

MABAS-WISCONSIN *in ACTION*

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

FALL-WINTER 2010
DOUBLE ISSUE

A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience

RACINE REHAB GROUP HAS LONG MABAS HISTORY

BY STEVEN JONES, RACINE FRIE BELLS

When the **Racine Fire Bells** began their canteen service over 60 years ago, their "theatre of operations" was almost exclusively limited to the needs of the Racine Fire Department. Over the years, an occasional run would be made to a suburban incident, but those runs were few and far between.

"The bottom line is that our rehab services and local MABAS divisions have formed a partnership that is mutually beneficial to all"

The emergence of MABAS in Southeast Wisconsin two decades ago really identified the need for a rehab function at these emergency scenes. Where before a single department might have had their needs met by a local auxiliary,

MABAS scenes quickly proved to be far more complex, bringing together numerous, sometimes dozens of departments at a single scene. The needs of such large scale incidents quite honestly began to overwhelm local auxiliaries.

(Continued on page 7)



Rehab Unit 66R (Reserve Unit former Mt. Pleasant ambulance - stationed in Racine).
(Photo by Timothy J. Stein)



Inside this issue:

My First MABAS Box	2
MABAS Division Spotlight	3
Milwaukee Rehab	4
MABAS Tornado Responses	5
"People Trapped"	6
Box Card Planning	6
Waukesha/Oneida Rehab	8
MABAS Floods	9
What is MABAS	10

PRESIDENT'S CORNER *BY BRIAN SATULA*

MABAS-Wisconsin has experienced a banner year for growth. Since last February 1st, our organization has grown by 13 divisions for a total of 36 divisions. With some neighboring counties cooperating with organized divisions, we are close to 60% of the counties in Wisconsin participating in MABAS.

This newsletter highlights incident rehabilitation for firefighting personnel. As any incident commander should be aware, when the alarm sounds the sudden change in activity, the added weight of equipment, the environmental temperature and the heat stress of a structure fire, all take a toll on the human body. The newsletter highlights some of the dedicated, volunteer organizations that provide this necessary personnel rehabilitation for the fire service.

It's no secret that box alarms occur on a daily basis within MABAS. As with our previous newsletters, we share some of the box alarm experiences from around the state and the value it provides to our communities. This newsletter places the MABAS division spotlight on Dunn and Pepin Counties – collectively organized as Division 117 – and the benefit they have received from organizing their division. Enjoy the newsletter and please let us know if you have any suggestions for the next issue.



**MABAS in Action —
Cudahy 4th Alarm — see page 6**
(Photo by Timothy J. Stein)

MABAS-WISCONSIN IN ACTION

MY FIRST MABAS BOX - DIVISION 117 IN ACTION *BY QUENTIN POPP*

The first MABAS Box of Division 117 (Dunn/Pepin Counties) turned out to be an extraordinary event lasting over 7 hours. Five alarms and one strike team was utilized. In all, 14 Tenders, 5 Engines, 1 Truck, 1 Water Supply, 1 Squad, 2 Command Vehicles Responded with total apparatus count of 24. An estimated 400,000 gallons of water was applied to the fire in just over 7 hours, with no injuries reported.

MABAS Division 117 5th Alarm + 1 Strike Team
July 14th, 2010
Knapp House
503 State Highway 12 East
Knapp, Wisconsin

SIZEUP

04:38 hours: One Story Common Wood Frame Construction with Fire and Smoke showing from side 2 Menomonie FD Engine 2 will be investigating.

Staging area: Park parking lot on Park Street and Highway 12

04:27 hours – Still Alarm

Menomonie FD Engine 1 and 2, Tender 2 and 3, Medic 2, Platoon 1 and 2 to the scene with three called into station.

04:57 hours Mutual Aid Request

Boyceville Fire Department requested for full structure fire response.

05:03 hours – Request more Equipment Menomonie FD

Command requested Rescue 1 and Snorkel 2 from station 1 be sent to the scene.

05:07 hours – 2nd page requested for Boyceville personnel from Boyceville Fire.

