

OKEM

Oklahoma Emergency Management Association

April, 2003

Quarterly Newsletter

Drills & Training “Pay-off” After Twister Hits Washington County



Washington County’s Mobile Command Center (shown above) was set up within minutes after a tornado cut a path thru parts of Washington County

A tornado ripped through the rural area of Washington County on Easter Eve between Dewey and Copan leaving approximately \$1.7 in property damages, several families homeless, and others left to pick up the pieces of their belongings scattered along its F2 strength path. There were a total of 56 structures damaged or destroyed, including four businesses. Numerous barns, sheds, feed storage tanks, and oil field and farm equipment lay scattered among the fallen limbs and uprooted trees along its path.

“We learned that exercises, planning, and mitigation does pay off. Our Incident Command System (ICS) worked well. The weather radar and spotter reports coordinated and provided very good coverage allowing good warning lead-time for our residents.

In the Copan area, residents had about 18 minutes of warning, in the Dewey area about 14 minutes, and in the Wann area, 12 minutes. The OK First and Baron radars along with Weathertap provided great data,” Kary D. Cox, Director of Bartlesville/Washington County Emergency Management explained.

Cox continued, “Our local radio stations announced the warnings by simulcast on their 3 stations with live spotter reports and tornado warnings. We recently held a damage assessment class that did help the assessments go smoothly. The mobile command center was placed at the damage site and worked well. The large van was easily spotted in the field and made it easy for responders to locate command. It worked as an information center and provided us the ability to establish order very quickly.”

“Some of the lessons we have learned are: The initial response was slightly disorganized but quickly recovered with on-scene command being established. The fact that the damage occurred in remote areas made it difficult to find open spots large enough for staging responders, command and media.

The lack of a universal system to mark searched properties when all the structures are gone, was a problem. Our assessment teams used survey ribbon, with a similar system being implemented county-wide for searches,” Cox continued.

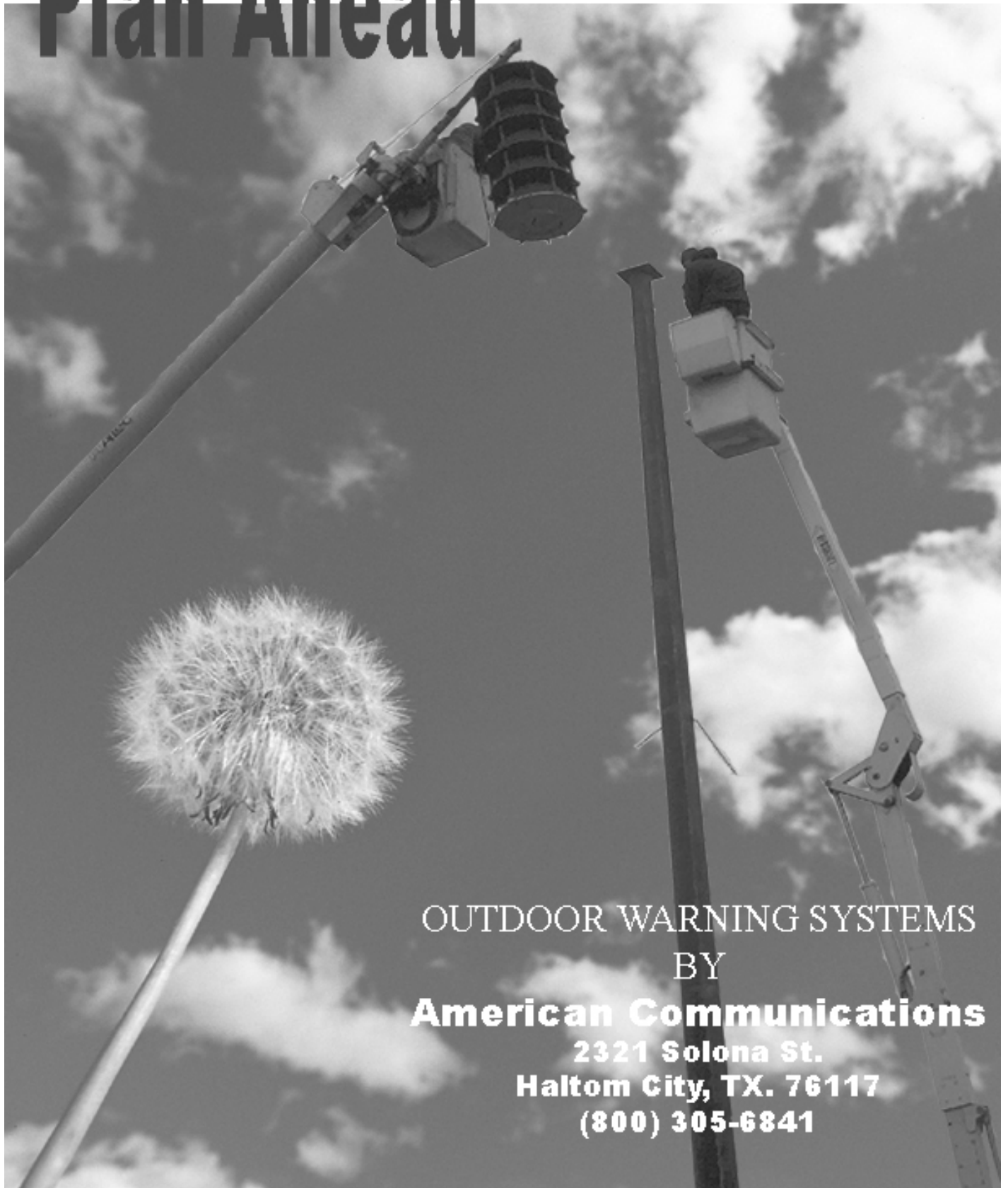
“Initially, we were unable to identify all the structures with residents due to some of the homes being far off the beaten path. The new Global Information System (GIS) system we are working on in our county now, will help tremendously. Plans are to have portable and on-scene access to the established county-wide, GIS system,” Cox concluded.

