



# OEM CHRONICLE

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Boone County  
Office of Emergency Management



## 2024: NEW YEAR, SAME GREAT OEM!

2023 has come and gone and your Office of Emergency Management is hard at work in the new year! We considered ourselves fortunate to be able to serve the community and support community preparedness over this past year and we are looking forward to what 2024 will bring us. Learn more about what we've been up to since the last OEM Chronicle by reading on.



## #WINTERREADY

Although trending downward since the early 1980s, heating fires remain leading cause of home fires in the U.S.

Learn how to prevent home heating fires, as well as other helpful tips from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), by visiting the next page.

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# #WINTERREADY

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## Portable Space Heaters

- Keep combustible objects at least three feet away from portable heating devices.
- Only buy heaters evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Check to make sure the portable heater has a thermostat control mechanism and will switch off automatically if the heater falls over.
- Only use crystal clear K-1 kerosene in kerosene heaters. Never overfill it. Use the heater in a well-ventilated room away from curtains and other flammable items.



## WINTER TRAVEL

Winter weather conditions can be harsh and unpredictable, posing significant threats to travelers, especially those traveling by car. Snowstorms, icy roads and freezing temperatures can create a dangerous environment that increases the likelihood of accidents and emergencies.

Being prepared can help you “expect the unexpected” so your trip isn’t ruined by common problems travelers face in the winter.

- Make sure your vehicle is in good working order before you travel.
- Install good winter tires and make sure they have enough tread, or any chains or studs required in your local area.
- When driving, increase your following distance from 3-4 seconds to 5-6 seconds. It takes longer to slow down and stop on icy roads.
- Every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit in the trunk. Kits should be checked every six months and expired items should be replaced regularly.
- Keep family and emergency phone numbers, including your auto insurance provider and a towing company in your phone.
- If stranded, run the engine for about 10 minutes per hour to run the heater and charge your cellphone. Open a window slightly to let fresh air in and avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

# NETWORK UPDATE

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Upgrades to the Boone County network required Boone County Joint Communications and the Office of Emergency Management to use a backup center for two Saturdays in January.

The backup location, which is always available for use, contains all of the equipment to seamlessly transition 911 operations from the main Emergency Communications Center (ECC) to the backup site without any disruption in service.

Our temporary Emergency Operations Center (EOC) had laptops, portable radios, conferencing equipment and all of the other supplies we would have needed to operate during the downtime. Fortunately we did not need to activate our EOC during this time period.

Big thanks to the Boone County IT Department for quickly making the upgrades and smoothly transitioning both departments back to the main location.



Photo: Boone County Joint Communications telecommunicators work at the back up Emergency Communications Center (ECC).

# TRAINING & EXERCISE

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Since our last OEM Chronicle issue, we've had a busy training and exercise month.

The OEM staff completed phase II of our earthquake exercise by touring the critical areas of our facility to refresh on our generators, electrical system, and Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system.

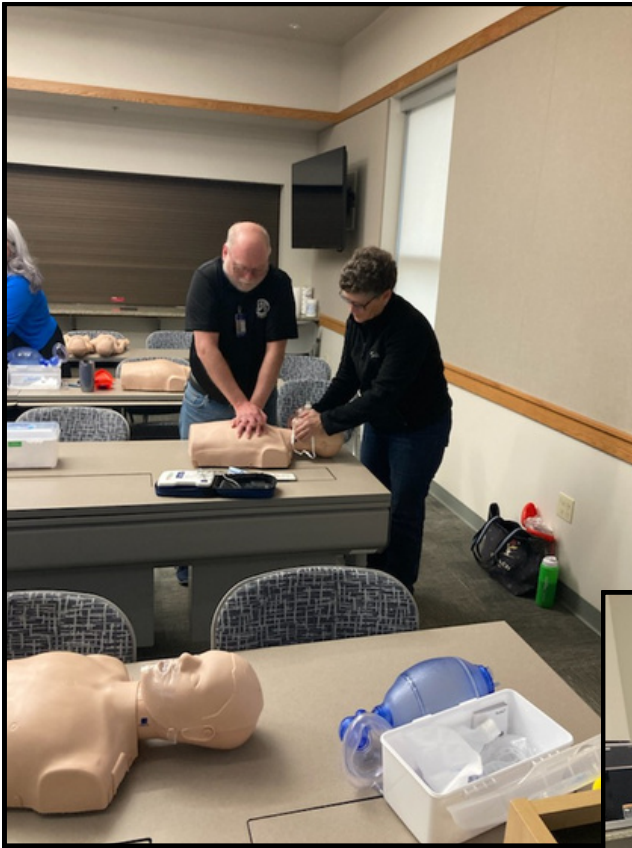
Specialists Kraig Johnson and Matt Brown also helped a local Cub Scout pack earn badges in preparedness by teaching about emergency management.