05:13 hours – Requests Box Alarm 3-12, 3rd alarm for Tenders.

Dispatched per Box Card 3-12 were: Glenwood City, Colfax, Elmwood, and Durand Fire Departments along with the Division Director.



05:35 hours – Menomonie FD Engine Requested 5th Alarm
 Menomonie FD Engine 1 requested that Box alarm 3-12 be increased to 5th alarm. Menomonie FD advised by MABAS dispatch that all tenders on the card were enroute and there were no more to dispatch from the card.

06:02 hours – Division Director requests Strike Team of Tenders

Division Director requested St Croix Comm Center be contact for a Tender Strike team of 5. St Croix advised they would be working on sending the 5 closest departments.

06:16 hours – Division Director Notified of Strike Team Response.

MABAS dispatch advises Division Director of a 5 tender strike team from St Croix County consisting of: Baldwin, Woodville, Roberts, New Richmond, and Deer Park.

07:03 hours – Request for 2 Engine Companies

Per Command Division Director contacts MABAS dispatch and requests the next two engine companies on Box card 3-12 be dispatch which was: Spring Valley, and Glenwood City.

08:01 hours – Tenders Released

New Richmond and Deer Park tenders were released from the scene

08:20 – 8:27 hours – Tenders Released

Roberts and Elmwood tenders were released from the scene

09:46 hours – Tenders Released

Durand, Baldwin, and Woodville tenders were released from the scene.

10:00 hours – 2 Engines 1 Tender released

Spring Valley and Glenwood City Engines and also Glenwood City tender were released from the scene

10:16 hours – Strike out the Box

Per Command Division Director strikes out box alarm 3-12 for Menomonie fire.

10:30 hours – Some Menomonie FD units released

Menomonie FD Snorkel 2 and Engine 2 were released from the scene.

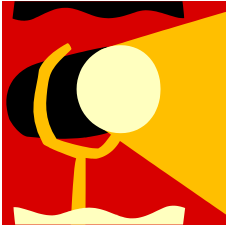
11:49 hours – Water Supply released

Colfax River pump and Tender were released from the scene.

12:30 hours – All Units Cleared Scene



(Photo by Glenwood City Tribune Press Reporter)



MABAS DIVISION SPOTLIGHT—DIVISION 117

BY QUENTIN POPP, SAND CREEK FIRE DEPARTMENT

Dunn-Pepin Counties, MABAS-WI Division 117, went active in 2010. In their first year, they had 3 MABAS Alarms: a five-alarm restaurant/bar fire, a 24-acre two-alarm brush fire in the Sand Creek Fire District, and a three-alarm structure fire in the Boyceville Fire District.

Our first three alarms have went pretty well as always were learning more and more each time and tweaking the ways we go about it a little bit. They have for the most part went according to plan - we did have some departments from outside of the division that are not a part of MABAS bring more apparatus then was requested but those agencies will continue to understand and change their ways with more of these calls.

The problem we had the most issue with is requesting equipment from agencies outside of the division and the MABAS system. We didn't realize that the dispatch center would not know or have any knowledge of NIMS typing of apparatus, so our Comm Center is calling requesting equipment that is needed and something as simple as a Tender (Tanker) is not being understood by the other dispatch centers because of a lack of NIMS training. We had to produce two MABAS dispatch scripts - one for dispatching our own agencies and one for conversing with outside Comm Centers that include a legend to help the outside dispatch center understand what equipment is being requested.

Because of our terrain in Division 117, IFERN just does not work. This has created problems with having to revert back to our main dispatch frequency and that clogs up our paging frequency for other calls. But we keep soldiering on until we can find another alternative on this.

I have definitely had good conversation and good feedback from the departments in Division 117. MABAS has allowed the rural volunteer departments to change their tactics. Normally a rural department might take a more defensive approach with a structure fire, even room and contents fires, but with our third MABAS box alarm call up here, Boyceville fire took an offensive approach because they knew they had 6 departments coming with equipment to back them up. By taking the offensive approach, Boyceville put the room and contents fire out, confined the fire to that room, and ventilated the rest of the two family house. With some help to clear up the smoke damage at least one of the families should be able to move back into the house. This is just one example of how MABAS is starting to help the agencies out in Division 117.