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Plan Ahead



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Overview of FEMA Citizen Corps Grants

(taken from IAEM Bulletin January, 2003)

In Fiscal Year 2002 (FY02) FEMA is providing \$21 million as grants to states to support the formation of Citizens Corps Councils and the oversight and outreach responsibilities of these councils, and to expand CERT Training across the county. CERT training puts in place a volunteer response force that can supplement the emergency and disaster response capabilities with a community.

FEMA's goal is to have 400,000 community members trained in the CERT program over the next two years. Training includes seven three-hour sessions: disaster preparedness; fire suppression; disaster medical operations; light search and rescue; team organization and disaster psychology and final exercise.

In FY02 FEMA also retained \$4 million for CERT program development, to include public education materials, CERT instructor guides and student manuals, and Web site support. The Citizen Corps grants require a 75 percent pass-through to local governments and there are no cost-share or match requirements.

For additional informational and guidance on Citizen Corps Council/DERT funding, contact your FEMA Regional Office or the State Citizen Corps Point of Contact available at www.citizen corps.gov.



(from Rick Smith WCM, NWSFO, Norman, OK)

It's time for many of the StormReady communities in the area to renew their recognition. It's a relatively easy process but the renewals must be done before the end of the year for those who are due for renewal this year.

We've also received several applications, either by mail, by fax or via the new on-line application process. We will be reviewing these applications soon and scheduling site visits.

State EM's take message to Capital

(Michelann Ooten, Public Information Manager Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management)

On Feb. 10, emergency managers from across the state took their message of disaster preparedness to the State Capitol. The Oklahoma Emergency Management Association hosted the Second Annual Emergency Management Day at the Capitol, which was designed to deliver discussion on the response, recovery, preparedness and mitigation efforts of emergency managers.

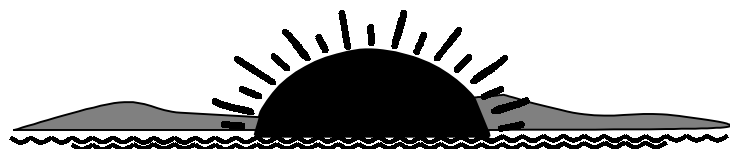
The event began with a briefing by Albert Ashwood, Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management director, and Kary Cox, OEMA president. Then nearly 100 emergency managers joined their representatives and senators at the OEMA Legislative Reception in the Capitol Rotunda. Discussions focused on support for House Bill 1512, which works to increase the standards for emergency managers.

The local emergency managers explained how in the last couple of years alone, they have helped Oklahomans during ice storms, wildfires, floods, tornadoes, hazardous materials incidents, a school shooting, drought conditions, and the I-40 bridge collapse. Moreover, state lawmakers were told how the efforts of emergency managers have delivered more than \$315 million in federal disaster aid to Oklahoma in the last four years alone.

The event was part of this year's Emergency Management Week, which was proclaimed by Gov. Brad Henry.