Photo: OEM staff learn about critical infrastructure at the Emergency Communications Center (ECC).

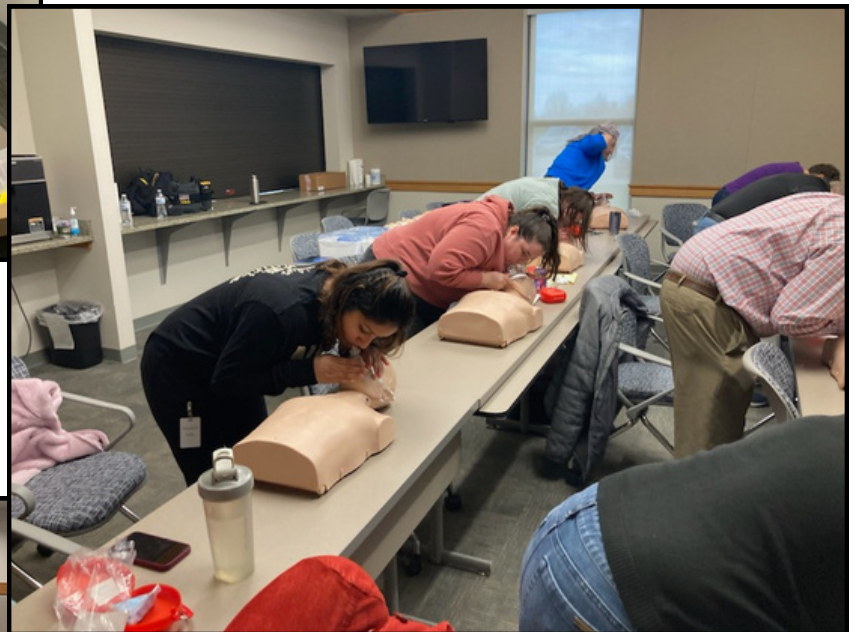


Photo: OEM Specialists Matt Brown (pictured) and Kraig Johnson presenting to a local scout group.



This fall, our office started providing American Heart Association CPR training for Boone County employees.

Since November, we have trained 26 employees from a diverse number of Boone County departments.



Photos (Clockwise from bottom): Specialist Matt Brown teaches correct hand placement to a class; Systems Administrator Steve Hite and District II Commissioner Janet Thompson practice compressions and ventilations on an adult manikin; Participants practice rescue breathing using a pocket mask.

Earlier this month, there was a emergency incident on the University of Missouri campus that required response from a variety of agencies to safely control the situation.

Our office supported the University of Missouri Campus and MU Health Care by sending one of our staff as a liaison to the University of Missouri command location to help with resource requests and information dissemination.

We also placed our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at a Level 2 or full activation to be fully prepared to support any needs the on site incident commanders would need.

This incident was an excellent example of how our emergency system worked to provide support as the staff on-site brought the incident to a safe conclusion and prepared to move into the recovery phase.



Photos: The Columbia Fire Department and the University of Missouri Police Department work on scene to control the fire incident.

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH

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January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month, a presidentially designated observance designed to educate the public about human trafficking and the role they can play in preventing and responding to human trafficking.

