

Crawford County Office of Emergency Services

April 2009 - Newsletter

903 Diamond Park – Meadville, PA 16335

Editor- Monica Skeens

UPCOMING EVENTS

April

8th – VEMSACC Meeting @ Cochranon
Fire Dept.

20th – Crawford County Fireman's Assoc–
Cochranon VFD

May

13th – VEMSACC Meeting @ EMMCO West

18th - Crawford County Fireman's Assoc–
Hydetown VFD

June

10th – VEMSACC Meeting @ CAVAS

15th - Crawford County Fireman's Assoc–
Jamestown Fireman's Club

July

1st - OES no longer asking for EMS
Preference

8th – VEMSACC Meeting @ Summit (Gibson
Park

20th - Crawford County Fireman's Assoc–
Vernon Central

August

VEMSACC – Crawford County Fairgrounds
Crawford County Fireman's Assoc– - NO
Meeting

September

9th - VEMSACC Meeting @ Centerville FD

21st - Crawford County Fireman's Assoc–
Springboro VFD

EMS Preference Notice

This is a reminder to all ambulance services: Crawford County OES will no longer ask callers if they have a preference or membership with a specific ambulance service as of July 1, 2009. Therefore you may want to make your members aware to request your service when making a call to 911.

Grass Fire Prevention

Spring 2009

By Pete Albaugh

The season is upon us already. Spring is here and people are cleaning up and we are off to another round of unnecessary responses to people fires or as I like to call them no brainer fires. Most if not all of these fires could be prevented with a little common sense. People have to understand the risk, not only for themselves but also to the firemen who must respond to put out the fire. We (the firemen) need to make sure and let them know it's not acceptable to have fires that threaten the community their neighbors and the firemen.

Some things to consider are what are they burning, is there regulation in your district that says what they can burn and when can they burn it. My department has had what I would call frequent flyers or people who just don't care. Every year they have a grass fire because they want to clean up or they use an unattended barrel to burn who knows what any old time regardless of the weather conditions. Here are some ways we have to combat the dangerous practice of no brainer fires.

CRAWFORD COUNTY OES CONTINUES EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

By Kevin Nicholson 911 Director

The DEP says you can't burn and they have a list of things such as shingles, tires, oil, hazardous materials, paint cans, plastic etc. So have the Township pass a resolution that says you can't burn without a burn permit issued by the Fire Department. Now you have a way to control approved burning. If what they want to burn is on the DEP list, tell them to get a dumpster and put it in the landfill. You now get to see what they want to burn and advise them how to burn and when plus other special conditions, no burning after dark and notify the Chief the day before the intended burn. You could require a fire engine be on site and then schedule the burn to suit the weather and crew availability. Finally if a permit is issued the fire must be attended at all times, no light it and leave it. The Township could have a clean-up day so people have a place to get rid of things they might otherwise burn.

Get the message out by actually talking to the news media when they call to ask about a fire, always be ready with a statement which includes why people should not be burning and the need to get a permit. You could ask the Township to include this information in a newsletter which could be inserted with the real estate tax bills. Put a notice on the fire department sign.

This is about education of the public and the job never ends. I have a sample burn permit and would discuss this in more detail with anyone interested. My department has been able to reduce the number of grass and garbage fires using all of the above.

Pete Albaugh
Assistant Fire Chief
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Over the past six months Crawford County 911 has continued to upgrade its equipment with several projects, which replaced outdated equipment. With the help of funding from Act 56, which is the states surcharge on cell phones, the upgrades were accomplished.

Probably the most significant project was the replacement of the department's Uninterrupted Power Source (UPS). The unit purchased from Liebert Inc. replaces a 1991 model, which was installed when the 911 Center was first built. The UPS performs two duties; first it protects all equipment in the department from power surges and it also instantly takes over electrical service in the event of a power outage until a generator starts and provides power. The new unit, which was installed in one day by Cox and Kanyuck Electric, and during the changeover dispatchers staffed both the 911 Center and its backup facility in case of issues with the project. There were no problems and the changeover to the new UPS was completed in the projected amount of time.

