



BEAVER COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES

SUMMER & FALL, 2020 NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Kelly Staschak

September is National Preparedness Month (NPM). 2020 clearly has proven we all need to be prepared for the unexpected. We have witnessed a pandemic, which has caused major health threats and drastic changes to our lifestyle. Weather related issues, fires, the list seems endless. There has never been a better time to be prepared for emergencies and disasters. National Preparedness Month is a time to promote family and community disaster planning, not for just the month of September, but planning for the whole year.

“Disasters Don’t Wait. Make Your Plan Today” is the NPM 2020 theme. The goal for NPM is to help individuals, families, and communities be prepared for when disasters and emergencies strike whether it be at home, work, school, places of worship, or while on the road. “This year, perhaps more than any other year in recent memory, we have learned that the success of wider emergency response situations is dependent on individuals’ willingness to take action to help themselves and others,” said Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Director Randy Padfield. “Whether man-made or natural, related to thunderstorm or a fire; emergencies happen when we least expect them. Having a well thought out plan that both you and your family have practiced, can be vital in these situations.” Our focus for this year’s NPM has been on four main topics as outlined on the following page.

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NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH, CONT.

"Make a Plan" Start the planning process by looking at specific questions to answer such as:

- How will I receive emergency alerts and warnings?
- What is my family/household communication plan?
- Do I need to create/update my emergency preparedness kit?

This is the perfect time to make sure that you are registered for Swift911, Beaver County's emergency notification system to alert you to emergencies that are going on in your community. Swift911 is only used during emergencies. You can register online at beavercountypa.gov, by using the app on your smartphone or by calling us at 724-775-1700 and requesting to register. As you look at specific needs for your household, begin writing the plan. There is a template that can be filled out for the Family Emergency Communication Plan that you can build to your family's needs. It can be found at ready.gov/make-a-plan.

"Build A Kit" Learn about the basic supplies that you should have depending on the location of the emergency kit. There are three storage locations that are recommended, since an emergency can strike anywhere:

- A Home Kit should be put in a designated location should your family have to evacuate quickly.
- A Work Kit should be prepared for at least a 24-hour shelter in place.
- A Car Kit should be prepared for if you get stranded while traveling.

"Prepare for Disasters" Know what the risks for disasters are in your area and how to act fast if you receive a local warning or alert.

"Teaching Youth About Preparedness" Talking to your children about preparing for an emergency is so important. It is not a game. They need to realize how serious it is and know exactly what to do, especially if they become separated from you. For more information on National Preparedness Month visit ready.gov/september.

Also follow us on Facebook by searching for Beaver County Emergency Services and liking the page.

In 2007, the now former United States Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt said

"Everything we do before a pandemic will seem alarmist.

Everything we do after a pandemic will seem

inadequate. This is the dilemma we face, but it should

not stop us from doing what we can to prepare. We need to reach out to everyone with words that

inform, but not inflame. We need to encourage everyone to prepare, but not panic."

These words speak just as strong in terms of preparing for emergencies and disasters as well as pandemics.

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Eric Brewer, Emergency Services Director

One of the most important skills that responders can develop is the ability to exercise effective communication techniques. This is a basic, yet indispensable, talent that is used daily to communicate and transfer vital information, deliver size-up reports, and protect other responders from dangerous situations.

The era of handing a responder a radio on the first day of work and expecting them to become proficient in its use has passed us by long ago. The systems and technology built into today's modern radios are more complex and challenging than in years past. Proper and repetitive training of police/fire/EMS and dispatch personnel in the efficient use of communication procedures is the key to ensuring effective radio communications.

Recordings of radio traffic from several events allow us to evaluate how communication can break down in a stressful situation. While life-threatening situations demand clear and effective communication, the incredible stress of serious events almost always has a negative effect on radio discipline and information sharing.

The days of staying on one channel for an incident have passed due to numerous issues. The biggest being, your incident is not the only one that is going on. Day to day traffic still occurs, hence why every communications system has operation channels and other channels to handle ongoing incidents or special situations. Some systems even have channels for traffic stops or just to run vehicle or other records information.

When using the radio:

- Listen up and pay attention so you don't waste precious airtime with repeat information or requests. EMS only needs to be requested once – another 10 requests for their ETA won't get them there any faster.
- Be brief and include important details. Be sure to include locations, descriptions, direction of travel, weapons observed and other essential elements of information that your fellow workers need to know. "Shots fired" is important, but not helpful if nobody knows where you are. A mnemonic for a report is SALUTE: Size, Activity, Location, Unit Identification, Time and Equipment. These are details that responding units need to know, so report them if known.

Emergencies have a way of degrading performance, but a real professional can be relied upon to keep it together on the radio when things are going south. When things are at their worst is when we need a clear communication channel the most, so make sure you're professional when the microphone is in your hand.

TELECOMMUNICATORS OF THE QUARTER

Kevin Whipple

Congratulations are due to two 911 dispatchers who recently received recognition for being Telecommunicator of the Quarter.

Chris Stone received the award for the 4th Qt of 2019 as he was nominated by his fellow workers. Chris was involved in directly assisting a coworker who was experiencing a medical emergency and immediately intervened to help. Chris also handled emergency calls that were exceptional.

Also Congratulations to Kayla Troy for being named “Telecommunicator of the Quarter” for 1st Qt of 2020.

Kayla was nominated by her coworkers and applauded by several police officers for the way that she handled recent calls. Kayla was involved in some high profile calls including one where she assisted in the delivery of a baby.

Congratulations to both Chris and Kayla!