*"We must do whatever we can, for as long as necessary, to end the scourge of human trafficking."* -  
Xavier Becerra, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

As the U.S. anti-trafficking movement has grown in our understanding of this diverse and complex crime, we are learning more about how specific people, such as medical professionals, teachers, truck drivers, and restaurant personnel, in addition to friends and family members, can help identify and report possible trafficking. Everyone can help by learning the types of trafficking and paying attention to the people around us.

## **Who is Most Vulnerable?**

While anyone can experience trafficking in any community, research suggests that people of color and LGBTQ+ people are more likely to experience trafficking than other demographic groups. Traffickers recognize and take advantage of people who are vulnerable.

## **People may be vulnerable to trafficking if they:**

- Have an unstable living situation
- Have previously experienced other forms of violence such as sexual abuse or domestic violence
- Have run away or are involved in the juvenile justice or child welfare system
- Are undocumented immigrants
- Are facing poverty or economic need
- Have a caregiver or family member who has a substance use issue
- Are addicted to drugs or alcohol

## **Who Are the Traffickers?**

Traffickers can be of any race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. They may be family members, romantic partners, acquaintances, or strangers.

# NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

## DEFINITION

- modern day slavery
- exploiting a person through force, fraud, or coercion

## QUICK FACTS

- 4.5 million people worldwide are victims of forced exploitation
- 1 in 6 endangered runaways reported in the U.S. are likely to become sex trafficking victims
- 20% of human trafficking victims are children

## SIGNS

- living with employer
- no identity documents
- submissive or fearful
- poor living conditons

## REPORT

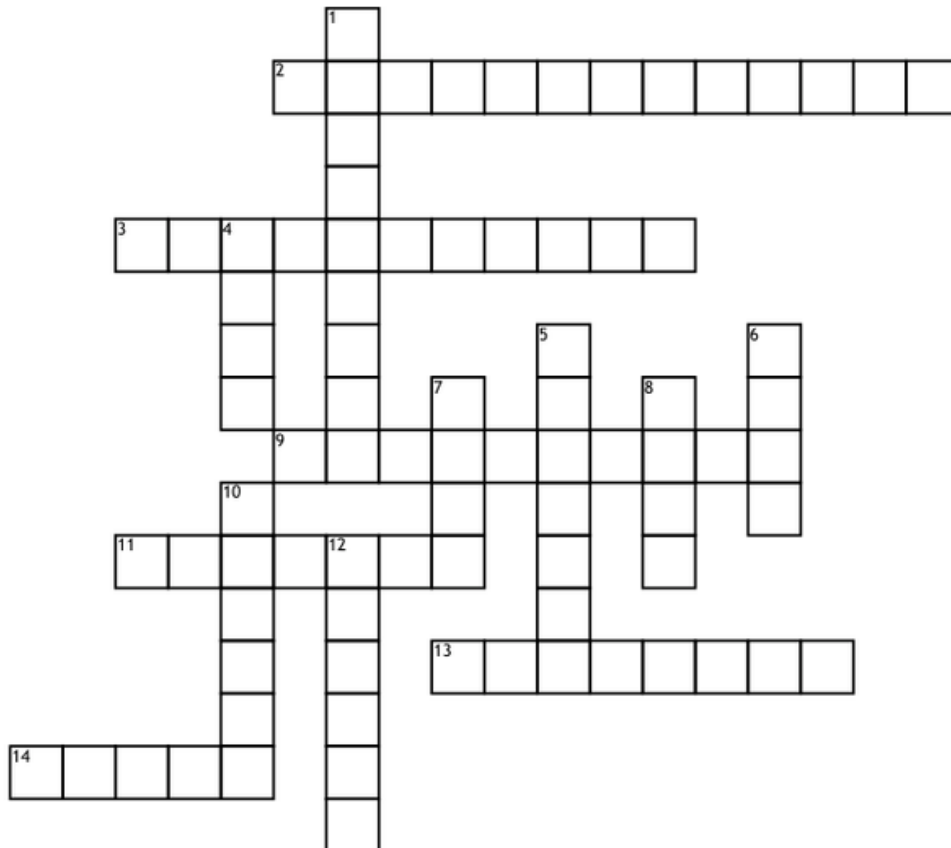
- call Homeland Security Investigations at 1-888-373-7888
- call federal law enforcement at 1-866-DHS-2-ICE
- contact your chain of command or DoD Inspector General hotline at 1-800-424-9098