Another recent upgrade completed was the replacement and upgrade of the tape logger, which records all phone calls and radio traffic in and out of the 911 Center. The new unit manufactured by Voice Print replaces a model, which had been in-service for five years. Five years is the normal life expectancy of a tape logger. The project was contracted and completed by MOBILCOM. The upgrade provides 911 with the newest in software and hardware technology. Recordings are used for legal proceedings, Quality Assurance, and it has the capability of emailing calls for both purposes.

Also upgraded were the 911 calltaking computers. Both the hardware and the newest version of software were upgraded. Since the inception of 911 Crawford County has used the CML calltaking software out of Canada. Approximately every three years the hardware

is upgraded and software upgrades are routinely completed when available. Windstream technicians completed this project including all of the hardware changes and programming of software.

The last recent upgrade was to the departments network clock. The new unit installed by MOBILCOM links the department's radio consoles, tape logger, and Computer Aided Dispatch servers to one clock, which is controlled by a satellite link. The clock keeps all of the equipment locked in on the same time, which provides for accurate record keeping and documentation.



New UPS Unit



Operations "Whirlwind Sunrise" Exercise

By Allen Clark

Each year local, county, and state agencies participate in a Severe Weather Exercise. The exercise scenario is designed to allow all local agencies and the county to experience significant weather problems from severe thunderstorms. Crawford County OES/911 issued a Tornado Warning shortly after the National Weather Service in Cleveland issued a Tornado Warning at 0900. The scenario continued with a tornado touching down in the Conneaut Lake Area and the Titusville Area. Numerous businesses and residences sustained minor to destroyed damages. Knowledge Center web-based software was used by EOC Staff from different locations within Crawford County by OES EOC Staff. Over 1,639 log entries were recorded from the participants using this system. Crawford County 911 Center reported 86% participation by public safety agencies in reporting their involvement via radio which is an increase from last year. Amateur Radio Operators established back-up communications with the hospitals and with PEMA Western Region Office. A Joint Information Center was established between OES and Meadville Medical Center public information officers who discussed the exercise to Cheryl Scott from WSEE TV. Titusville Area Hospital evacuated portions of their hospital and set up a command post with Titusville EMA. Local Emergency Management Coordinators John Bauer from Cochranton Borough and Bill Coston from East Mead Township assisted in the County Emergency Operations Center with damage assessment and resource tracking. Ever year this exercise is conducted and new lessons learned are improved upon year after year.





Don Bovard, Jim Cihon, Phil Baranyai, and Bill Coston



Cheryl Scott from WSEE and Joe Galbo, OES PIO, and Duane Koller, MMC PIO

Future OES Mobile Command Bus

By Allen Clark

Through cooperation between the Crawford Area Transportation Authority (CATA) and the Crawford County Local Emergency Planning Committee and Crawford County Commissioners, a twenty-nine passenger bus was purchased by the County. A bus committee was formed to go and review other mobile command and communication vehicles in the region and to spec out the remodeling this bus to meet the needs of Crawford County public safety agencies. Homeland Security Funding will be applied for to pay for the remodeling of the bus. Once completed, this unit will be able to provide emergency

communications, mobile command post, and serve as a rehab unit for any public safety agency that requests it. The bus is expected to be completed and in service late. The bus will replace the Crawford County HazMat Trailer that is currently being utilized. The mobile unit will be quicker to respond with, easier to maneuver, provide more capabilities, and provide immediate communication, heat, and air conditioning while en-route to the emergency scene.



Future OES Mobile Command Bus

Note from Editor

As always I hope you enjoy the newsletter. Keep in mind we would love to hear from your services and include your ideas and articles in our newsletter each quarter. Please feel free to suggest ideas for the newsletter and if you are willing to write an article on a specific topic it would be greatly appreciated. We would love to hear from any of the agencies we work with fire, police, ems or otherwise. Please feel free to email me at mskeens@co.crawford.pa.us