More Radios for McIntosh County

Harry Trottier tells the OKEM that "McIntosh County just received a mitigation grant that enables us to put NOAA Weather Alert Radios in every public building in the County. This includes every fire department, police department, community center, library, hospital, nursing home, County barns, and County Health Department, City Halls and State Park gatehouses. Since we are a Storm Ready County, all of the public schools already have them in place. We will be installing 50 weather alerts soon.



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New Storm Season, New Storm Products

(Rick Smith WCM, Norman Office)

We have started an on-line quarterly newsletter designed primarily for storm spotters, emergency managers and cooperative observers. The winter and spring editions are available on our website:

www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/newsletter.

Watch for new products and services this storm season. We plan to continue our graphical outlooks and short-term forecasts to provide you with a graphical representation of the what, why, where and when of severe weather.

We will also be providing additional services to help you stay on top of developing weather situations. The new Regional Weather Discussion and Significant Weather Advisory will be available on the Weather Radio and on the Internet. Both products will help give more information on what to expect.

We also plan new things for Weather Radio this season, including live severe weather briefings on significant weather days

Custer County conducts Drill

The threat of terrorism is on everyone's mind since September 11, 2001. No one is more aware of the need for preparation and planning in the event of an emergency than the County departments of Emergency Management and the Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC).

The Custer County offices decided to take a pro-active roll and set up a mock emergency on November 2, 2002, to test the effectiveness of their emergency plan. The one day event participants included the fire department, police, sheriff's office, two local hospitals, a medical evacuation unit (helicopter) from Oklahoma City, two local nursing Colleges, the local national guard and a team of volunteers from Environmental Management, a local environmental company specializing in emergency response.

Custer County Civil Emergency Management Director, Michael Galloway, indicated "the whole aim of the drill is to test the county emergency preparedness plan which has been updated in view of Homeland Security concerns post 9-11-01".

Mr. Galloway was particularly grateful for Environmental Management's participation. "It is not often an experienced private company will devote the resources to assist with this type of training, but Environmental Management "pulled out all of the stops". They brought their emergency response trailer and a complete crew. In addition to Environmental Management's assigned responsibility, constructing and operating a portable mass decontamination unit, that the County was able to draw upon their experience throughout the drill.

Mike Holder, Environmental Management's Project Manager for the event, was pleased with the response and proud to have been a contributor to the success of the drill

Mr. Terry Bobo, President, of Environmental Management stated, "He is always willing to participate in these type of exercises". As a governor appointed member of the Oklahoma Hazardous Material Emergency Response Commission (OHMERC) and Chairman of the Logan County, LEPC for many years; Mr. Bobo certainly understands the value of training conducted at the local level.



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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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E-MAIL ADDRESS - BUSINESS _____

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TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: () DELEGATE () AFFILIATE () NEW () RENEWAL

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Mail application and membership dues to: Jennifer Duff, Secretary, P.O. Box 1448, Shawnee, OK 74802
Membership Dues are \$25.

Dues will be billed every July and should reach us by August 1st.

ABOUT OEMA

Because emergencies transcend jurisdiction boundaries, intergovernmental coordination and cooperation are essential. The objective of The OEMA is to assist local, state and Federal agencies in the establishment and maintenance of effective emergency management Organizations.

We strive to advance the professional standards of persons engaged in emergency management through professional certification programs, legislative review, information exchange and educational programs.

SERVICES

The OKEM is a quarterly newsletter published by the OEMA that focuses on activities of the Association, emergency response news, legislative issues, jurisdictional activities and professional resources.

OEMA conference, workshops and committees provide direct access to current issues and trends in emergency management, helping Participants enhance their roles in emergency management.

Coordination and communication are maintained with a network of allied associations and organizations that deal with all aspect of comprehensive emergency management.

MEMBERSHIP

Delegate membership is available to all persons who are professional engaged in a civil defense or emergency management agency of The State of Oklahoma or its political subdivisions.

Affiliate membership is available to all persons interested in fostering emergency management programs with Oklahoma.

OKEM Editors Note:

To insure that you get your newsletter in a timely manner, the mailing address is derived from the address that you list on your membership form. If you do not receive an OKEM please contact the Association's secretary as listed above to confirm that the address on your membership form is the correct mailing address. If an additional address is required for OKEM Newsletter mailings, please advise the Associations secretary of the same.

Task Force Formed

A meeting was held on April 1, 2003 at the Creek County Fairgrounds to introduce the formation of the Oklahoma Disaster Task Force. The Task Force was formed as direct result of the Interstate 40 Bridge collapse near Webbers Falls Oklahoma in May of last year and is designed to provide assistance to Oklahoma communities in the aftermath of large-scale emergencies or disasters.