Complete this Winter Emergency Preparedness crossword puzzle and be entered into a drawing to win a prize!

Email the completed puzzle to [EM@boonecountymo.org](mailto:EM@boonecountymo.org).

# Winter Emergency Preparedness



**Across**

- 2. Those with medical conditions should include these in their emergency kits.
- 3. Confusion, slurred speech, memory loss, and lack of coordination are all signs of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9. Never use these indoor during power loss.
- 11. Have an extra one of these handy for your phone.
- 13. When driving in snow, increase your following \_\_\_\_\_.

- 14. Leading cause of winter injuries.

**Down**

- 1. Dry socks and gloves will help prevent \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. While shoveling, \_\_\_\_\_ snow rather than lifting it.
- 5. Contact wearers should include a pair of these.
- 6. Don't forget to have this handy for emergency purchases.
- 7. You should refresh your emergency kit every \_\_\_\_\_.

- 8. Your personal emergency kit should prepare you to shelter at \_\_\_\_\_ for up to 72 hours.
- 10. Dressing in multiple \_\_\_\_\_ will keep you warm when working outdoors.
- 12. One \_\_\_\_\_ of water a day per person in emergency kits.

# BOONE COUNTY SPOTLIGHT

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Starting this year, we'd like to spotlight one of our local partners who work hard to make Boone County such a great place to live, work, and recreate in. This month we'd like to recognize Melissa Wilding.

**Please introduce yourself and your organization:**

My name is Melissa Wilding and I'm the Disaster Program Manager for the Central & Northern Missouri Chapter of the American Red Cross.

**What does your organization provide?**

Our organization provides many services in each community with the goal of preventing and alleviating human suffering. We respond to disasters such as home fires, and provide immediate support to those affected, and offer preparedness education to families, schools, organizations and businesses. Our Service to Armed Forces program helps military members and their families and veterans with resources.



We also provide lifesaving training including First Aid, CPR and water safety through our Training Services Programs. And we are the largest supplier of blood in the U.S. ensuring lifesaving blood and blood products are available for patients in need. More than ninety percent of our work force is volunteers, so we offer many opportunities for individuals to get involved in our mission. For information on our services and how to volunteer, go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or call 1-800-Red Cross.

**What are some challenges you face?**

We are in need of volunteers who are interested in helping us respond to local disasters, such as home fires. Home fires are the most common disaster we respond to and having a volunteer team to help us do this important work is key to our service to the community. Our disaster responder volunteers provide help and hope to those affected by fires, floods and tornadoes. They touch lives every day and make such a difference. It is our priority to bring on more volunteers in the months ahead to help us carry out our mission in Boone County and the surrounding communities. For those interested in exploring a volunteer opportunity with us, please go to [redcross.org/volunteer](http://redcross.org/volunteer) or call 1-800-RedCross.

**How do you like to spend your time outside of work?**

I enjoy traveling and enjoying all different sorts of outdoor activities. I especially love hiking and exploring our local, state and national parks.

