



MINERAL VIEW NEWSLETTER

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HOMELAND SECURITY & 911

Mineral County, West Virginia

July 31, 2008

Issue 7

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MEETING DATES

LEPC – Oct 9
2ND Thursday 6 PM
Jan, Apr, July, Oct
County Health Dept

911 ADVISORY BOARD – Oct 16
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 – Aug 12
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

New EOC & 911 Center Construction Underway!

After many years of planning, the new Mineral County Emergency Operations and 911 Center construction is underway. Located on donated property, to the rear and southwest of Walmart in Keyser, the center will replace the original 911 center location at the WV State Police barracks on Route 46. The new secure facility will comprise approximately 4,500 square feet and will also house the mapping and addressing office.



Dispatchers will for the first time, have the advent of computer-aided-dispatch and NCIC/WEAPONS systems, which combined with the new addressing system, will allow for quick accurate dispatch of fire, EMS, and law enforcement assets to locations in Mineral County. This will be a state-of-the-art facility, and will provide EOC capacities including bunks and shower facilities. New communications will include a microwave link to facilitate radio transmission from the Pinnacle tower site, which is also part of the State IRP system (article page 2).

Construction should be complete by December 2008, with occupancy taken shortly thereafter. Any questions may be addressed to OEM Director Marc Bashoor at 304-788-1821.

Westward Migration – CWID

Mineral County participated in the Coalition Warrior Interoperability Demonstration (CWID), completed in June 2008, partially demonstrating West Virginia's ability to communicate and coordinate during a "Westward Migration". As most of you know, the potential evacuation of the National Capital Region has generated a lot of seminars, grant opportunities, exercises, etc. The State's Interoperable Radio Project (IRP) (see next page) is a big part of westward migration preparation, but there remains a tremendous amount of progress to make to prepare this region.

There is a general agreement amongst emergency management types, that "we're going to keep them moving (away)." Where we are not in agreement – nor do many want to talk about – is in the weeds/details about reality – "...we don't have enough people, barriers, signs, etc to possibly 'keep them moving' forever". Let's get down to the brass tacks – inter-state travel and traffic management (fuel, repairs, towing, etc.), evacuee management (food, water, toilets, housing, etc.), law enforcement – how do we handle the evacuees who say, "we're not going any farther"? How many jail cells do we REALLY have? What about lethal force? What do we do with abandoned vehicles, pedestrians, etc...? There are many more questions, than we have answers for.

There is a misnomer prevalent among many folks, that NIMS classes and the compliancy they have achieved through classes has prepared "us" to "be-in-charge" of disasters (such as a westward migration). The fact is that the most classes provide us with two things; (1) compliance, and (2) opportunities to build confidence. Compliance and confidence along with exercises will ultimately allow us the opportunity to demonstrate COMPETENCE during a disaster, which is what we should all strive for.

SATELLITE PHONE PILOT-PROGRAM – First in the Nation

The Mineral County OEM is participating with Preston County, WV and Allegany County MD in a “first-of-its-kind” satellite-phone-pilot-program. The ONLY cost to Mineral County or participating agencies is the cost of installation for the equipment. In cooperation with Mobile Satellite Ventures (MSV), we are establishing emergency management networks that will provide a redundant interoperable communications system, ultimately connecting our jurisdictions with a myriad of local, state, and federal assets – through the use of the one satellite phone. The phone carries both the typical phone dial capacity, as well as a radio-type feature allowing for direct communication.



The Mineral County Health Department is the FIRST Health Department in the United States to be connected to this network, providing them instant contact with the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, as well as with many other partner agencies across the country. Similarly, the Preston Memorial Hospital in Preston County is the first hospital in the country to be part of this network. Other than the Health Department, units installed in Mineral County include the 911 Center (portable unit) and the OEM Director, with plans to install two additional units in a fire department and Sheriff's vehicle.

This is a 3-year pilot project, which MSV and the respective OEM's/County Commissions may re-evaluate at the end of the 3-year term. The phones have already proved functionally capable for local communications, during a mass-power outage in the Cumberland Maryland area, as well as during severe storms in Preston County. Any questions should be directed to the OEM Director, Marc Bashoor at 304-788-1821.

INTER-OPERABLE RADIO PROJECT (IRP)

The State of West Virginia some time ago embarked on a fully interoperable radio project, utilizing a network of new and existing towers and microwave systems. The system will ultimately tie each of the County's Emergency Operations Centers into a loop of communications between Charleston and the rest of the state. Based on 490's UHF frequencies, the system has to be robust enough to overcome our natural mountain and valley terrain, while providing the distance and reliability that we need to maintain a full communications system.

Many counties already have the capability to use the system, with Randolph County hosting the first regional network of emergency service providers utilizing the network. Berkeley County is also on the network, with additional service installations occurring that will allow Mineral, Morgan, Jefferson, Hampshire, and Hardy County's to be on-line with the network in the near future. A new tower for Mineral County, soon to be constructed on Pinnacle outside of Elk Garden, will provide a critical link for the system, “hopping” the signal from a tower near Deep Creek Maryland to a new transmission tower outside of Romney (Hampshire County). The new transmission tower in Romney as well as other new towers in Hampshire and Hardy County will provide the links to provide significant coverage for Mineral County. As funding becomes available (usually through grants) Mineral County OEM will examine the options and necessary equipment to ultimately convert to the IRP system. While the infrastructure is in place to support the network, funding to outfit the end-users has not yet been acquired – nor has the infrastructure been operating for a sufficient amount of time to provide quality assurance data supporting the network's reliability in the hillier portions of Mineral County.

