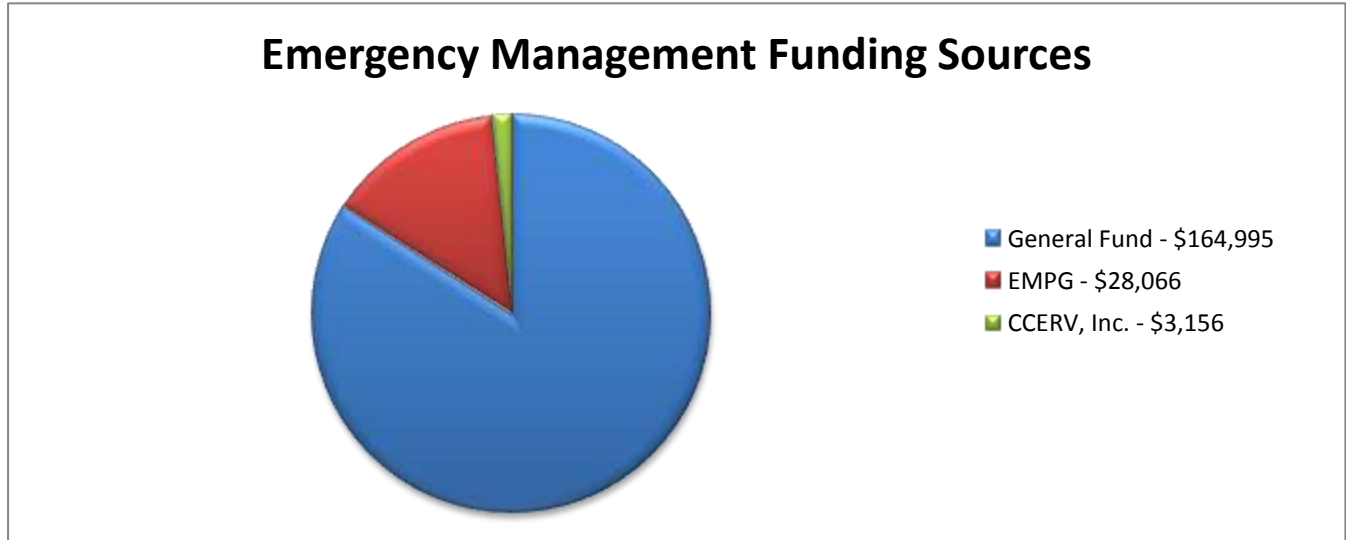
Kansas has a total population of **2.9 million** residents with a total land mass of **82,278** square miles with **105** counties.

Cowley County is considered a rural county located one hour to the southeast of Wichita in South Central Kansas and borders the State of Oklahoma. Cowley County has the following statistics:

- * Population - **36,311** (14th largest in Kansas) with an average of 32 people per square mile.
- * Size - **1,132** square miles (**728,960** acres). 1,126 square miles are land and 6 square miles are water (7th largest in Kansas).
- * 8 cities. The smallest is Cambridge with a population of 82 and the largest is Arkansas City with a population of 12,415. The County seat is Winfield with a population of 12,301.
- * 25 townships. The smallest is Cedar with a population of 44 and the largest is Creswell with a population of 2,098.
- * 5 Unified School Districts (Arkansas City, Central Burden, Dexter, Udall and Winfield).
- * 2 Colleges (Southwestern College, a four year private college and Cowley College, a two year community college)
- * The Walnut and Arkansas Rivers both run through Cowley County with the City of Arkansas City being located inside the junction of those rivers.

Budget Information

Cowley County EM and all of its volunteer agencies operate from the county's general fund and Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG). Income from CCERV, Inc. donations support operations of the volunteer groups.



Staff Accomplishments

All County EM staff are members of the Kansas Emergency Management Association (KEMA). KEMA is a network of leaders dedicated to providing excellence in Emergency Management for Kansas. The annual conference is held in September and a highlight of the event is the Awards Banquet where leaders are recognized for their service and excellence.

KEMA President's Choice Award is given by the Association's President to a person, group or organization that has made a significant contribution to their agency, the profession or the Association. For 2016, the President's Choice Award was presented to Brian Stone of Cowley County.

KEMA's Outstanding New Emergency Management Professional Award is presented to an EM professional who has served less than twenty-four months in the position who has displayed enthusiasm toward the job and made specific accomplishments and/or improvements to the local program. This year, Jason Kazban, EM Specialist for Cowley County was nominated for this award. Although he did not win the award, it is an honor to be recognized for his accomplishments during his short time with the EM department.



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 their time and effort without expecting anything in return. EM volunteers performed 1,638 hours of work in support of training, outreach and response to events in 2016.

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. The group dates back to August 8th 1985. 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 work 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.

CCEA meets the 2nd
Tuesday of every
month at 7:30pm.

COWLEY COUNTY COMMUNITY 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

CERT meets the 2nd
Tuesday of every
month at 6:00pm.

COWLEY COUNTY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS (MRC)

The (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)

During natural disasters, people have refused 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.

CART meets the 2nd
Tuesday of every
month at 6:00pm.