For rehab, we have a couple things written right into our box cards up here. The most significant is probably the Red Cross. Out of Eau Claire, they have a canteen vehicle they will dispatch to serve either hot or cold liquids and some food.

The other is dispatching our mobile command vehicle when it's really hot out or really cold out, where we can then use some of the extra space in that for rehabbing personnel.

Some of the 14 Tenders at the Knapp House fire

(Photo by Glenwood City Tribune Press Reporter)



MABAS-WISCONSIN IN ACTION

MILWAUKEE REHAB GROUP ENTERS ITS 64TH YEAR OF SERVICE

BY GARY SCHMIDT, MILWAUKEE FIRE BELL CLUB DIRECTOR OF REHAB

The **Milwaukee Fire Bell Club** has supported the fire service since 1947. The membership annually sponsors a child at a local summer burn camp, attends safety fairs, provides refreshments at ceremonies and fire recruit graduations, assists at training burns, and provides rehab services at extended duration emergencies.

The Milwaukee Fire Bell Club takes pride in its proactive setup of a rehab sector. By aggressive monitoring of dispatch and fireground radio traffic coupled with a comprehensive knowledge of response protocols of the departments served, the MFBC Rehab Response Team can operate with little interaction with the Incident Commander, allowing the IC to focus on the incident at hand. The MFBC's Emergency Support Unit (ESU-1) responds with 35 gallons of fresh water (used in the preparation of powdered coffee, cocoa, and Gatorade), 80 bottles of water, and 10 bags of ice.

On board are NutriGrain bars, 2 EZ-Up tents, two misting units, ice-water-soaked towels for hot weather, boot/hand warmers for cold weather, and socks for water soaked boots. Fire Bell Stew can be made on a full size four burner stove or outside food is brought in. A 10kw generator powers the rig and lights up the scene. Three 6 foot tables can be used for rehab away from the vehicle.

There are also over 2 dozen foldout chairs for rehabbing firefighters. The Milwaukee Fire Bell Club has served 400 personnel at a Port of Milwaukee Security drill and served for 47 straight hours at the Patrick Cudahy meatpacking plant fire in 2009.

In 2010, the Milwaukee Fire Bell Club became an official MABAS asset as part of Division 109 (City of Milwaukee). They also provide rehab for Division 107 (Milwaukee County) and Division 119 (Ozaukee County) and have served Divisions 102, 106, and 111 at times in the past. In 2011, the Milwaukee Fire Bell Club will place into service a second rehab vehicle geared towards rehabbing personnel. The rig will have interior seating for 10, exterior seating for 30, a misting unit and EZ-Up tent, two refrigerators containing 60 bottles of water, Gatorade, and PowerAde, and a hot water machine for making cups of instant soup, hot chocolate, and gourmet coffee. The interior also has two unisex restrooms.

This new rig was made possible by a substantial donation. ESU-1 is a renovated 1972 Heavy Rescue rig from an Illinois Fire Department.

The Milwaukee Fire Bell Club is a 501(c)(3) organization and never charges an agency for services rendered. As a MABAS asset, the rigs are available for deployment in other Divisions.



(Photos by Chuck Liedtke)

ANNOUNCEMENTS, REMINDERS & DEADLINES

- It's very important for the Wisconsin Fire Service Emergency Response Plan contact information to be current and in E-sponder. It will be especially important to WEM Fire Services Coordinator and the MABAS Regional Coordinators.
- Send completed MABAS Box cards to Dean Nelson at dnelson94@wi.rr.com

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Your contributions to the various columns will make this newsletter a success. Let me know about your MABAS activity at garyschmidt@wi.rr.com. I will contact you upon receipt to formulate the newsletter article. In particular, pictures of activity are needed.

