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BEAVER COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mid-year, 2026 Newsletter

BVPS FEDERALLY EVALUATED EXERCISE COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY

Jason Chappell, Radiological Emergency Preparedness Planner/Trainer

On June 9th, Beaver County Emergency Services, alongside our local, state, federal, and private-sector partners, successfully completed the Biennial Federally Evaluated Hostile Action Based (HAB) Exercise at Beaver Valley Power Station. While the exercise evaluated our ability to respond to a complex emergency, it also highlighted something even more important—the unwavering dedication of the people who serve our communities.

Exercises of this magnitude require months of planning and coordination, but their success ultimately depends on the commitment of the men and women who volunteer their time and expertise to be prepared before an emergency ever occurs. Our Municipal Emergency Management Coordinators once again demonstrated their professionalism by working side by side with law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel, county agencies, state and federal partners, and Beaver Valley Power Station staff to ensure a coordinated and effective response.

Whether staffing Emergency Operations Centers, coordinating resources, supporting protective action decisions, or maintaining clear communication throughout the exercise, each participant played an important role. Their willingness to train, adapt, and work together reflects the strength of emergency management in Beaver County and reinforces our shared commitment to protecting the communities we serve.

To everyone who dedicated countless hours preparing for and participating in this exercise, thank you. Your professionalism, teamwork, and commitment to public safety continue to strengthen our county's emergency preparedness program and ensure that Beaver County remains ready to respond when it matters most.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Eric Brewer, Emergency Services Director



As our radio update project is nearing completion, I would like to thank everyone for their patience during the process. We started the radio talks back in 2021 and introduced the subscriber project in March of 2022 during a session at CCBC. Since then, the project expanded to include the replacement of the main radios at the tower sites, a project to connect the towers with fiber as well as the addition of 4 new tower sites. Coordinating the project with approximately 100 different agencies within the county, two bordering states and six counties was a major challenge.

Analog radios have provided a simplistic and easy-to-use experience for users, but as agencies continue to evolve, the need for clearer voice, expanded functionality and coverage has rapidly increased. You will see that digital communications allows us to do different things with a different sound on the system.

Reasons Digital Radios Outperform Analog Radios

- **Better Voice Quality** - Automatic error correction capabilities maintain the clarity of voice, even with background noise or a corrupted signal. Speech is digitally encoded, which means advanced algorithms can deliver clear voice in extreme conditions.
- **Stronger Coverage** - Digital performs better even at the far edges of coverage. Built-in error correction helps eliminate the static, background noise, and voice distortion that can occur with analog radios as you reach the limits of coverage.
- **Longer Battery Life** - While battery life is a challenge for all mobile devices, digital technology is much more efficient. Digital radios provide up to 40% longer battery.

There were some issues that were observed during the roll-out process:

- Alterations were made to radios, mostly with antennas. Radios were purchased with the correct equipment that is specifically made for that model of radio, whether it is a portable or mobile. If an alteration was made, there will be performance issues with the radio.
- Very little training is done with radios. We ran 4 sessions with approximately 50 different agencies and over 100 participants to update and train on the system. We plan on offering additional training in the future.
- There is very little maintenance done on radios once they're put into service. A good expense for your agency would be a maintenance agreement for your mobiles, portables and base stations.

Lastly, this is a public safety radio system. Special events (planned events), fundraisers and prolonged incidents need to be moved off of the main dispatch frequency. Operations for parking cars, carnivals, fireworks, parades or Light-up-Nights should not be done on the main dispatch.

Just because your event is going on, we're still dispatching emergencies, and your colleagues are doing traffic stops. It comes down to courtesy and professionalism!

For more details on the digital radio system, see the Public Safety Radio System FAQ later in this newsletter.

BREAKING GROUND ON A SAFER BEAVER COUNTY

Jason Gallagher, Hazmat Planner / Equipment Coordinator

On July 30th, we proudly celebrated the groundbreaking of the future Beaver County Hazardous Materials Response Garage, an important investment in the safety, preparedness and resilience of our community.