BVPS EXERCISE POSTPONED

Doug Humble

Any person or agency participating in our Beaver Valley Power Station biennial exercises should know by now or have been notified that the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were unable to support conducting the June 2020 exercise during the COVID -19 pandemic. Without the participation of our state and federal partners, conducting an exercise was impossible and thus suspended. At time of publication, all stake holders were in discussion on how to proceed with exercises during this COVID-19 environment.

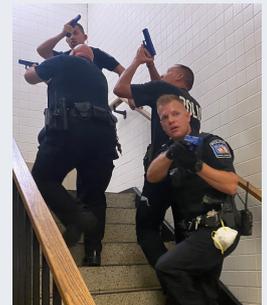
NEWS & NOTES

- **Congratulations** to John Bender and Brian Speer on their promotions to full time dispatcher status and to Josh Trone on his promotion to part time dispatcher.
- **ID badges** will be issued to Law Enforcement Officers who require an ID to enter the Beaver County Courthouse and EMS personnel only. Appointments and department head authorization are required in advance. Please call 724-775-1700 to schedule an appointment or for more information.
- **As of January 1, 2020, the Beaver County 911 Center has discontinued faxing incident information** and updates to local departments. Local agencies can use the NetViewer website to securely access incident information or they may choose to have closed incident reports emailed to them. If your agency is ready to upgrade, please contact Jim McCarthy at 724-775-1700 or jmccarthy@beavercountypa.gov.

ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING

Doug Humble

Like many of our training events and meetings these days, Active Shooter Training has gone virtual. On August 11, 2020, Emergency Services participated in a Virtual Active Shooter Training session with Job Training of Beaver County. Approximately 60 participants joined the online meeting to learn about best practices for responding to this type of event.



Additionally, Beaver County Emergency Services partnered with the Beaver County District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department and ESU Team as well as with Monaca and Center Police Departments to conduct Active Shooter Training at Central Valley Middle School on August 25, 2020. Taking precautions for COVID-19 and practicing social distancing, participants wore masks unless they were too physically tasked to do so, as was the case for the responding officers. The training included a review of "Run, Hide, Fight" practices as well as a communication and notification system review. Following training, we conducted 2 full scale exercises as well as a hotwash to assist in the preparation of an After Action Report.

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

New online fill-able forms

We are pleased to announce that our texting agreement, fire response plans and line officer contact information forms are now available on our website. Visit www.beavercountypa.gov and select "Emergency" on the top banner. From there, you will see the responder texting agreement and the fire information forms on the right hand side. We will begin only accepting the newest texting agreement, and it must be signed by the chief. Please email the completed forms to fireinformation@beavercountypa.gov or fax to 724-266-0210 once completed. Email is the preferred way.

CAD Link

Also on our website, you will see a link to the CAD system that's labeled "Police, Fire and EMS CAD". You can click on the link and login to the CAD system to view your times. If you have issues or questions regarding this, please contact Jim McCarthy or Kevin Whipple at 724-775-1700.

EVENTS CALENDAR

- **September 22:** First day of Autumn
- **September 29:** BVPS Offsite Agency Training, Virtual

- **October 8:** BVARA Meeting, 5 PM
- **October 12:** Columbus Day, County Offices Closed
- **October 21:** Chiefs of Police Meeting, 11 AM
- **October 21:** Hazmat Team Training, Garage, 6:30 PM
- **October 31:** Happy Halloween!

- **November 1:** Daylight Saving Time Ends: Fall Back One Hour, Inspect Fire & CO Alarms & Replace Batteries
- **November 3:** Election Day, County Offices Closed
- **November 11:** Veterans' Day, County Offices Closed
- **November 17:** VOAD & LEPC Meetings, 11:30 AM & 1 PM
- **November 18:** Chiefs of Police Meeting, 11 AM
- **November 18:** Hazmat Team Training, Garage, 6:30 PM
- **November 24:** Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator Training, 1:30 PM & 6:30 PM
- **November 25 & 26:** Happy Thanksgiving! County Offices Closed

ALL EVENTS ARE LOCATED AT THE BEAVER COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES CENTER, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

For more information on any of the above listed events, or to add your public safety event to future calendars, please email the editor at: smu@beavercountypa.gov

Team Pennsylvania

COVID-19 CRISIS COUNSELING PROGRAM

**GET CONNECTED WITH A
FREE CRISIS COUNSELOR**



CALL 1-855-284-2494



Do you feel...

Stressed?

Overwhelmed?

Alone?

Afraid?

Anxiety?

*During these uncertain
times, you are not alone.
We are here to listen.*

Please call our Pennsylvania Support and Referral Line

1-855-284-2494 TTY: 724-631-5600

There are trained professionals available 24/7 ready to help you navigate these unprecedented challenges.

These services are **FREE & CONFIDENTIAL**.

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

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The Beaver County Emergency Services Newsletter
is created and published by the Beaver County
Emergency Services center.

Beaver County Emergency Services is a division of Beaver County government, under the authority of the Beaver County Board of Commissioners. Emergency Services manages the county's 9-1-1 dispatch operations center and also serves as the county's Emergency Management office, working under the direction of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) on emergency preparedness, planning, mitigation, response, and recovery.

The Emergency Services center is also the home of the county's Hazardous Materials Response Team, the Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC) and is the contact point for many other public safety organizations, including EMS, Fire, Police, and Municipal EMA services. Emergency Services works in conjunction with a number of county and offsite agencies to provide comprehensive public safety guidance and emergency support to Beaver County.

Want to contribute?

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