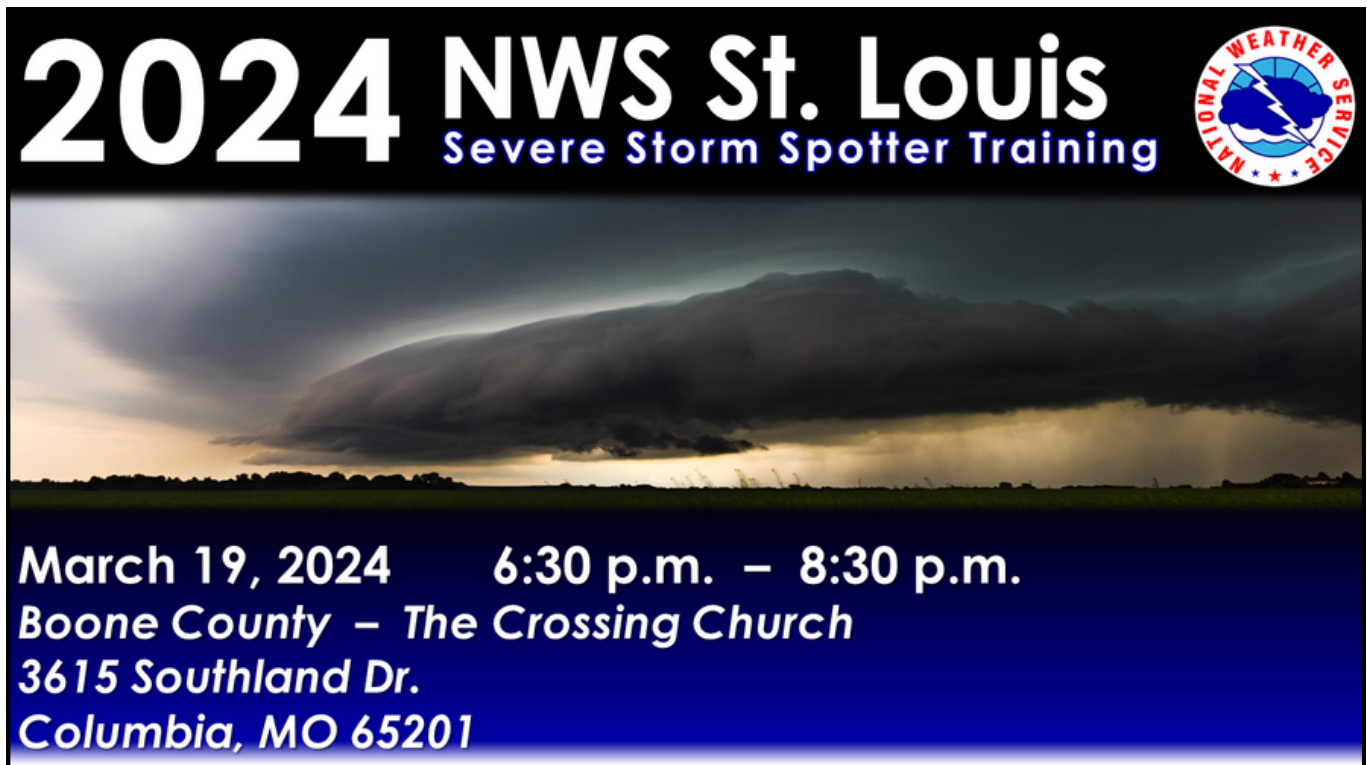
**What's one thing on your bucket list?**

To travel to Banff National Park in Alberta Canada and hike the northern most Rocky Mountains area throughout that national park.

# UPCOMING TRAINING

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January 2024

A promotional poster for the 2024 NWS St. Louis Severe Storm Spotter Training. The top section features the text "2024 NWS St. Louis" in large white font, with "Severe Storm Spotter Training" in smaller blue font below it. To the right is the National Weather Service logo. The background is a dramatic landscape with a large, dark storm cloud over a field at sunset or sunrise. The bottom section, on a dark blue background, contains the event details in white text: "March 19, 2024 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.", "Boone County – The Crossing Church", "3615 Southland Dr.", and "Columbia, MO 65201".

**2024 NWS St. Louis**  
Severe Storm Spotter Training

**March 19, 2024 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**  
**Boone County – The Crossing Church**  
**3615 Southland Dr.**  
**Columbia, MO 65201**

Join us Tuesday, March 19, from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm for National Weather Service Severe Storm Spotter Training.