COWLEY COUNTY 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). In 2016 RACES was added to the group. 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. Through the efforts of all volunteer organization, money has been raised for the purchase of communication equipment needed for training purposes and made available when these volunteers are deployed in an emergency situation. Communication is a vital part of emergency response and this equipment is crucial to our volunteers. We are grateful for the support from community organizations, businesses and individuals

CCERV, Inc. meets the
2nd Monday in
January, April, July and
October at 6:00pm.

RADIO AMATEUR CIVIL EMERGENCY SERVICES (RACES)

In an effort to increase the County's ability to communicate in an emergency, a Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) Group was formed in 2014. 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.

RACES meets the 4th
Tuesday of every
month at 7:30pm.

Under the continued leadership of Randy Storey, the year 2016 brought significant growth and development to the Cowley County RACES organization. A total of 10 new members were added, a major revision of the local RACES plan was written and approved, and Ron Upton was appointed as Deputy RACES officer to help lead the growing group. RACES members continue to work with Emergency Management to enhance their skills and to train with the County's existing communications assets, as well as to develop new tools and capabilities for the future.

Members of Cowley County RACES have been hard at work to update and improve the Amateur Radio communications capabilities within the county EOC. So far volunteers have worked to identify and iron out some bugs with an antenna on the roof of the EOC, and have helped to develop new emergency communications procedures for use both within and outside of the EOC. They are also in the process of brainstorming to develop new tools to communicate with the EOC and other locations from the field. Through their help, Cowley County is working to build a very robust backup communications network that will serve the county well in times of need.

Staff/Volunteer Activity

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

January

7th-8th: MCC to AC for SWAT training

12th: VOAD meeting

13th: CERT Officers meet to plan training exercise

19th: PIO Working Group meeting

20th: Ebola TTX

21st: Informal Ham meeting

25th: IWT meeting

27th: WebEOC training

28th: SC KS VOAD meeting

February

1st: Pipeline training

3rd: Radiation Response Vol. Corps training

4th: SC KEMA meeting

15th: CERT classes begin

23rd: Fury on the Plains at Cowley Cinema 8

25th: Ham class begins

29th: Dexter Fun Run planning session

March

1st week of March: Severe Weather Awareness Week - posted tips each day

1st: Severe Wx presentation - Cowley College

3rd: Health and Medical Symposium

6th Severe Wx presentation - Whittier School

12th: CERT class final exercise

15th: Twitter Talk

16th: Facebook Forum

17th: KCJIS/Motobridge training

22nd: Ark City Women's Fair

29th: Winfield Women's Fair

30th: CPR recertification training

April

5th: Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

7th: SC KEMA meeting

11th: SIEC meeting

12th: VOAD meeting in Parkerfield

12th: Address/Map training for volunteers

14th: Southwestern College Presidential Inauguration

14th: Advanced Spotter presentation by NWS at Cowley Cinema 8

16th: Health and Safety Fair in Winfield

17th: Informal Ham Gathering

May

5th: Active shooter training

5th: SCIP meeting

7th-8th: Kansas Sampler Festival

8th: Southwestern College graduation

10th: Dexter Fun Run meeting

18th: WVF planning meeting

19th: Social Media training

19th: Informal Ham Gathering

30th: VA Memorial Day Ceremony

June

7th: FAC meeting with USDA

15th: SIEC meeting

20th: Mass Fatality training

21st: MARC Training

23rd: NG911 video shoot

25th: Amateur Radio Field Day, Winfield City Lake

July

9th: Dexter Fun Run (CCEA/CERT/CART)

12th: VOAD meeting -ICS training

19th: PIO Working Group meeting

August

4th: SC KEMA meeting

10th: SIEC meeting

19th-20th: K&O Gas & Steam Engine Show

24th: KEMA Board meeting

September

September is National Preparedness Month.

Preparedness hints posted daily.

1st: County Dept Head COOP TTX

8th: Neighbor's Night Out

11th: Cornerstone Fellowship Neighbor's Night Out

13th-16th: KEMA Conference

24th: Last Run Car Show - Ark City

28th: KDEM PDA for flooding

30th: WHS Homecoming Parade

October

3rd: Ark City Neighbor's Night Out

4th-5th: Future Now: Finance (AC and Winfield)

8th: Southwestern College Homecoming parade

17th: SIEC meeting

22nd: GE Family Day

25th: PIO Working Group meeting

25th - Winfield Spooks parade

25th - Volunteer Functional Exercise in EOC

29th - Arkalalah parade

November

3rd: DR-4287 Applicant Briefing

12th: ABATE Toy Run - Winfield to Ark City

14th; Public Assistance - 101

15th: WHS CERT Lite class

16th: Healthcare Coalition meeting

December

4th: Emergency Prep presentation to 4H group

10th: Winfield Christmas Parade of Lights

13th: Holiday social for all volunteer groups

15th: County-wide meet and greet at EOC

A Word From CERT by Mark Moon, Communications Officer

When former Communications Officer Brian Cunningham moved away into a new position in May, I was asked to step in. I quickly discovered Brian wore mighty big shoes! Following the path he left, our focus has been on continuing education, increasing the capabilities of each individual in various communication skills, and updating the equipment we rely on when our unique talents are called upon.

Continuing the mission to grow funds to update and expand our communications equipment, we continue to raise funds thru various events and raffles. Putting those funds to use, a purchase plan was developed to provide a multi-layered equipment response to likely needs in the event of a disaster, and to allow for continued growth with diversified equipment. The ability to communicate reliably within a team, and with the first responders they interact with, is vital to the mission and safety of our volunteers who respond in a time of need.