MABAS WISCONSIN IN ACTION STAFF

Content Editor.....Gary Schmidt (Milwaukee Fire Bell Club)

Format Editor.....Terry Schmidt (Milwaukee Fire Bell Club)

ContributorTim Stein (Racine Fire Bells)

MABAS TORNADOS BY GARY SCHMIDT AND JOSHUA NIELSEN, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, KENOSHA JOINT SERVICES



Above - A citizen trapped by downed power lines from a South Shore Fire & Rescue - EF-1 Tornado touch down - Durand Avenue & Oakes Road - October 26th, 2010

Below - Units staging at the Union Grove (Div 102) tornado of November 22, 2010. (Photos by Timothy J. Stein)



Every year, tornados strike Wisconsin. Normally thought of as a spring or summer event, a few years ago, one struck in January and in 2010, tornados struck in October and November.

Is a weather-related MABAS event any different? Here's what **Joshua Nielsen** of the Division 101 (Kenosha County) Comm Center tells MABAS Wisconsin In Action.

"I can tell you that from our experience in January of 2008, that dealing with a tornado is different than any other MABAS event we had experienced. In that event, we were dealing with two separate geographic areas being affected, one in Wheatland and one in the City of Kenosha".

"In each area we were receiving multiple calls for damaged and/or collapsed structures. I would say, from the Dispatch Center's point of view, it would be equivalent to having multiple structure fires occurring simultaneously in several different areas of the county. Pleasant Prairie Fire Chief Paul Guilbert responded to the Communications Center during the incident, providing a resource to the MABAS Dispatcher and assisted in communicating through Nextel phones when we couldn't communicate over normal radio channels".

"In our event, the amount of responding units lead to problems, at times, with units covering one another. We had doubled our staff shortly after the event started, but still only had one dispatcher to operate on the MABAS channel, so without Chief Guilbert, operating the MABAS channel would have been much more difficult".



Next Issue of MABAS Wisconsin In Action: Why units from 4 MABAS Divisions were outside another Division's firehouse.
(Photo by Dan Rode)

MABAS-WISCONSIN IN ACTION

“GIMME A 4TH ALARM - PEOPLE ARE TRAPPED” BY GARY SCHMIDT

Shortly before 10pm on Tuesday November 30, 2010, with temperatures dipping below freezing, a fire was reported to the Cudahy Fire Department (southeastern Milwaukee County Division 107), in apartments above a Print Shop. First in units reported residents trapped on the second floor. The building was at the end of block containing very closely placed commercial structures. There were not only serious life safety issues, but also the potential for rapid communication to the rest of the block.

After special calling for paramedic units from Divisions 107 and 109, a MABAS Box Alarm was transmitted at 10:09pm, and a minute later a second alarm level was requested. Within 15 minutes, Incident Command went directly to a fourth alarm level.

As per MABAS response recommendations, subsequent alarms included resources from Divisions 102 and 106 so as to not deplete Division 107. This was not an inter-divisional request however; just specific resources as listed on the Div 107 Box Card.



Fire Under Control - Note the aerial and ground ladders used in the rescues. Divisions 107, 109, 102 and 106 were utilized, demonstrating the regional response strategy of the MABAS system. (Photo by Timothy J. Stein)

ANNOUNCEMENTS, REMINDERS & DEADLINES

- It's very important for the Wisconsin Fire Service Emergency Response Plan contact information to be current and in E-sponder. It will be especially important to WEM Fire Services Coordinator and the MABAS Regional Coordinators.
- Send completed MABAS Box cards to Dean Nelson at dnelson94@wi.rr.com

MABAS BOX CARD PLANNING BY GARY SCHMIDT

MABAS Division 106 (Waukesha County) conducted a “Box Card Party” on January 26, 2011. This meeting was all business for the 30+ fire departments in the Division to come together and obtain agreements as to placement of other departments on a given department's Box cards. Neighboring Division departments were also invited as it is typical for MABAS assets to cross divisional lines prior to an interdivisional request level.