These FREE presentations train regional weather spotters to gather and relay real-time observations of severe weather events such as tornadoes, damaging winds, hail, flooding, and winter weather.

These reports assist National Weather Service (NWS) meteorologists in making warning decisions and as a spotter you will help the NWS fulfill their mission of protecting life, property, and your local community with life saving information. These classes are open to anyone, regardless of age or experience, and run about two hours long.

If you want to learn more about the weather, join us at The Crossing Church on the 19th!

# STAFF UPDATE

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## **Kraig Johnson, Planning and Preparedness Specialist**

Kraig coordinated his first Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meeting of the year and distributed LEPC purchased equipment to Columbia Fire Department and Heinz/Kraft; he coordinated OEM's first two Winter Weather stakeholder calls; Kraig has also been working on our Mass Fatality Plan and Continuity of Government (COG) planning, and has been continuing our work on the Disaster Recovery Plan by meeting individually with Recovery Support Function (RSF) groups.

## **Della Luster, Administrative Coordinator**

Della worked hard to close out the 2023 budget and get us ready to work off of the 2024 budget. She also reconciled our purchasing cards and made sure that everyone in the office got paid!

## **Chris Kelley, Director**

Chris attended a planning meeting to bring a FEMA Faithful and Readiness Symposium in for Faith-Based community and assisted Kraig in leading our last Disaster Recovery Plan meeting. He also helped our warning siren contractor install the siren on Easley River Road and met with the 13th Circuit Court administrator to assist them with transitioning to using the RAVE platform for emergency messaging to their employees. Chris also took the FEMA course K-2306 focusing on EOC Resource Skillsets.

## **Bart Messer, Administrative Assistant**

Bart worked on tasks to keep our office running smoothly. He answered phone calls to the ECC, updated our EOC computers, checked the OEM vehicles biweekly, and paid the bills.

## **Jake Waller, Deputy Director**

Since the last Chronicle, Jake taught an AHA CPR class, gave a tour of the EOC to a group of MU students, participated in an earthquake exercise and Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) training, conducted interviews to fill the open full-time staff position, and finalized the 2023 Strategic Plan Addendum and 2023 Annual Report.

## **Matt Brown, Training and Exercise Specialist**

Last month, Matt earned the Advanced Professional Series Certificate in Emergency Management! He taught Hands Only CPR train-the-trainer, an ICS 400 class in Maryville, a BLS CPR class to county employees, and conducted part 2 of an Earthquake drill for OEM staff.

Matt facilitated a DNR training on wild edible plants for the CERT team, represented our department at our LEPC, and Kraig and Matt gave a disaster preparedness class to local Scouts seeking to get their Disaster Preparedness Merit badge.

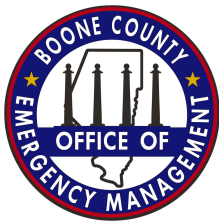
Finally, CERT had its annual Holiday Party where they recognized the amazing work that all of our volunteers do.

# ENGAGE WITH OUR OFFICE

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The Boone County Office of Emergency Management OEM Chronicle contains preparedness information to help those who live, work, and visit Boone County become better prepared for emergencies.

If you have any suggestions about content to add to the Chronicle, please don't hesitate to reach out by emailing [EM@boonecountymo.org](mailto:EM@boonecountymo.org).



Come join almost 7,000 of your friends and neighbors and follow our socials. We are: [@BooneCountyOEM](https://www.instagram.com/BooneCountyOEM)



For weather information, monthly giveaways and preparedness tips please visit: [@boonecountyready](https://www.instagram.com/boonecountyready)

**Sign up for Free Boone County Ready Alerts**  
Get weather, emergency, and special-event text and email alerts.

**Emergency Alerts:**

Text BCALERT to 67283 to opt-in to receive emergency notifications.

**Preparedness Notifications:**

Text READY to 67283 to opt-in to non-emergency preparedness messaging.



(573) 554-7900



2145 E County Drive Columbia, MO 65202