We are also coordinating a plan to better communicate with other agencies, both within and outside Cowley County (in the event of circumstances that involve surrounding county agencies). Part of this plan involves using the capabilities of individual members and their own FCC-granted amateur radio operator license to include ham radio as a means of communication, along with short-range Family Radio Service (FRS) and shared-frequency public service radio.

A Word from the Auxiliary - Mark Moon, CCEA President

As former Presidents Jeff Soukup and Brian Cunningham moved away to a new position in January and May, respectively, I was selected to fill that role. I became increasingly aware of the dedication and selflessness exhibited by the members of the group. Realizing the importance and gravity of their accepted mission, they voluntarily set aside their personal life at a moment's notice to provide experienced observations of severe weather conditions to the Emergency Operation Center. Their reports allow the National Weather Service to provide timely notification of approaching storms to the citizens of Cowley County and surrounding areas. To keep their weather identification skills fresh, many volunteers attended the National Weather Service's March "Fury on the Plains" and April advanced training presentations, hosted by the Cowley Cinema 8 Theater.

CCEA volunteers also give their time and resources to keep the organization on track and functional. Vice-President Tyler Gurnee, in addition to his usual duties, has taken on the task of Training Officer, and is spearheading an effort to update the Auxiliary's training manual. Our Secretary/Treasurer Cameron Groom is assisting in that effort, along with keeping track of our finances and ensuring an accurate reporting of Auxiliary activities. They have also been integral in coordinating updates to our bylaws to keep them clear, concise and relative to our organization.

CCEA volunteers also donate their time, vehicles and fuel, expertise and communications skills to provide manpower for situations like wide area searches or roadblocks. This year, dry conditions in late spring resulted in several significant grass fires that caused smoke to obscure the roadway. CCEA members responded to man roadblocks to keep travelers safe. When flood waters rose in the community as a result of heavy rains upstream, CCEA members monitored the progress. CCEA members also ensured traffic safety during local parades and special events, such as Arkansas City's Arkalalah, the Dexter BBQ Fun Run, and the Memorial Day program at the Winfield Veteran's Cemetery.

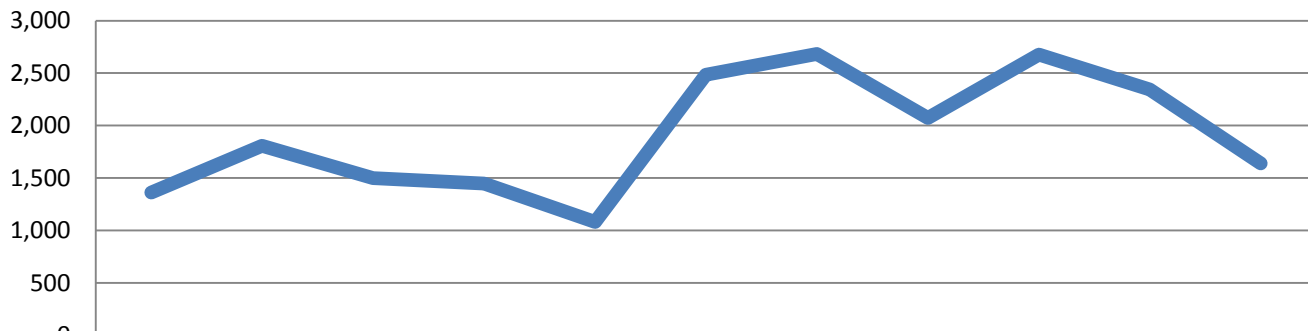
As a result of fund raising efforts throughout the year, we were able to purchase updated equipment to ensure reliable communications for those volunteers who yield their service at a moment's notice. We plan on continuing the update of equipment as we gain new members who qualify to spot in the field on their own, and to replace obsolete and increasingly unreliable radios.

As a member group under the working umbrella of Emergency Management, we also embrace the concept of working together with other groups. Recognizing we are the first to be called out for approaching severe weather, we will likely be the first on scene should a disaster strike, necessitating the activation of associated groups, the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Community Animal Response Teams (CART) and the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). Our goal is seamlessly working together in the various roles to give Cowley County residents our best coordinated efforts in the event a disaster strikes.

A Word from CART - Michelle Crane, CART President

Pets are family members and in the middle of a disaster you want to know your family members are safe whether they are human or pets. CART plays a huge part in providing shelter for animals during a disaster whether they are lost, unclaimed or temporarily surrendered and works to reunite pets with their rightful owners. CART is cadre of trained volunteers to assist with animals during a time of disaster. In 2016 Cowley County CART participated in many activities to help make our presence known. Information was displayed at National Night Out in Arkansas City, Annual Health and Safety Fair held in Winfield, Fury of the Plains and a presentation for the 4-H Council. CART also participated in several fundraisers in the county and attended the 2016 Kansas Animal Response Exercise at Crisis City for a weekend learning and participating in mock drills. 2017 will be a bigger more active year for CART as we spread the word and recruit volunteers.