The meeting also allowed for the publicizing of special resources a given department may have and was willing to share. This included foam, boats, water rescue, technical rescue, command posts, and other such items.

Bill Rice, Southeast Regional Coordinator for MABAS Wisconsin, offered many suggestions for Box Card design, such as:

- Try to have the same number of resources per alarm level - if you list 3 engines and 2 trucks at the Box Level, list the same at the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th alarm. If your Life Safety Card has 3 BLS and 2 ALS at the Box Level, try to keep it like that at other levels. The reason is, under the stress of an escalating event, the Incident Commander can easily calculate what each additional alarm will bring without having to reference the card.
- Do not highlight or use different fonts or colors—they mean something to you, but will confuse other departments when they reference them.
- Complete all five MABAS Box Alarm levels. Even if you think you will never have an incident that would be that large, there will be times where resources at a given alarm level are not available and the Comm Center will go to the next level to fulfill the alarm level request.
- Determine where your interdivisional requests will come from. Your entire division may be overwhelmed by an event such as severe storm and you may have to leapfrog to the interdivisional level for help.
- Spread out the strain on resources in the immediate area by expanding the geographical area you are drawing from.
- Minimize the number of resources drawn from one department, especially at the same alarm level
- Avoid listing specific unit numbers—let the responding department determine which engine or truck to respond
- If you have drawn resources from a neighboring division on the first five box alarm levels, do not list them as an interdivisional choice.

RACINE FIRE BELLS — CONTINUED

(Continued from page 1)

The Fire Bells recognized this need in our area and began exporting our services to fire departments throughout Southeast Wisconsin. The expansion of our services was accomplished largely through the contacts we made with the numerous departments found on the scene of a MABAS incident.

As knowledge of our services grew, departments began to place us on their MABAS cards. At first we were listed at the 3rd or 4th alarm level, but frankly, the time needed to contact a crew and prepare for a response, as well as the time needed to reach more distant scenes, necessitated that we be placed on the MABAS cards at an earlier level. Where before we might not be contacted until an hour or so had elapsed, placing us at the Box or 2nd alarm level allows us to reach emergency responders more rapidly, earlier in an incident, when first due crews really needed rehab.

About ten years ago the Racine County Fire Chiefs made the Fire Bells an Associate Member of their organization. Having a member present at County Chief's meetings allows us the opportunity to get to know and communicate with area incident commanders, propose ideas, prompt discussion, and provide information.



Rehab Unit 64 (stationed at Lake Geneva fire station 1)



Rehab Unit 65 (former Kenosha FD ambulance - stationed in Racine) (Photo by Timothy J. Stein)

The Racine Fire Bells were one of the first emergency responders in our area to carry an onboard cross band repeater. This type of equipment allowed us to expand the types of services at a scene, services which went beyond refreshments and rehab supplies. MABAS scenes were the ones where these additional services were most often needed. Over the years misting fans, Core Cooler chairs, propane heaters, rack chargers for radios of all types, and other equipment were added to our arsenal in order to better meet the needs of those at MABAS scenes.

Today we respond to an area comprising 1000 square miles. The greatest catalyst in the growth of our services over the past 15 years has been the MABAS system. Participation in MABAS has allowed us to reach more departments and care for far more emergency responders than we ever thought possible. The favor has been returned to us in the form of financial and other means of support for our services which comes from the over 50 fire and rescue agencies that now lie within our response area. The bottom line is that our rehab services and local MABAS divisions have formed a partnership that is mutually beneficial to all.

DIV 119 HAS FINAL TRAINING

BY GARY SCHMIDT

Ozaukee County Division 119 conducted its final training on December 13, 2010, before going live in January, 2011. The exercise intentionally simulated a MABAS Box that requested units from multiple counties that utilized different radio systems. Departments responded (non-emergency) to the exercise site to test fireground communications. There were some bumps encountered with radio communications that required follow-up.

It should be noted that while Division 119 did not go "live" until 2011, it was used in interdivisional requests by both 2009 and 2010. That underscores not only the value of MABAS and the ease of understanding its response protocols, but the immediate need for it across the State.