Conversion to the IRP system is not necessarily a replacement to the existing VHF system. Any reliable communications system will have a series of redundant capabilities, ensuring that we can always talk to each other. Maintaining the existing VHF system will ensure that we are able to fully capitalize the availability of the IRP, while ensuring that the tried and true VHF system is still available and usable in Mineral County.

EDITORS CORNER

OEM Director Marc Bashoor would like to thank everyone for their thoughts, prayers, and gifts during our family's time of crisis. Andrew is home recovering from his accident, and we expect him to begin his senior year on-time in a regular classroom. Out-patient physical therapy and follow-up appointments will continue for the next 6 months or so. For those of us who were able to see the accident scene, we know that the mere fact that Andrew is alive, is a miracle. Thank you.

The Mineral County Fair, sponsored by the Fort Ashby Volunteer Fire Department, runs through August 2. Call 304-298-3712.

MINERAL VIEW – HIGHLIGHTS

Keyser Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

Chief – Tim Evans
President – James Teets



Pictured left to right: 1914 LaFrance 500 gpm chem. Tank, 1968 Dodge brush jeep 125 gpm, 275 gal tank; 2006 KME Squad; 1985 LaFrance 1250 gpm, 500 gal tank; 1999 LaFrance/KME 1,500 gpm, 750 gal tank; 1947 LaFrance 500 gpm, 500 gal tank



Pictured left to right: 1982 Rescue Systems tanker, 500 gpm, 1,250 gal tank; 1960 LaFrance 750 gpm, 300 gal tank; 2004 KME Ladder 1,250 gpm, 300 gal tank w/pre-piped waterway; 1999 F350 w/brush insert 125 gpm, 150 gal tank

The Keyser Vigilant Reel and Hose Company #1 was organized in 1893, then chartered in 1905. The name was later changed to the Keyser Volunteer Fire Department Incorporated. The original fire station (pictured in 1949 below) was pretty much a garage located on land owned by the City of Keyser. With about 25 original members, Keyser was one of the first Fire Departments in the area, and indeed would provide “unheard of” mutual aide to surrounding communities from time to time – unheard of that is, in 1893. Keyser’s first piece of firefighting equipment was an American LaFrance 4-wheel hose reel. The reel was generally pulled by hand, although local mules were occasionally used for those “farther runs”. In 1948, a bond levy was approved that provided for the current station #1 (above left). On their 100th anniversary in 1993, members dedicated station #2 (above right), just south of the city limits. Bridge construction will mean a new station #1 to be built in Keyser, in the near future.



The company grew, and in 1914 purchased their first piece of motorized equipment – indeed the first piece of motorized equipment anywhere in the area. When no other companies had motorized equipment, the 1914 American LaFrance 500 gpm chemical tank vehicle was instrumental in the “early” control of significant fires in Barton, Moorefield, and Petersburg. One of the more notable fires in Keyser, was the ‘first National Bank and Opera House’ fire in 1919, where two firefighter members of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Fire Brigade, were fatally injured in a wall collapse.



Keyser subsequently purchased 1931 (pictured left) and 1947 (still in service today) American LaFrance pumpers. Prior to 1947 all of the Fire Department’s equipment was owned by the city of Keyser, which meant the mayor had to approve any call for a fire engine to respond outside of the city of Keyser. While the equipment is now owned by the City of Keyser, the City of Keyser continues to have “say” over who will be Fire Chief, and the Fire Chief has only emergency operational authority. This physical arrangement is an oddity in its least, and indeed unique to Mineral County.

The Keyser Volunteer fire Department was the organizing group for the West Virginia State Firemens Association, having sent a letter of intent to establish such a body, to all West Virginia Fire Departments in 1929. Four Fire Departments showed up for the inaugural meeting – Keyser, Piedmont, Ridgeley, and Romney. The organization thrives today, with some 250 members across the State of West Virginia.

MINERAL VIEW – HIGHLIGHTS – Hampshire Fire

Four companies from Mineral County assisted Hampshire County on a recent fire in Romney. It was a busy day for Hampshire companies, with many of the County’s units already fighting a body shop fire in the Augusta area. Units from Burlington, New Creek, Fort Ashby, and Keyser assisted in Romney, with other Mineral County and out-of-county units filling in for Mineral County stations.

Units operated on the scene for upwards of six hours, with Keyser’s ladder truck returning to assist with overhaul and investigative work on the following day. With temperatures hovering in the mid 90’s, this was a tough couple of days for local firefighters and EMS providers.



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 & 400 – Available on request.

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.

Mineral County Training Weekend – was hosted by the Elk District VFC in April. This was a very well received event, with over 100 participants participating in the two days of training and fellowship. Thanks to the Mineral County Fire Fighters Association and especially to the Elk District VFC.

- ♣ **Center for Domestic Preparedness:** <http://cdp.dhs.gov>
- ♣ **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...? – Tornadoes came through your community. Do you have a personal plan to protect you and your family? How about a plan to communicate with relatives and loved ones when they're thinking the worst? Family planning takes on a whole new meaning when you consider these and other preparedness goals. Make sure you have a "go-kit" that includes contact lists, batteries, flash light, non-perishables (crackers), bottled water, blankets, etc. Visit www.citizencorps.gov to learn more, and to sign your community up as a Community Emergency Response Team.

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- ♣ Mapping & Addressing Update
- ♣ Mineral County's Computer Aided Dispatch System
- ♣ New Phone Exchange