Volunteer Hours By Year 2006-2016



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Volunteer Hours	1,363	1,806	1,500	1,446	1,081	2,485	2,682	2,073	2,676	2,343	1,638

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

Christmas Gathering

Volunteers from all Emergency Management volunteer groups, and their guests, attended the annual Christmas gathering at the EOC lieu of their regular monthly meeting on December 13th. EM staff members provided chili, soup, a selection of BBQ meats, hot dip and chips, and drinks. Volunteers brought a sampling of their favorite finger foods and desserts to round out the menu. The groups use this time to visit with each other and share ideas for events in the year to come.

Cowley County Meet and Greet

Cowley County Emergency Management hosted the Meet and Greet for all county departments and special guests on December 15th from 9am-4pm. Staff members provided a variety of cookies and hot drinks for those visiting the office. To create a festive holiday spirit, a winter fireplace was projected on one screen and a window looking out at falling snow was projected on another while holiday songs played in the background. Mr. and Mrs. Snowman presided over the selection of cookies. Sgt. Claus of the Winfield Police Department's Blue Santa program and his elf stopped by for cookies and cider.



Volunteer Appreciation Dinner - photos

On April 5th, during Volunteer Appreciation Month, CCEM hosted a dinner to honor its volunteers and to recognize their 1,638 hours of volunteer service to the county during the previous year. Special guests attending the BBQ dinner provided by Greg and Kristi Powers were Jeremy Willmoth, Wayne Wilt and Chance Hayes. Hayes, from the National Weather Service agency in Wichita, was the guest speaker. He praised the groups for their continued community involvement and told the spotters how much their “up to the minute” information was appreciated by his organization. He told them NWS could always count on the information to be spot on accurate. Gifts for the volunteers this year were, as always, in keeping with the preparedness theme – key chain whistles representative of their volunteer group signature color.



Addressing the group during the appreciation dinner is Chance Hayes of the National Weather Service in Wichita.

A note to the brave readers: the slide in the photo on the right side shows actual reports his office has received regarding hail sizes. If you can read the bottom point under the "Anatomy and Physiology" section, give Chance a call. He'll gladly provide you with all of the details.

Mulvane Flooding Response

In mid-August, Sumner and Sedgwick Counties were hit with record rainfalls in a short amount causing many flooding issues with one of the hardest hit areas being Mulvane. The call went out to Cowley County for assistance in that city. Assisting with intake and property assessments between August 22 - 26 were Vickie Harvey, Rose and Joe Rose, Ben Dobbs, Carolyn Bergkamp, Mark Moon and Christian Snouffer. Brian and Jolan went to Mulvane on August 23 to visit the volunteer reception and assistance center. Viewing the setup and visiting with staff will be beneficial to the CCEM staff if and when the same type of service may need to be provided in Cowley County.



Fund Raisers

Several years ago, the volunteers were given the opportunity to sponsor the Fun Run at Dexter's annual BBQ in July. Since then, members from CCEA, CERT, CART and CCEM have planned the event. This year the event was held on Saturday, July 9. All participants who pre-registered for the event were given a t-shirt. All participants received a finisher's medal and first, second and third place medals were given to runners in the men's and women's divisions. This year, local law enforcement officers from the Cowley County Sheriff and Winfield Police Departments provided a bicycle patrol, the City-Cowley County Health Department provided a hydration station and the Winfield Fire/EMS Reserves provided medical services to the event. The sound system and the emcee were courtesy of the Dexter Outreach Center Church. There was a drawing at the end of the race for prizes generously donated by businesses in Cowley County.



Members of the bike patrol and event organizers make final arrangements before the start of the race.



The City-Cowley County Health Department at the hydration station.



Medical staff from the Winfield Fire/EMS Reserves.



Finisher's medals.

A raffle in May and the sponsorship of the annual Dexter Fun Run in July helped boost the funds of CERT and CCEA, As a result, the groups approved plans to begin ordering new and additional communications equipment. Fund raisers and anonymous donations over the past three years have made the purchase of radios a reality. The groups still need to replace and grow the inventory, but the process of improving their communication abilities has begun.

Rather than hold a raffle every three months, the groups decided this year to hold one big “blow out” raffle. For the price of one ticket, with a maximum of 300 tickets to be sold, a person could choose between winning a smoker built by Dexter High School shop students, \$250 in Winfield or Arkansas City Chamber Bucks or two five-day passes to Walnut Valley Bluegrass Festival.

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.

Volunteer Groups Purchase New Communications Equipment

The Cowley County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Emergency Auxiliary (CCEA) volunteer groups have spent the past two years raising funds to purchase additional and replacement communication equipment. With the assistance of several anonymous donors through the Legacy Foundation and the fund raising projects, the groups were able to order their new equipment last month.

Whether out spotting storms, assisting with traffic control or conducting search and rescue operations, being in constant communication with each other and the command center is vital to the safety of the volunteer teams. For the last several years, the amount of available communication equipment has decreased due to age and the growth of the groups. Through the formation of a non-profit organization (CCERV, Inc.) by the combined emergency management volunteer groups, the effort to raise money for radios began in earnest.

CCEA, familiarly known as the storm spotters, was able to purchase five Public Service radios to replace several old radios and provide equipment to newly trained volunteers. CCEA members usually have mobile radios in their vehicles for wider range as they follow storms throughout the county. They use the hand held radios when out of their vehicles to assess damage or assist with traffic control.

