



MINERAL VIEW NEWSLETTER

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HOMELAND SECURITY & 911

Mineral County, West Virginia

April 22, 2008

Issue 6

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MEETING DATES

LEPC – July 10
2ND Thursday 6 PM
Jan, Apr, July, Oct
County Health Dept

911 ADVISORY BOARD – July 17
3RD Thurs 7:30 PM
Jan, Apr, July, Oct
County Court House

FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION
2ND Wednesday
7:30 PM monthly.
Location varies

AMBULANCE AUTHORITY – June 10
2ND Tuesday, 7 PM
Feb, Apr, June, Aug,
Oct, Dec.
Location varies

COUNTY COMMISSION
2ND Tues. – 9:30 AM
4TH Tues. – 4:30 PM
Monthly
County Court House

NIMSCAST – What you should know...

The NIMS Compliance Assistance Support Tool (NIMSCAST) is designed as FEMA’s web-based self-assessment instrument for State, territorial, tribal, and local governments to evaluate and report their jurisdictions achievement of all NIMS implementation activities released since 2004. The NIMSCAST is designed for the emergency management community as a comprehensive self-assessment support tool. Using the NIMSCAST will assist the emergency management community to comply with NIMS requirements, as determined by the National Integration Center.

Additionally, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) requires Federal Departments and agencies to make adoption of the NIMS by State and local organizations a condition for Federal preparedness assistance (ie: application, approval, and audit of grant funding). The NIMSCAST facilitates the adoption of the NIMS by State, local, and tribal governments in order to meet the requirement established in HSPD-5. Further information about NIMSCAST may be researched at www.fema.gov/nimscast/index.



The Office of Emergency Management has established a NIMSCAST account for Mineral County. All of the information available to OEM for Mineral County has been entered. Individual response agencies should provide certification to OEM of their individual NIMS compliance, so that OEM can complete and update the NIMSCAST account. The OEM Director has been recognized by the Mineral County Commission as the NIMS coordinator for Mineral County. Any questions or concerns should be addressed to OEM Director Marc Bashoor at 304-788-1821.

Grants – Trial & Success

The grant application process CAN at times be considered a “pain-in-the-rear”, although a necessary “pain” no less. Many people have already learned through “trial and error”, so we challenge you to use other peoples’ trials as a path to your grant success.

Many of Mineral County’s emergency response partners have great success stories to tell. Fire and EMS Departments have purchased firefighting and breathing air equipment along with fire engines and specialty rescue apparatus. The Sheriff’s Department has received grant funding for new vehicles, laptops, and other law enforcement items. The OEM has been successful in obtaining nearly \$900,000 worth of grant funding over the course of the past two years. The vast majority of that funding has been related to a communications tower at the Pinnacle radio site. This site will allow Mineral County to better consider future radio system improvements, including the potential migration onto the State’s trunked radio system (see P-25 & narrowband story on page 2).

Most grant denials are based in two areas; (1) incomplete or ineligible applications, and (2) inadequate justification to prove the “worth” or demonstrable benefit of the potential grant award. Number 1 can usually be avoided by CAREFULLY reading the grant rules and THOROUGHLY completing applications, while number 2 can be avoided by making contact with those that have the success stories to tell. While they probably won’t write the grant for you, they will most likely help you understand their path to success. For more information on line, go to www.grants.gov.

“SAFE DIGGING MONTH” – May 2008

Everybody, that’s ever built anything, has heard about “Miss Utility”. Miss Utility used to be different local or 800 numbers, depending on what state or locale you were working in. That has changed, with 811 being the new number you should call before you begin any digging project. Building a deck? Planting a tree? Installing a mailbox? May has been dubbed “Safe Digging Month”, so make sure you call 811 before you dig! The new, federally-mandated national "Call Before You Dig" number, 811 was created to help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. People digging often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked due to concerns about project delays, costs and previous calls about other projects. These assumptions can be life-threatening.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

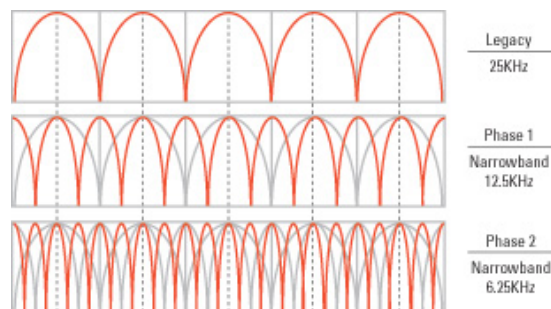
Every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees or shrubs. If you hit an underground utility line while digging, you can harm yourself or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially be responsible for fines and repair costs.