As Commissioner Camp shared during the ceremony:

“This facility is an investment in those dedicated professionals. It will provide modern space to house specialized equipment, improve operational readiness, support training, and ensure faster, more efficient responses when emergencies occur. Simply put, this project strengthens our ability to serve the people of Beaver County.”

We would like to thank the Commissioners Dan Camp, Jack Manning and Tony Amadio as well as Director of Emergency Services Eric Brewer, our Emergency Services staff, the Hazardous Materials Response Team, our municipal, state, and federal partners, and the engineers, architects, contractors, and everyone whose hard work has made this possible.

The groundbreaking is more than the start of a construction project, it is an investment in public safety that will serve Beaver County for decades to come. Thank you to the Beaver County Commissioners for investing in this project.



LEPC EXPLORING ONLINE PAYMENT OPTION FOR FACILITIES

Kathryn Schotsch, Emergency Management Specialist

The Beaver County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is currently exploring new online payment options to make the payment process more convenient and efficient for facilities remitting annual Tier II fees.

The LEPC has received requests from facilities for an online payment option when submitting payments for hazardous chemicals stored on-site, as well as for Emergency Off-Site Response Plans that may be required for facilities storing extremely hazardous substances. Offering this option would provide facilities with a faster, easier, and more convenient way to submit payments.

Currently, facilities primarily submit payments by check. As electronic payments continue to become more common and paper checks are used less frequently, the LEPC recognizes the need to modernize its payment process and provide facilities with an option that better meets their needs. The LEPC hopes to have more information on updated payment options for facilities prior to the next Tier II Chemical Inventory reporting cycle.

HAZMAT PROGRAM UPDATE

Jason Gallagher, Hazmat Planner / Equipment Coordinator

Since the beginning of 2026, Beaver County's Hazmat Team 700 and Hazmat Program staff have been busy moving equipment, planning, training, and responding to incidents.

Equipment loans

We have provided various equipment within the county for a variety of classes and have assisted our PA Region 13 Task Force counties with support for any events they have requested equipment for.

Responses & Training

The Hazmat Team was notified of 8 incidents, with 3 responses from January to June.

We also had our monthly trainings consisting of:

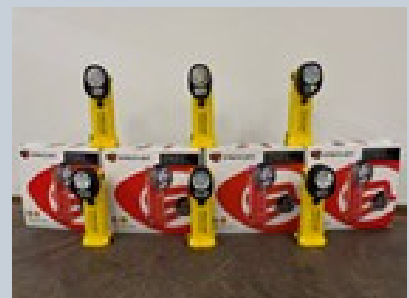
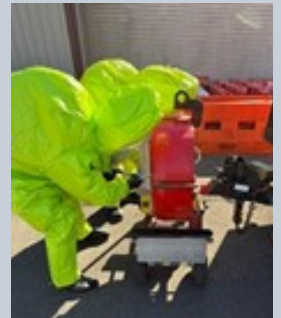
- Hazmat Ops Refresher
- Hazmat Technician Refresher
- Communication & Identification Exercises
- Full-scale Exercise on Chemical Suicides
- Biennial Refresher on Radiological Response for BVPS
- Many more trainings that members attended outside of team trainings

Additionally, a Drone Assessment & Response Tactics Course was hosted in August, and a Hazmat Officer & Safety Course is scheduled for September.

For More information, contact me at jgallagher@beavercountypa.gov

Safety First Grant

Recently the team was awarded the Norfolk Southern Safety First Grant, which allowed us to purchase Coveralls & Flashlights to help equip the team and enhance our readiness for the next incident.



Just a Reminder: Dangerous materials are all around us. They're carried in trucks, trains, and boats and moved on our highways, railroads, and rivers. Spills don't happen often, but you should be prepared.

Chemical spills or releases of any toxic materials could be poisonous to people and the environment.

BEAVER COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: PREPARED TODAY, READY TOMORROW

Kevin Whipple, Deputy Director

Emergencies can happen anywhere, at any time, and being prepared before an incident occurs is one of the most important steps we can take to protect our communities. In Beaver County, emergency management is a continuous effort involving planning, training, coordination, and partnerships with agencies throughout the county.