The CERT volunteers were able to purchase eight radios with microphones in addition to 10 Family Radio Service (FRS) radios. The FRS radios are used for work in smaller areas. Since volunteers work in teams with a designated team leader, they are able to communicate with the team leader by using the less expensive equipment. The team leader, in turn, is able to communicate with the command center through the use of the more powerful PS radio that is also compatible with law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel.

A number of the volunteers now hold ham radio licenses. When communication towers become inoperable and phone lines are down, the ham radio is often the only form of communication left. As a result, the volunteer groups are encouraging their members to take the course and get a license. CERT and CCEA purchase the manuals used in the course by their members. The only expense to the volunteer is the cost of the test.

Through additional fund raising, the groups hope to continue updating and expanding their communication equipment. They also want to increase the number of volunteers with a ham radio license and, possibly, add an inventory of ham radio equipment to the department. When working in emergency situations created either by nature or man, the safety of the volunteers is important and the best way to ensure their safety is through training and communication.

Community Outreach and Education

2016 CERT Class

The 2016 CERT Class members began their training on February 15th and celebrated completing the 24-hour course on March 12th by participating in the final exercise. Since the class was relatively small this year, many CERT “veterans” took the opportunity to attend the classes to refresh their skills. Once again, instructors for the majority of the classes were seasoned first responders: Chad Mayberry and Brad Klein, Winfield FD/EMS; Ken Corcran, Arkansas City Fire/EMS. Also assisting with the classes were CERT members Brian Cunningham and Steve Williams. The final exercise, held at the First Christian Church, was led by Williams. A huge thanks goes out to Allison Moon and the Southwestern College drama group for using their acting and moulage skills to create very realistic “disaster victims.”

CERT Lite

For the past few years, Lynne Hunter, Winfield High School teacher, has encouraged the students in her Health Class to participate in a CERT Lite (named so because its curriculum is geared toward teens) class. This fall, twelve students attended the three hour session in the Emergency Operations Center.

Jolan Csukas, Volunteer Coordinator, discussed the roles of all of the CCEM volunteer groups and outlined the training requirements for each. She also led the group through the emergency preparedness process including making a family plan, practicing the plan, building an emergency kit and becoming aware of potential community disasters apart from the natural disasters so familiar to all. Cameron Groom, Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary officer, defined the difference between a storm spotter and a storm chaser. He showed students the equipment in the storm center and explained the functions each person performs during the course of a disaster. Students were also shown, via PowerPoint, the various cloud formations that can eventually become a major storm in the area.

Health and Safety Fair

The annual Health and Safety Fair was held at the Winfield Fairgrounds from 9am to noon. All four volunteer groups set up information tables and answered questions about the responsibilities and requirements of their respective groups.



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, eleven winners were drawn. Other opportunities to win a radio were during the Health and Safety Fair in Winfield; the Arkansas City and Winfield Women’s Fairs; and Neighbor's Night Out events. The radios were made available through a FEMA grant and the sponsorship of Cowley County businesses.

Neighbor's Night Out

Due to extremely hot temperatures, Neighbor's Night Out events were held at different times around the county this year. Volunteer Coordinator and CERT member, Jolan, hosted a watermelon feed for her neighborhood. An emergency preparedness presentation was made and a drawing for a NOAA severe weather radio and other prizes was held. Volunteers assisted with traffic control at the Cornerstone Fellowship Community picnic on September 11th. CERT members Cheryl and Orlan Underwood assisted with the CERT information booth at the Arkansas City Night Out event in Wilson Park on October 3rd.

General Electric Family Safety Day

On Saturday, October 12th, General Electric hosted a Family Safety Day and invited Emergency Management to set up an information booth for the approximately 1,500 employees and family members attending the event. There were eight booths providing information to those in attendance. Between the hours of 9am and 2pm, a steady stream of visitors stopped by our table to ask questions and receive information about emergency preparation and planning and to learn about the volunteer groups associated with CCEM. Volunteers assisting with the event were Quinn Sayre, Cheryl and Orlan Underwood, Steve Williams and Jolan Csukas.

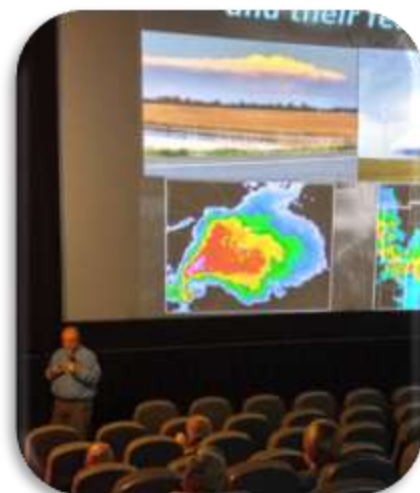


Storm Fury on the Plains

The annual storm spotter training was held at the Cowley Cinema 8 Theater near Strother Field on Tuesday, February 23, 2016. Two separate presentations were given by Chance Hayes, Warning Coordination Meteorologist and Brad Ketcham, Meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Wichita. The 2:30pm presentation had 100 attendees and the 6:30pm presentation had 130 attendees for a total of 230. There were 11 NOAA All-Hazard Weather Radios given away during that evening.

Advanced Spotter Training

The NWS held Advanced Spotter training classes in three areas located within their 26 county warning area. Cowley County was able to host one of those three and it was also held at the Cowley Cinema 8 on April 14th. This course brought in 114 interested participants.