One easy phone call to 811 starts the process to get your underground utility lines marked for free. When you call 811 from anywhere in the country, your call will be routed to your local One Call Center. Local One Call Center operators will ask you for the location of your digging job and route your call to affected utility companies. Your utility companies will then send a professional locator to your location to mark your lines within a few days. Once your underground lines have been marked, you will know the approximate location of your utility lines and can dig safely, because knowing what's below protects you and your family. Always call 811 before starting any digging project!

P-25 & FREQUENCY NARROW-BANDING

Project 25 (P-25) and the Federal Communications Center (FCC) narrow-banding mandate are two issues that will be affecting many emergency service agency communications systems for years to come. P-25 is a voluntary standard set by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) that stewards a conversion to digital communications amongst public safety communications systems. The project is configured in 3 phases that serve as the standard for mandatory conversion to the FCC narrow-banding requirement (see below). The three phases include; (Phase 0) integration of existing analog systems with new digital equipment, (Phase 1) digital conversion to 12.5 kHz spectrum spread, and (Phase 2) conversion to a 6.5 kHz spectrum spread. Narrow-banding information is in the next paragraph. For more information on Project 25, visit www.apco911.org/frequency/documents/03-20-06-PublishFinalVersionofReformattedP25SoR.pdf.

The narrow-banding FCC REQUIREMENT will have a tremendous impact on our communications systems including the required re-licensing and re-programming of all of our VHF radio licenses and equipment, no later than January 1, 2013. We are beyond the, “it will never happen” stage, indeed we have witnessed other jurisdictions struggle with the realities of their re-licensing process. The two main goals of the narrow-banding requirement are to (1) double the number of available frequencies, and (2) to reduce the amount of interference between frequencies. Number 1 is relatively easy to achieve by “squeezing” the frequency spectrum to the 12.5kHz mentioned above (see chart to the right). The reduction in frequency interference will be achieved by subsequently reducing the authorized transmission power of the re-licensed frequencies. The reduction in transmission power will automatically reduce the ability of the repeaters and transmitters to achieve levels that traditionally have created interference between competing licensees. Although the chart above shows the “Phase 2” 6.25 kHz narrow-banding, this phase does not have a requirement deadline, nor a mandate for implementation at this time. So the long and the short for Mineral County is the following: (1) All of our VHF frequencies (except paging) will need to be re-licensed and all of our repeaters and radios will need to be re-programmed. (2) All user equipment must be P-25 (digital) and 12.5 kHz narrow-band capable for conversion NO LATER than January 1, 2013 (the process will have to start long before this). (3) All user equipment will have to be reprogrammed. No wide band equipment can be sold after 2010.



Mineral County OEM will be examining the benefits and issues of potential migration to the State Interoperability Radio Project (IRP). IF appropriate grant funding can be obtained, user equipment would be purchased and installed by Mineral County. The IRP is a trunked-UHF system, currently being evaluated in several neighboring jurisdictions. (More next issue.)

EDITORS CORNER

911 Center – The \$1.33 million construction contract has been awarded to Harbell Construction out of Cumberland Maryland. Harbell began site work in the middle of April, with project completion expected around December 2008. An additional \$500,000 is budgeted for funding Mineral County’s first Computer Aided Dispatch System and the related equipment and materials necessary to bring the new center on-line. Rumors of the centers’ demise ran rampant after the untimely aircraft accident and death of the property’s original owner, Rob Kessel. Since that time, the Kessel family has graciously donated the property to Mineral County, with the Mineral County Building Commission financing and owning the facility. The official “Ground Breaking” took place today, with the Kessel family in attendance. Our next edition WILL have a progress picture.

Ambulance Authority (MCAA) – The County Commission appointed several new MCAA members. Congratulations to Judy Young, Linda Valentine, James Koon, and Lewis Kitzmiller. The OEM looks forward to continue working with the MCAA.

MINERAL VIEW – HIGHLIGHTS

Sharon Montgomery – 911 Training Coordinator



Sharon Montgomery is one of Mineral County’s original part-time dispatchers, having been hired in 1991. Sharon acknowledges that not much has changed with the 911 Center in the 17 years she’s worked there, except for the people, a computer here or there, and the call volumes. As Mineral County’s population has increased, so has the 911 traffic, especially in the law enforcement area. When Sharon was hired, the Center worked one dispatcher per shift, with part-timers filling in on relief shifts – Sharon was assigned the “cat-eye” (overnight) shift. Sharon went full time in 1993.

Prior to being hired by Mineral County, Sharon was a stay-at-home mom with daughters Ashley and Erica, while she also assisted her husband, Randy, tend to their farming operations at A&E Farms (daughters initials). A&E Farms continues to raise beef cattle today, although the tough economic times make it more and more difficult to continue farming.