Officials from several agencies have been meeting over the past year to develop the task force and form a structure and protocols under which the task force will operate. One of the most important items to come out of the task force is a software database developed by Ronnie Goad of Checotah EM and Harry Trotter of McIntosh County EM that will aid in resource management and documentation. This database is currently available to all Oklahoma Emergency Managers on the OEMA web site; www.okem.us. EM's must login and be assigned a password and user name. The database is a secure site and accessed only by approved individuals to maintain integrity and security of the resources.

The task force is also working on wireless broadband capabilities as well as other communication resources.

The goal of the task force is to be able to provide most any type of assistance to an affected community including all areas of incident management, safety, assessments, logistics, public information, and stress management and welfare of responders and victims alike.

Agencies involved in the task force to date include; several local Emergency Management agencies, several municipal fire departments, local police and sheriff departments, State Medical Examiners office, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, OSBI, and others.

For more information about the Oklahoma Disaster Task Force, or to request assistance from the task force contact; Harry Trotter, McIntosh County EM, Kary Cox, Washington County EM, B.J. Pope, Creek County EM, Scott Evans, Oklahoma Medical Examiners Office in Tulsa, Brett Bailey, Tulsa PD, or Steve Paladino, ODCM.

State, Local Anti-Terror Aid Earmarked



Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge

By JONATHAN D. SALANT, Associated Press Writer

States and localities will receive \$1.5 billion to help pay for the costs of increasing security during the war with Iraq, Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge said Tuesday, April 29, 2003.

The funds are in addition to \$1.6 billion in federal funds already going to state and local governments. "You cannot secure the homeland from Washington, D.C.," Ridge said.

"You can only secure it from the hometown."

During the Iraq war, the government raised the color-coded warning system from yellow to orange and undertook Operation Liberty Shield to try to prevent a terrorist attack on American soil. The stepped-up security procedures were in place from March 17 to April 17.

The plan involved the participation of all levels of government and private industry, and included random searches of cars at airports, stepped up security at bridges and landmarks, greater security at nuclear power facilities and petroleum and chemical plants, and increased scrutiny of feedlots, stockyards and food storage areas.

Local officials have criticized the Bush administration for what they say is a lack of financial help for increased security measures.

Ridge also has called on Congress to change the formula for dispersing hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal aid, which now go to states on a population basis. The homeland security secretary, a former Pennsylvania governor, said the formula should also account for population density, the presence of national landmarks, critical public works projects, and the likelihood of an attack.



Beaver County is "Stormy Ready"! National Weather Service officials from the Amarillo office honored Beaver County as "Storm Ready". The honor was made possible by the efforts of Beaver County Emergency Management Dept. Beaver County was designated "Storm Ready" on September 25, 2002, and is the first to receive the honor in the region.

Weather Lab

Weather Information Services

Weather Stations:

Weather Lab sells *Davis Precision Weather Instruments* and many of the accessories including the “WeatherLink” hardware and software that can connect your Davis Weather Station to your PC. Get the latest in affordable weather technology with the New Wireless Vantage Pro. Pickup a Davis Catalogue and choose the Weather station that’s right for you. (Stations measure barometric pressure, temperature, humidity, rainfall, wind speed and direction, and much more. Vantage Pro weather stations offer forecasting, on-screen graphing, and much more. Quick view icons show the forecast at a glance—sunny, partly sunny, cloudy, rain or snow—while a moving ticker-tape display gives more details.)



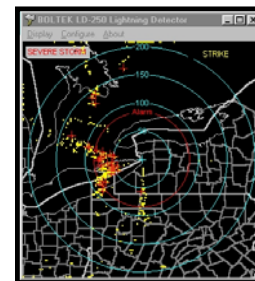
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The “Talking Weather Station”:

One of the best solutions for a small city and limited budgets. This “telephone system” is a simple and flexible answering machine. You can use a 486-66 pc to answer the phone while the E.M. is away. It can be programmed to answer with a message, give the time and when connected to a Davis Weather Station purchased from Weather Lab it can give the temperature and even a forecast that you can record yourself! But there are many more functions available, just ask to find out more or call to hear what it can do. 580-762-9999 or 580-363-3444.

THE SCOUT:

This is one of the most popular products from Weather Lab. This is a weather station that can be mounted on a truck, car or most any vehicle. It’s portable and accurate. Great for storm spotters and storm chasers alike.



For more information on the above products and more not shown, contact:
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