**Brad Ketcham,
Meteorologist
NWS-Wichita**

KAKE TV and Dillon's Weather Radio Event

On May 31, 2016, 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 Arkansas City.

During this visit, they met with citizens, programmed new Weather Radios, re-programmed older Weather Radios and talked Severe Weather. To make the afternoon even more eventful, cold air funnels became visible between Arkansas City and Winfield causing some excitement among residents. Cold Air Funnels are described as high based weak circulation that occurs in a cool air mass. These funnels rarely reach the earth's surface although they can appear to be threatening.



**Photo of cold air funnel
courtesy of Morgan
Stradal**



**Photo of cold air funnel courtesy of
Angela Root**

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.

This year marked an above average year for tornado activity across the County. The first occurred at approximately 4:54pm about 2 miles north of US 166/271st Road junction (approximately 21 miles east of Arkansas City) on March 30. The tornado touchdown was brief and no damage was located giving it an EF-0 rating.

On October 6, Cowley County once again became the target of tornadic activity. The afternoon began with thunderstorms forming just east of Strother Field, an industrial area between Arkansas City and Winfield. The first alert came in the form of a Significant Weather Advisory at 2:01pm. At 2:08pm, a Severe Thunderstorm Warning was issued and at 2:12pm, the first of several Tornado Warnings were issued.

Middle of the day storms and warnings normally call for a lower turnout of spotters. However, due to the nature of this storm, many spotters, including volunteers, EM staff, fire department and law enforcement officials quickly surrounded this storm. The storm moved in a northeast direction before exiting Cowley County and moving into Elk County. Numerous funnels were reported and there were three areas that the tornado did touchdown. The first was east of Strother Field Airport approximately five miles south of Winfield and was rated at EF-0. The second was near the intersection of 172nd/191st Roads approximately 8 miles east and 1 mile south of Winfield. Damage to outbuildings occurred. An NWS assessment determined that tornado was on the ground for 100 yards with a width of 100 feet. It was rated at EF-1 with peak wind speeds of 99mph. The third tornado touchdown was recorded 2 miles west of Cambridge near US 160. Damage to trees occurred from this tornado. The NWS assessment concluded this storm was 1/2 mile long and 50 yards wide. It was rated an EF-1 with peak wind speeds of 94mph. While minor damage did occur, there were no injuries or fatalities.



**Photo of tornado southeast of Winfield
courtesy of Brian Stone, Cowley County
Emergency Management.**



**Photo of tornado west of Cambridge
courtesy of Ron Cannon, Burden
Police Department.**

Severe Weather statistics for 2016

EOC Activations



Time in the EOC



**Severe Thunderstorm
Watches**



**Severe Thunderstorm
Warnings**



**Severe Hail
Reports**



**Severe Wind
Reports**



Tornado Watches



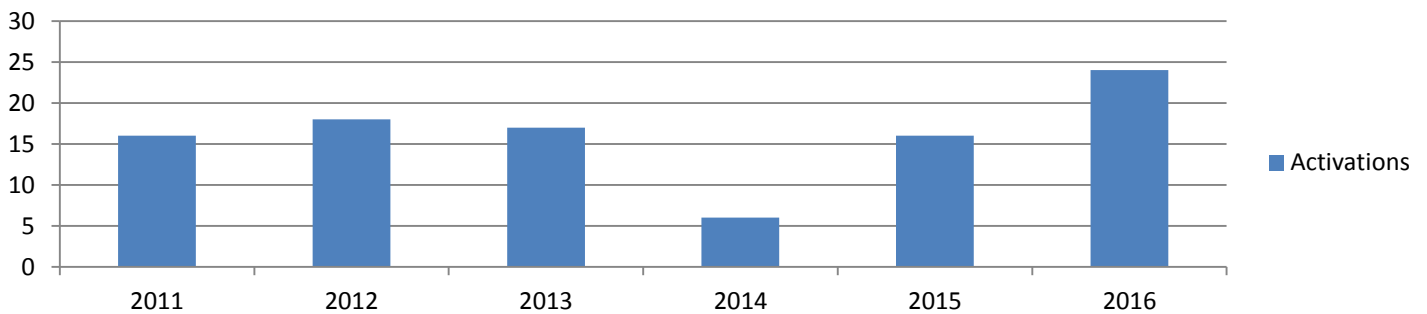
Tornado Warnings



Tornado Reports



Historical Severe Weather Activations by Year 2011-2016



Communications

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 2016. 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 February and March, and resulted in 8 new operators. Through classes held since 2011, the total number of new operators in Cowley County is now 70.

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 2016, the Cowley County Amateur Radio Club again worked together with Cowley County Emergency Management to participate in the event. The group tried a different location this year, and set up and operated from the Winfield City Lake using the Cowley County Mobile Command trailer for shelter and generator power. While conditions for the event this year weren't ideal, the event was considered a success. The group was able to contact other participants nationwide, and learned a few valuable lessons along the way.



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 2016, 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.

