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Communication key for first responders **(<http://woodwardnews.net/local/x1977776029/Communication-key-for-first-responders>)**

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Woodward News (<http://woodwardnews.net>)

Woodward, Okla. — First responders practiced communicating with each other through the Oklahoma Regional Response System on Tuesday at the Office of Emergency Management in Woodward.

Responders from across Western Oklahoma including Woodward, Weatherford, Enid, Guymon and others showed up with their one-of-a-kind units that are equipped for rescue and aiding in communicating in disaster situations.

Jay Moore, captain of the Weatherford Fire Department, said whether they need to go up or down, to a grain elevator or into a cave, the units they use are equipped to handle a variety of situations.

"We've used it for the Calumet tornado, Woodward tornado, a trench collapse, cave rescue and grain elevator rescue in Hydro," Moore said.

Weatherford's Technical Rescue Trailer is much like a tank, it can climb rubble piles and it's equipped to cut through concrete and steel, he said.

It also helps group leaders to communicate on many different levels.

All the emergency rescue trailer units compile different types of communications equipment used on local, state and federal levels.

Clint Roles with the Weatherford Fire Department, said without communication systems like this, there would be mass confusion during disaster.

"Without the system people could have searched the south side and not the north side (of Woodward after the tornado)," Roles said.

Each of the units belongs to a local agency and there are 15 different units that serve different purposes. Units are designed to respond to emergencies including chemical,

biological, radioactive, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) events, agriculture emergencies, technical rescues, mass casualty incidents and/or natural disasters.

After the April 15 tornado struck Woodward, Regional Response System units and teams responded from across the state. There were multiple medium EMS, Bantam EMS and Intermediate Rescue units.

Chad Campbell, paramedic with Woodward EMS, said a medium EMS unit holds the equipment of about 50 ambulances and it's main purpose is to treat mass casualties. The unit holds everything from airway equipment and IVs to blankets and oxygen tanks, he said.

"We have everything from basic medical equipment to advanced life support equipment," Campbell said.

The Woodward News 904 Oklahoma Ave. Woodward, OK 73801