MABAS-WISCONSIN IN ACTION

WAUKESHA REHAB GROUP IS WELL TRAINED BY KATHY BAKER, NPDF AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

The **North Prairie Fire Department Auxiliary** is a rehab group in MABAS Division 106 (Waukesha County). While technically part of the North Prairie Fire Department, the canteen rig is listed on various MABAS Box cards in Division 106. We have 9 active members.

The auxiliary does participate in mass casualty trainings, and has its own trainings on scene safety and what area departments expect of us. All of our members have had NIMS 700 & 100. Some of our members are certified in: NIMS 200, first aide, CPR, defibrillator use, CERT, emergency sign language, & wild land fire management.

For emergency situations we average 20 calls per year. We will go anywhere we are asked, but primarily southwest Waukesha County and some of Jefferson & Walworth County.

We also provide service for trainings, refreshers, county Chiefs meeting's and meals for NPDF monthly business meetings. Our primary funds come from the annual North Prairie Harvest Festival, which we co-organize. We sometime get donations from other fire department and individuals.



NORTHERN WISCONSIN REHAB BY LARRY MATHEIN, CHIEF, LITTLE RICE FIRE DEPARTMENT

MABAS Division 114 (Oneida County) has a rehab group that was inspired by a retiree from the Milwaukee Fire Bell Club (Norb Kartz). The **Little Rice Emergency Services Unit (ESU)** is a refurbished Fed Ex truck that we put together ourselves. It functions as a self contained mobile canteen type vehicle, capable of cooking and serving hot food and hot and cold drink as required. Normal stock on board includes Beef Stew, Cookies, Crackers and assorted drinks such as Gatorade, 200 bottles of water, coffee, hot cocoa. Our crew can have food ready to serve for at least 50 personnel within 15 minutes of arrival.

There are no costs involved with response (although we do accept donations) and we will respond wherever we are needed for emergency personnel use only.

Our services are provided by members of the Little Rice Fire Department which is a municipal department located in Oneida County. In addition, there are community members that are not able to fill the role of firefighter or EMS personnel. Most are older folks who were interested in helping their neighbors.



The ESU has been used on crime scenes at the request of Department of Justice and Vilas County Emergency Management; wildfire incidents for the WiDNR; and fire/emergency scenes in Lincoln County, Oneida County, and Vilas County.

Our crew will respond just about anywhere they are needed. We have no defined "Coverage Area." Travel time can be really about the only limiting factor. Once pagers are activated, we generally can be on the road headed to a scene within about 20 to 30 minutes. The responses are made in a non-emergency mode unless requested otherwise by an Incident Commander. Then the Chief of our department has to authorize that. Although fully equipped with warning lights, siren and radios, it is hard to justify "Emergency Beef Stew." If a jurisdiction requests us sooner, rather than later, in an incident, we obviously will

(Continued on page 9)



MABAS FLOODS BY GARY SCHMIDT

On July 22, 2010, there was a historic weather event that cause havoc in the Milwaukee area, affecting one Fire Department more than others. A line of summer thunderstorms developed in the late afternoon along a slow moving weather front. The **North Shore Fire Department (NSFD)**, a consolidation of Fire Departments from the seven contiguous cities and villages in the northeast pocket of Milwaukee County, was called to provide Mutual Aid just across the County line to the Mequon Fire Department for a structure fire caused by lightning from the first storms to pass through.

Within the hour, a second line of storms passed through northern Milwaukee County around 4pm, resulting in many calls for service for the NSFD. The NSFD mutual aid units were released from the Mequon fire and responded back into their territory. While enroute, those crews had to respond to lightning striking their own firehouse (NSFD Station #1).

The storms stalled over the area. In less than 2 hours, over 8 inches of rain fell (a record) in a 5 square mile area, with the rest of the County still getting over 4 inches of rain. The Wauwatosa Fire Department had several inches of water in the ground level of their new fire house opened just weeks earlier.