Beaver County Emergency Services works every day with our municipalities, local Emergency Management Coordinators, fire departments, emergency medical services, law enforcement agencies, healthcare partners, volunteer organizations, and state and federal partners to ensure we are prepared to respond when our residents need us most. This collaboration is the foundation of an effective emergency management system.

Behind every emergency response is months and years of preparation. County Emergency Management focuses on maintaining emergency plans, conducting training and exercises, coordinating resources, supporting municipal emergency managers, and ensuring that the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) can be activated and staffed when a significant event occurs. The EOC brings together representatives from multiple disciplines to improve communication, coordinate resources, and support local communities during times of need.

Preparedness is not only the responsibility of emergency responders—it begins with each resident. Simple actions such as having an emergency supply kit, creating a family communication plan, knowing your community's notification systems, and understanding local hazards can make a significant difference during an emergency.

As technology continues to advance, emergency management is also evolving. New tools such as improved communications systems, geographic information systems (GIS), weather monitoring technology, and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) are helping responders gather information faster and make better-informed decisions during incidents.

Beaver County is fortunate to have dedicated emergency responders, municipal partners, volunteers, and community members who work together to strengthen our county's resilience. While we cannot always predict when emergencies will occur, we can prepare for them.

Emergency Management is a team effort. Through cooperation, training, and community preparedness, Beaver County remains committed to protecting lives, property, and the quality of life that makes our communities strong.

WHAT3WORDS: A VALUABLE TOOL FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Brian Murray, Deputy Director

Many of our responders are familiar with what3words, a location system that divides the world into 10-foot by 10-foot squares, assigning each square a unique three-word address. Beaver County 911 receives what3words location information through our RapidSOS integration, allowing telecommunicators to identify precise caller locations when that information is available.

While dispatchers can relay a caller's what3words location over the radio when needed, responders are encouraged to download the free what3words app as a reference tool. The app allows you to quickly enter a three-word address and view its exact location on a map, making it easier to understand where a caller is located before arriving on scene.

What3words is especially useful for incidents occurring in parks, wooded areas, campgrounds, large industrial sites, trails, rivers, farms, and other locations where traditional street addresses may not accurately identify a person's or incident's location.

Although what3words is not a replacement for standard addresses or GPS coordinates, it is another tool that can improve situational awareness and help responders navigate to difficult-to-find locations more efficiently.

We encourage all field personnel to download the free what3words app and become familiar with how it works.

<https://what3words.com/>



WHAT3WORDS

BEAVER COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO SYSTEM F.A.Q.

Q. Will my radio work after the switch over to digital?

A. NO. You should be using the “New” zones in your radio

Q. Who can program radios?

A. Beaver County has 3 approved radio vendors. If you had someone else program your radio's the radio's may not work on our system if they do not have the appropriate settings.

Q. Who are the approved vendors?

A. Bearcom
Capital Area Communications
Lauttamus Communications
Westcom Communications

Q. Will my Minitor pager still work?

A. Yes. The fire paging channel will not change. However, if you have the fire response channel, it will not work. If you had other frequencies in your Minitor that are not digital, they will still work.

Q. How do we know what channels to use if we have a planned event?

A. If you have an upcoming event, contact the admin office a few days/weeks prior to the event so we can assign a channel for you to use. This is a public safety radio system. The main dispatch channels should not be used for special events (ie. Parades, carnivals, fireworks, festivals, light-up nights, etc).

Q. Are towing companies permitted to use the radios?

A. No, this is a public safety radio system.



EMERGENCY SERVICES

351 14th Street
Ambridge, PA 15003
724-775-1700

BEAVER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
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Beaver County Courthouse • 810 Third Street • Beaver, PA 15009
724-728-3934 • www.beavercountypa.gov

The Beaver County Emergency Services Newsletter
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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?
E-mail the editor,
Schuyler Mu , at
smu@beavercountypa.gov