

# THE OKLAHOMA OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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## Equipment and Training Pays off in Tushka Tornado Response

Winds of up to 167 mph barreled through Tushka, OK, (in Atoka County) on April 14, killing two people, injuring 43 and leaving a small town in ruins. A handful of Tushka volunteer firefighters began the task of search and rescue and within an hour of the storm, calls went out to surrounding communities for additional equipment.

“We’ve been slammed hard,” Atoka Fire Chief Donnie Allen heard over the phone. A firefighter called to let the Chief know his home had been hit but his family was safe. The next call Chief Allen received was from McAlester Fire Chief Brett Brewer asking if they could help.

### Also on the way-Durant Fire

Chief Roger Joines had been on the job two and a half months and already his Intermediate Technical Rescue Unit has seen action twice. Joines sent a 12 man team that night along with the unit. It was set up in the parking lot near the command center and provided a physical

place to find information. “When [residents] saw our trailer there, they knew to come up and ask questions,” said Chief Joines.

The communications system on the Intermediate Technical Rescue Unit was a huge asset since communications were a major issue among the various departments responding.

“Chainsaws were probably the most used piece of equipment on that unit,” said Chief Joines. “We also used the Auxiliary Rescue Unit as a light source for the area.”

### Training is key

With 13 rural fire departments in Atoka County and firefighters coming in to assist from outside communities, it is easy to see why training for Regional Response System team members is such an important component to the system.

“NIMS classes have helped the firefighters that responded,” said Chief Allen. “Accountability was great. An accountability board was set up

within the first hour. Nobody got left behind.”

Chief Joines agreed adding that there are a number of training courses required to participate in the Regional Response System, which can be overwhelming prior to an incident. “At the time you are taking the course you think, man this is a lot of information. But it starts coming back to you when you show up on scene.”

The citizens of Tushka now face recovery—both physically and mentally—and are rebuilding. Including Chief Allen, who had severe damage to his property. However, the Atoka Fire Chief is thankful for the assistance from the Regional Response Units that responded that Thursday night. The equipment and trained responders from Durant and McAlester had an enormous impact on the small community.

- Brook Arbeitman, OKOHS



Oklahoma Office of  
**Homeland Security**  
*Prevent, Protect, Prepare*

## **MYN Update**

Since the program was first launched last fall, OKOHS' neighborhood preparedness initiative, Map Your Neighborhood (MYN), has been a complete success. OKOHS staff members have hosted MYN Leaders Training Sessions in Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton and will host upcoming training sessions in Midwest City and Northwestern Oklahoma. Trained Oklahomans have been very responsive to the information at the training sessions and have been excited to share the MYN curriculum with neighbors. To see when a MYN Leaders Training Session will be hosted in your area, visit [www.reddirtready.com](http://www.reddirtready.com).



*Tulsa citizens participate in MYN Leaders Training on March 26*

## **Incident Resource Hotline**

The Incident Resource Hotline, formerly referred to as the One Call System, is available to emergency responders who might need resource assistance at the scene of a disaster.

To use the Incident Resource Hotline, responders must call 1-800-800-2481.

## **NECP Goal 2 Underway**

The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) is a strategic plan developed by the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) which defines a series of goals that establish a minimum level of interoperable communications and a deadline for agencies to achieve that minimum level.

Goal 2 requires 75 percent of non-UASI jurisdictions to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies. Capability and performance data must be collected from all Oklahoma counties and submitted to OEC by September 2011.

OKOHS is asking **County Emergency Managers** to assist with the Goal 2 data collection effort because of their unique community knowledge and abilities. County E.M.s are encouraged to watch a two-hour Response-Level Communications Training Webinar that is available to enable participants to better understand the process for completing NECP Goal 2.

For additional information about NECP Goal 2, the collection process and the webinars, visit [www.ioc.ok.gov](http://www.ioc.ok.gov) or call Nikki Cassingham at 405-425-7296.

## **Announcements**

**May 10:** Region 5 Council Meeting (McAlester, 10 am)

**May 11:** Tulsa UASI Working Group (Tulsa, 10 am, 15th Floor, City Hall, One Technology Center)

**May 11:** Narrowbanding Technical Assistance Workshop (OKC, 9 am) Contact Nikki Cassingham, [ncassing@dps.state.ok.us](mailto:ncassing@dps.state.ok.us) for more info

**May 21:** Camp Bandage (Broken Arrow, 10 -3, Immanuel Lutheran Church) FREE for kids of all ages

**May 30:** Memorial Day

**June 18-22:** National Sheriff's Association Annual Conference (St. Louis)

**June 20:** Neighborhood Watch Training (St. Louis) Go to [www.usaonwatch.org](http://www.usaonwatch.org) and click on "Events" for more info

**June 11:** MYN Training Session (Midwest City)

**Aug. 2:** Region 1 Council Meeting (Woodward, 10:30 am)

**Aug. 10:** Tulsa UASI Working Group Meeting (same as above)

**Aug. 11:** Region 3 Council Meeting (Lawton, 2 pm, Great Plains Technology Center)

**To request a speaker from OKOHS at your local event or community meeting contact Lacey Callahan at 405-425-7296.**

## Narrowbanding Funding Application Available

OKOHS has determined that several public safety agencies are struggling to meet the narrowbanding mandate by the Jan. 1, 2013, deadline. To help these agencies, OKOHS has allocated Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP) funds toward the purchase of narrowband-capable equipment and Oklahoma public safety agencies that are not narrowband-compliant are encouraged to apply.

To view the guidelines for applying and application instructions, visit, [www.ioc.ok.gov](http://www.ioc.ok.gov).

## RRS Coordinator Position Available

The Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security is seeking a Regional Response System (RRS) Coordinator. The successful applicant must have specialized public safety knowledge, skills and abilities acquired prior to hiring. This is a full-time unclassified state position, which is funded with federal grant funds. Salary will be commensurate with experience and ability. State benefit package applies. This position will remain open until May 15 or until the position is filled. For more information about the position and to apply, visit [www.homelandsecurity.ok.gov](http://www.homelandsecurity.ok.gov).

## Stakeholder Conference to be Held in April 2012

OKOHS will be hosting a stakeholder conference in April 2012. Official dates have not been set, but the conference will likely take place during the third or fourth week of April. In an effort to increase attendance and encourage networking, we have been calling associations to ask about any scheduling conflicts they might have. If you know of any major discipline events or trainings that have been scheduled during this time that might conflict with the OKOHS stakeholder conference, please email the event or training information to Lacey Callahan at [lcallaha@dps.state.ok.us](mailto:lcallaha@dps.state.ok.us).

## News Regional Response System Area Map

A new Regional Response System Area Map and new regional maps have been developed based on additions to the RRS and movement of the units. For more information and to view new maps of each region, visit [www.homelandsecurity.ok.gov](http://www.homelandsecurity.ok.gov).