As darkness ensued, basements were flooding causing electrical hazards. The NSFD was responding to one call after another to rescue people trapped by high waters. The Milwaukee Fire Department was also overwhelmed, with many "dive rescue" assign-



ments for cars in street underpasses. The NSFD 911 Call Center flooded out, forcing dispatchers to relocate to a backup center.

The NSFD contacted Division 107 for a Box Alarm to get additional resources into the NSFD to assist with the high call volume. Tosa D/C Scott Erke was at Division 107 Dispatch and felt that there would be too many turn downs from other 107 departments due to the high volume of incidents throughout the Milwaukee County Area.

MABAS Southeastern Regional Coordinator Bill Rice was contacted: "In quick discussion with D/C Erke, I felt that we could quickly get a Task Force together from NSFD neighbor to the north that was not have the high volume of call that the NSFD was having. This proved to be very effective. Within 30 minutes, the NSFD had almost doubled its size and no residents were waiting in line for service. The responses continued for about four hours until calls sharply dropped off and units returned to their communities".

"Division 106 and 111 were also contacted and asked if they could respond to the NSFD if needed. 111 said yes and 106 said no; they too had numerous calls going. By the time I received the information about 106, things were leveling off in NSFD's response area. I still knew I had one Division on standby. My other concern at the time was that Milwaukee would need assistance. I had planned on calling 102, 103 or 101 to assist them if needed. While 119 was not technically a functioning Division, they were familiar with the procedure".

Even with the rains stopping, the aftermath was sewers overflowing, rivers forming as water found a place to drain, and roadways impassable due to several feet of water. Pictured above was I-43. Underpasses on the expressway filled with several feet of water, stopping traffic (note bridge in background). Thousands of commuters could not traverse the area on many streets and highways in the northern half of Milwaukee County for hours until the water subsided. (Photo by Mike De Sisti).

NORTHERN WISCONSIN REHAB — CONTINUED

(Continued from page 8)

be there sooner into the incident. The goal should be to have us rolling BEFORE you absolutely have to have us there. We can always turn around.

If an Incident Commander feels that their personnel can benefit from our service, call. Again, when you figure an hour or so for us to arrive, getting us on the road early in the incident takes some of the stress off. This is especially important during weather extremes as emergency personnel can become overexerted and taxed faster. This is NOT the time to start thinking about calling! We should already be on our way. We are part of MABAS Division 114, which at this time is the only active Division in the region. The ESU is due on most departments Box or 2nd alarms. We are dispatched by the Oneida County Dispatch Center.

We would be happy to provide any additional information or answer any questions that might come up. Just give the Chief a call. Our crews will also come out for demonstration purposes if a group of departments or jurisdictions would like to see what we are.

MABAS-WISCONSIN IN ACTION

WHAT IS MABAS (MUTUAL AID BOX ALARM SYSTEM)? BY GARY SCHMIDT

MABAS is a system that preplans the resources needed when an incident exhausts local resources. The activation of MABAS may differ depending on the area of the State, but an example could be when an incident escalates beyond a full first alarm assignment. A full first alarm assignment generally consists of 2-3 pumper engines, 1-2 aerial ladder trucks, 1-2 water tenders (tanker trucks), a BLS and/or ALS unit, and 1 or more chiefs. A BLS is basic life support, such as EMT-staffed ambulance; ALS is advanced life support, such as a paramedic staffed ambulance.

