

Cherokee County Local Emergency Planning Committee
Regular meeting
Cherokee County Courthouse / Emergency Operations Center

September 6, 2011

Meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Chairwoman Holly Capron.

Introductions were made by those in attendance:

Gene Bates – Guest Speaker (HAM radio)
Judy Leighty – LEPC Treasurer
Larry Hiatt – Columbus News Report
Mary Burke – St. John’s Maude Norton Hospital
Jeff Simpson
Vicki Rahall – Cherokee County Sheriff’s Office
Art Mallory – Cherokee County Sheriff’s Office / Emergency Management
Holly Capron – Chairwoman L.E.P.C.
Wayne Elliott – Cherokee County 911 and Mapping
Jim Burton – City of Columbus
Dusty Groves – Cherokee County Emergency Management / C.E.R.T.
Jason Allison – Cherokee County Emergency Management
Betha Elliott – Cherokee County Health Department
Carl Hayes – Cherokee County Health Department / Environmentalist
Art Blick – C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Team)
Melissa Cromwell – Spring River Wellness Center
David Groves – Cherokee County Sheriff’s Office

Mr. Gene Bates provided LEPC members with a discussion paper regarding HAM radio operators. He explained that there are three levels of operators with a wide spectrum of abilities.

There are currently around 44 licensed operators in Cherokee County.

Mr. Bates went on to say that there are two nationally recognized organizations for HAM radio operators who are trained to assist emergency management agencies. Those organizations are RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) and ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service).

RACES has strict guidelines and is controlled by the local emergency management office once a civil emergency has been declared. They also must successfully complete training, such as NIMS and ICS.

ARES organizations on the other hand are designed to provide emergency

communications support to any agency, public or private and the NIMS and ICS training is not required.

There was significant discussion on the benefits having a local HAM radio organization to assist with emergencies within Cherokee County, and the benefit of the HAM operators being able to communicate with other agencies, including those across state lines.

In addition, during large scale events, the Cherokee County HAM operators could coordinate with other operators from outside the county to increase communications.

Mr. Bates did mention that with a repeater, operators could communicate longer distances.

Emergency Management Director Jason Allison said that the county had repeaters that may be suitable, and therefore no expense would be needed.

Melissa Cromwell also stated that Spring River Wellness Center had a large tower where a repeater could be placed.

Mr. Bates shared with the group that the 5 watt portable radio he had with him cost around \$100.00. He used that radio to test the distance of communication recently and while on Highway 69 south of Columbus, attached a longer antenna and was able to communicate with an operator in Joplin, Missouri.

Jason Allison updated the group on the Mother Road Marathon. It was noted that at current time there were fewer runners and some changes in the course from last year.

Director Allison also said that during October (Emergency Preparedness Month) they will be working on some programs in the area grade schools.

Director Allison, Dusty Groves and Art Mallory will be attending state mandated training in Topeka next week for the Kansas Emergency Management Association conference.

Larry Hiatt brought up a discussion he had with the Board of Cherokee County Commissioners, Betha Elliott and Jason Allison regarding the inclusion of a basement at the Columbus Museum. The museum is in the process of adding on to their current facility, and the basement could be used to store artifacts, and also as a storm shelter. All parties

are working to include those plans in the construction of the new addition.

Chairwoman Capron advised the members that Angie Ripple was unable to continue to serve as secretary for the L.E.P.C., and barring any objections (there were none noted) David Groves would take meeting minutes.

Chairwoman Capron also updated the members on the ticket sales (approximately 1,000 sold) for the storm shelter. She and Dusty Groves will be going to Galena, Riverton, Baxter Springs, Weir and perhaps the Cherokee Homecoming to sell tickets before the give-away during Columbus Days in October.

Sheriff Groves updated the members on plans for the Mother Road Marathon and the implementation of a new phone system at the Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center. They are also in the process of installing the CAD system.

Cherokee County Health Department Administrator Betha Elliott reminded members of the 4-corners meeting to be held on October 5th, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at Granny Shaffer's in Webb City, Missouri.

Administrator Elliott also discussed the CDC exercise for health departments and hospitals that will occur sometime in November (no date has been set).

Cherokee County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member Art Blick said that they had been working on setting up a regional CERT meeting, but due to the upcoming training and scheduling conflicts, that has been set aside for the time being.

Mr. Blick also said that there will be an upcoming Basic CERT training in Cherokee County.

The instructors are currently at the FEMA training center in Anniston, Alabama. The course in Cherokee County will be a 25 hour training (no date has been set).

LEPC Treasurer Judy Leighty reported that there was no expenditures, no income and the group had a \$0.00 balance.

Melissa Cromwell stated that Spring River Wellness Center is in the process of becoming a Red Cross Certified Shelter.

There were no other discussions and the next meeting was set for October 4th, 2011 @9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the Cherokee