In 1995, Sharon took over the employee training responsibility, while continuing to work full-time on a shift. Sharon served as Chief Dispatcher from 1997 to 1999. Sharon continues today with training and scheduling responsibilities, serving as second-in-charge at the 911 Center. Although she continues on a full-time shift, the duties and responsibilities of today and those coming with the new Center will probably necessitate a more flexible schedule. At the new Center, Sharon will be in charge of the computer-aided-dispatch (CAD) training. Sharon sees the CAD and NCIC enhancements as the biggest challenges facing the 911 Center in the near future. When asked what the most “comical” moment has been during her time at 911, Sharon said, “there have been sooo many, I’m not sure I can pick one.” She does say that the dispatcher’s job can be intense and very stressful – and that dispatchers have to learn to laugh at and with themselves to sometimes take the ‘edge’ off.

PLANE CRASHES NEAR CUMBERLAND REGIONAL AIRPORT (CBE), Wiley Ford WV

A light plane carrying two local residents, who were returning from a business trip to Charleston, crashed on approach to the Cumberland Regional Airport on the evening of February 21, 2008. The pilot, David Summerfield, was recognized as one of the most experienced pilots at CBE, and was the only FAA certified pilot instructor at CBE. The passenger, Robbie Kessel, was a well-respected local developer, owner of the Min. Co. 911 Center land. Both have many local business and family ties.

In darkness and very snowy conditions, local fire, EMS, and law enforcement units searched in vein for the aircraft. Units from Wiley Ford, Ridgeley, Short Gap, Patterson Creek along with Cumberland City and Allegany County District 16 were assisted by the Mineral County Sheriffs Department, West Virginia State Police, and the OEM. OEM & 911 assisted the CBE authorities track down the many “leads” that local residents reported. These included the sounds of “low flying aircraft”, “a glow on the mountain in WV”, “unusual sounds”, and many others. The search was called off due to weather and safety on day 1 at 2:23 a.m.

Under light and safer weather conditions, the search resumed at 7:45 a.m. on day 2. Local units from West Virginia were joined by the Maryland State Police, Allegany County, MD OEM, the Civil Air Patrol, and the WV National Guard to broaden the search area. After an exhausting day of grid searching and with the help of technologic capabilities, the wreckage was located on Irons Mountain in Maryland, three miles from CBE, shortly before 6:30 p.m. on day 2. There were no survivors. State and local law enforcement along with Federal officials are continuing the crash investigation.

TRAINING CORNER

TRAINING CLASSES & WEB-SITES

(To provide specific classes or sites that we should highlight, contact the editor at mineraloem@yahoo.com)

NIMS IS 300 – Mon May 19 & Tues May 20, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Mineral County Health Department. All applicants must pre-register with the Health Department at 304-788-1321. IS100, 200, & 700 are pre-requisites.

NIMS IS 400 – Tuesday May 13 6-10 p.m., Saturday May 17 8-4:30 p.m., Tues. May 20 6-10:00 p.m. at the Short Gap VFD. All applicants must pre-register through RESA VIII at <http://resa8.k.12.wv.us/pbsvc> IS300 & 700 are pre-requisites.

NIMS IS100, 200, & 700 can be taken on-line by going to www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp. Classroom sessions of IS 300 & IS 400 are required for mid-level managers and above. If you need any further information, contact Marc Bashoor at OEM at 304-788-1821.

Emergency Vehicle Operations – Sat May 17 & Sun May 18 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Springfield VFD (Hampshire County). All applicants must pre-register through RESA VIII at <http://resa8.k.12.wv.us/pbsvc> or by calling 304-738-8797.

Mineral County Training Weekend – will be held this coming weekend 4/26 & 4/27 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., hosted by the Elk District VFC. All applicants should pre-register through RESA VIII at <http://resa8.k.12.wv.us/pbsvc>

- ♣ **West Virginia University, Fire Service Extension:** www.wvu.edu/~exten/depts/fireserv/fireserv.htm
- ♣ **Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) VIII:** <http://resa8.k12.wv.us/pbsvc>
- ♣ **National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center (NERRTC):** www.teex.com/nerrtc
- ♣ **New Mexico Tech – Respond! (EMRTC):** <http://respond.emrtc.nmt.edu/>
- ♣ **Storm Mountain Training Center:** www.stormmountain.com

WHAT IF...? – the infamous “westward migration” were to really happen? Are we ready? The OEM has been working with neighboring jurisdictions to answer that question (among many others). The short answer to “are we ready” is “no”. There is a lot of planning, training, and pre-positioning that needs to happen before we can truly say “we’re ready”. As additional training opportunities come available, and as the National Capital Region along with the Eastern Panhandle Homeland Security Region 3 have developed more concrete plans – the OEM will communicate them to all of our personnel (see next issue).

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- ♣ Westward Migration
- ♣ State Interoperability Radio Project
- ♣ The “dog-pound” (promised last time – it will be in the next issue)