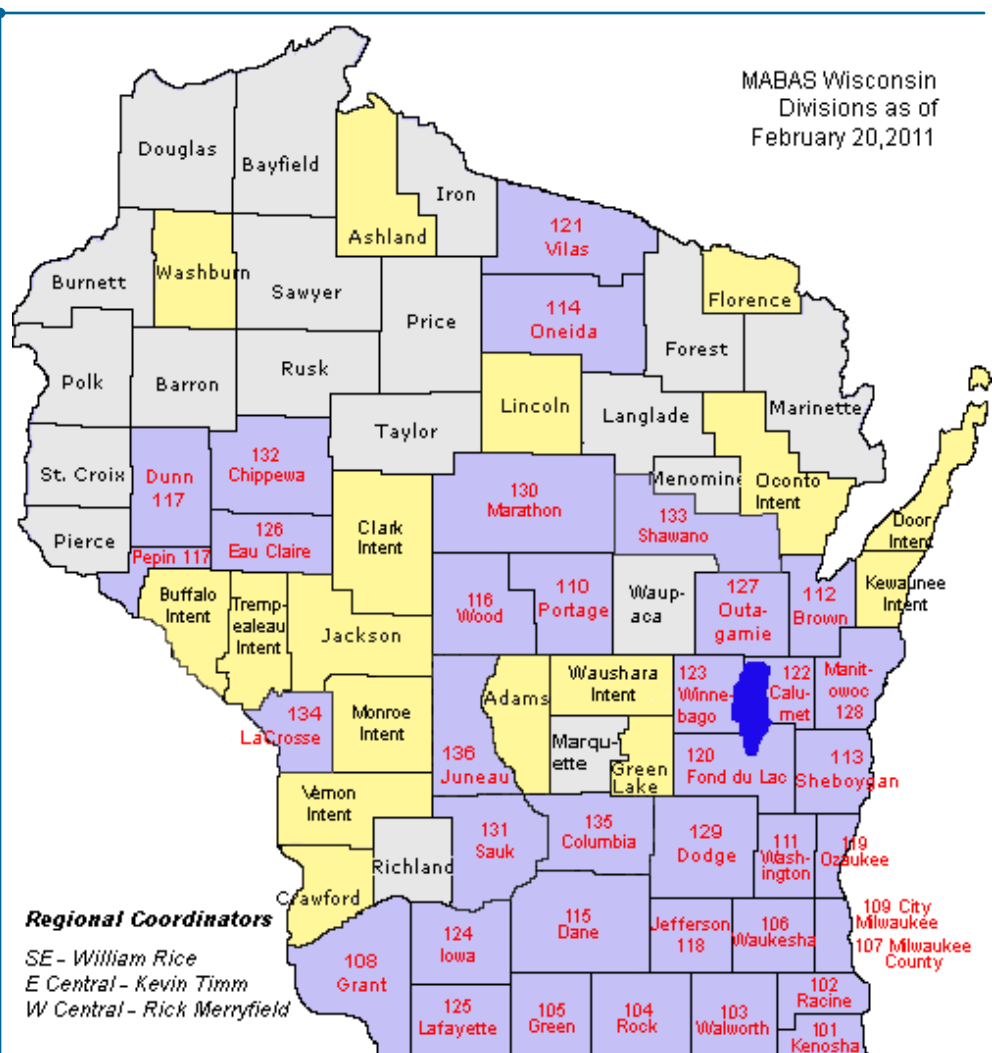
When a MABAS box is requested, special procedures go into effect. In some Divisions, the local Dispatch Center is relieved of the dispatching of additional resources when the MABAS Division's central dispatch center takes over.

In areas that already have a centralized dispatching center, often additional dispatching resources get called in when a MABAS Box occurs. Most importantly, a single radio frequency is used that is common to all Fire Service agencies in the MABAS system. This allows for very quick dispatching of many units from multiple jurisdictions. The MABAS system also handles the staffing of firehouses in the stricken community by outlying departments.

MABAS Wisconsin dictates the minimum staffing and certification of the resources requested so that an Incident Commander always knows that fully staffed, certified resources will be responding to provide aid to the incident. Common terminology and radio frequencies are used throughout the MABAS Wisconsin system, enabling interoperability between agencies.

The preplanning of resources ensures that no community will be depleted of resources should another incident occur. Besides structure fires, MABAS has box cards for grass fires, mass casualty incidents, hazardous materials, trench rescue and other types of emergencies.

MABAS has coordinator positions for regions based on the six Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) regions.



For more information about becoming a member of MABAS-Wisconsin, visit:

www.mabaswisconsin.org

MABAS WISCONSIN continues to grow. There are 36 active divisions and other counties are at various stages of formation.