Public Assistance 101

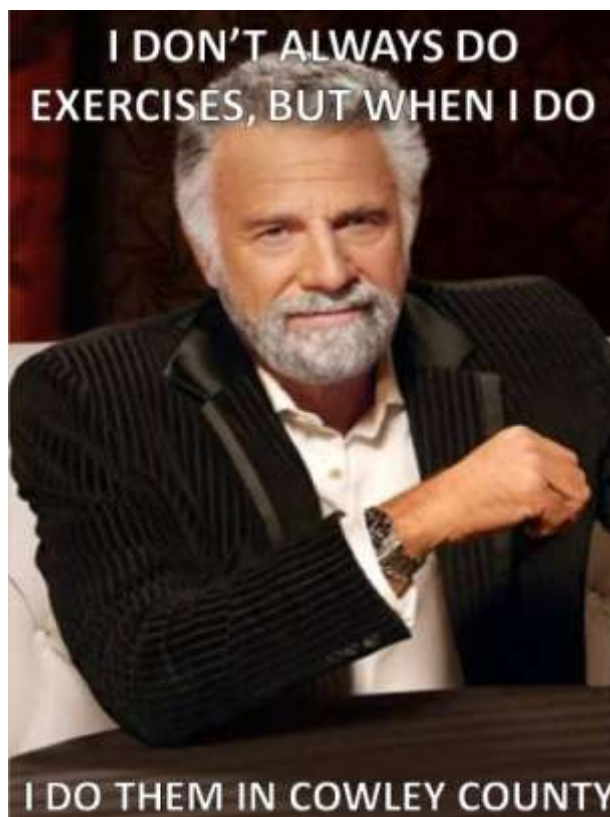
This year proved to be an active year for disasters and the declarations that follow (see the article on page 24). While the declaration process remains the same, FEMA's regulations and rules do change and therefore so do the interpretations of those rules. We all know that our County will experience a weather-related disaster in the future. With that, the Kansas Division of Emergency Management sent Stanley Smith, the State Coordinating Officer to visit with our jurisdictions about Public Assistance. The goals were to learn exactly what Public Assistance is, what is the declaration process, what do we do to prepare ourselves for an event and what do we do during the event. Representatives from the City of Arkansas City, and the townships of Bolton, Dexter, Fairview, Harvey, Rock Creek and Walnut were in attendance. The class focused on an awareness followed by lessons learned from previous disasters and examples of a successful declaration. It is our intention to hold another class during the 2017 year.

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.

Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan

Cowley County, in compliance with EMPG requirements, 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 came together to 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.



Drip, Drip, Drip

On September 1, 2016, Cowley County Emergency Management wrote and facilitated a tabletop exercise based off of Continuity of Operations (COOP) principles. COOP is a process of planning for potential limiting factors derived from natural and manmade disasters that would affect operations of a department. This process is paramount to ensure that community based services are still able to be provided to the citizens. The exercise was instrumental in not only testing existing plans, but also to give department leaders a better understanding of the process and identifying best practices that can be mirrored by other departments.

This exercise was the first time that directors of numerous departments were able to come together as a team and work toward finishing the ultimate goal of having a county level COOP plan. Those participating represented the following county departments: Treasurer, Clerk, Administration, Engineering, Register of Deeds, Extension Office, Appraiser, MIS/GIS, Emergency Communications, Emergency Management, District Court, Community Corrections, Youth Services, Sheriff, City-County Health Department, CDDO and Cowley First.



Drip, Drip, Drip COOP TTX being facilitated by John Stradal, Assistant Coordinator and Jason Kazban, EM Specialist for Cowley County.

Dust in the Wind

Kansas. Nothing lasts forever but the earth and sky. "Dust in the Wind."

On October 25, 2016, Cowley County Emergency Management conducted the annual functional exercise for the Cowley County Volunteer groups. This exercise was authored by Cowley County Emergency Management personnel. The exercise involved many community partners that provided a familiar voice on the radio via the simulation cell. Outside evaluators from Elk County and the KBI assisted in the overall evaluation process of the performance of the groups. Federal partners from the National Weather Service provided not only real world inputs during the authoring of the exercise but also participated in the simulation cell as well. This exercise is a valuable tool to allow the volunteers to respond to a disaster situation conducted in a secure learning environment.



Communication Room scenario being evaluated by Byrdee Miller of Elk County EM and David Falletti of the Kansas Bureau of Investigations.

SimCell operations for the Dust in the Wind Functional Exercise.



This exercise was a spearhead product that the teams had not been subjected to in the past. The exercise tested not only the Cowley County Emergency Auxiliary (CCEA), but also the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the newly formed Radio Auxiliary Civil Emergency Service (RACES). All of the organizations performed well and took away lessons that will only strengthen their already stellar performance and contributions to the community.

TRAINING

Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC)

On June 21 2016, Cowley County Emergency Management hosted a MARC training at the Physician's Pavilion in Winfield. The training was an introductory level training for a diverse field of stakeholders to help community preparedness, response and recovery efforts. This was the first training of this nature in the State of Kansas. It was sponsored by the South Central Kansas VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) and kfacilitated by the American Red Cross.

MARC training held in the Physician's Pavilion of the William Newton Hospital in Winfield.



Active Shooter Training

In May of 2016, of the Department of Homeland Security came to Winfield and provided a 4 hours course called: " Active Shooter: A Preparedness and Response Training." The class was well-attended by many members of the community including staff and volunteers from Emergency Management.



Active Shooter training held at Baden Square in Winfield.

WORKING WITH AND IN THE COMMUNITY

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.

Future Now: Finance (Formerly Reality U)

Future Now: Finance is an exercise geared towards sophomores that helps youth understand some of the "realities" involved in preparing for an employable future and adulthood. This program provides students the opportunity to learn about those choices that must be made as adults. It provides a valuable service to teens helping them learn to determine spending priorities and budget their money. The goals of Future Now: Finance 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 Future Now: Finance in the Arkansas City and Winfield High Schools. It is rewarding not only for the students, but also for the volunteers.

From Emergency Management and volunteer groups, Brian Stone, Taylor Dory, Cheryl Underwood, Crystal Merz and Wayne Howard assisted in Winfield and Brian Stone and Jason Kazban assisted in Arkansas City.

Facebook Forum and Twitter Talk

2016 was a year to try something new in the area of Social Media. This year we decided to use our two social media platforms to reach out and have active conversations between the citizens and EM staff. The Twitter Talk was held on March 15 and the Facebook Forum was held on March 16. While there was very little interaction during these events, we feel that spearheading an open conversation prior to any event, including severe weather, is important. This year's primary theme was Outdoor Warning Sirens.

Mobile Command

In 2008, with the use of Homeland Security Grant Funding, Cowley County was able to purchase a Mobile Command Center. That resource is available for use by agencies within Cowley County and even to those outside of the County. The center is used on a regular basis by law enforcement during the Walnut Valley Festival, the Cowley County Fair, the Dexter BBQ and other scheduled events. Since the purchase, it has also been used during the Creekstone fire, homicide investigations, manhunts and other events too numerous to mention. To date, the Mobile Command Center has been used for 2,542 hours supporting emergencies and community events.

PIO Working Group

Formed in 2016, the PIO Working Group is comprised of Public Information and Public Relations Officers from entities across Cowley County. Our mission is to provide accurate information in a timely manner to help citizens make informed decisions.

Day to day events show us the need to disseminate information in a routine manner. However; emergency events or disasters dictate an immediate response to the community. Together, this group is learning to share resources, how to disseminate accurate information quickly, yet still remain responsible for their own jurisdiction.

The group meets quarterly and has had special guests in three of the four meetings. On a local level, Marti Mutti from KSOK Radio addressed the group about the needs of the local radio station and how a local PIO can assist them. During a separate meeting, Erin McDaniel, PIO for the City of Newton, talked to the group and provided lessons learned from the Excel shooting incident that occurred in February. The last guest was Pilar Pedraza, reporter for KWCH Channel 12. She was able to address the group from her view and tell us how we can assist her. The goals of these meetings is to establish a rapport and trust with local and region media personnel.

The Cowley County PIO Working Group is only the second of its kind in the State of Kansas.



Erin McDaniel, PIO for the City of Newton, talks to the Cowley County PIO Working Group about lessons learned from the Excel shooting in Hesston, KS.

Pilar Pedraza, reporter for KWCH Channel 12 in Wichita, facilitates a discussion with the Cowley County PIO Working Group about interaction with the news media.



DISASTERS

2016 proved to be an active year for many of the local jurisdictions, Cowley County EM and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. When an event occurs, Cowley County EM works with the local entities to do a preliminary damage assessment. If the local assessment reaches a minimum threshold, then that information is forwarded to KDEM. KDEM collects the same data from all other affected jurisdictions to see if the State's threshold can be met. If that is the case, the KDEM can request, through the Governor's office, a Federal Declaration, which may provide Federal assistance to the local jurisdictions.

May 22-31, 2016

Severe storms and flooding affected much of the area during the dates of May 22-31, 2016. Representatives from local jurisdictions spent hours calculating potential losses and damages. By time of submission, Cowley County had estimated losses in the amount of \$533,000. After being submitted to FEMA, the eligible costs were reduced to \$33,000. Even so, the State requested a Major Disaster Declaration on behalf of all jurisdictions and the State of Kansas. On August 3, 2016, FEMA denied the request. On August 31, 2016, the Governor of the State of Kansas filed an appeal to FEMA about their August 3 decision. Unfortunately, the appeal was denied as well.

September 2-12, 2016

Severe storms and flooding once again affected Cowley County in early September. A local disaster declaration was signed and Cowley County participated in a Preliminary Damage Assessment on September 28, 2016. Local jurisdictions continued to assess and document damages and losses for another week. On October 20, 2016, the President declared a major disaster declaration for the State of Kansas. Eleven counties, including Cowley County, were made eligible for public assistance funding through FEMA. On November 3, 2016, eligible entities from Cowley County met with representatives from KDEM and FEMA to begin the application process. A total of seven different jurisdictions are still working through the reimbursement process. Since the process is not complete, a final tally of reimbursements is not available. However, the preliminary estimates put damages near \$250,000.00.



Photos of flooded roadways in northwest Cowley County courtesy of Paul MacKay, Maple Township.



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 situation reports, bridge work, road closings, weekly preparedness tips and special days. To visit: <http://www.cowleycounty.org/em>



Cowley County EM has 597 Twitter followers and has sent a total of 4,431 tweets to our followers.



Cowley County EM has 3,131 Facebook likes. The top cities with the most followers are Arkansas City (1,009) and Winfield (929). The most popular time to view by our followers is 8:00pm. Posts on two dates generated the most reaches: October 6th at 4:48pm (Funnel Photo) reached 5,909 viewers and October 6th at 4:54pm (Tornado Photo) reached 5,739 viewers.

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