

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

## HOW WI-TERT CAN ASSIST DURING A MABAS INCIDENT

BY GARY SCHMIDT, WITH ASSISTANCE FROM HEIDI MUELLER AND CONNIE CATERALL

**A Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce or TERT**, is an organized network of trained dispatchers that could be deployed to assist a dispatch center or staff a command post in the event any of our public safety communication centers would become compromised or overwhelmed due to a natural disaster or terrorist event.

WI-TERT, is part of a nationwide initiative. In 2006, WI-TERT entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Wisconsin, the Department of Military Affairs, Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), and communication groups such as WINENA, WIAPCO, and SEWCRSG to facilitate the use of WI-TERT. Visit [www.wi-tert.org](http://www.wi-tert.org) for more information.

*The Police Chief requested the EOC to "get him all the resources they could".*



**An Actual Event:** The meatpacking plant was a major employer in the city. A fire not only was threatening to destroy the entire plant, but also was coming close to breaching the ammonia tanks. The entire city needed to be evacuated.

**Connie Catterall, WI-TERT State Coordinator** relates: "The Police Chief requested the EOC to 'get him all the resources they could'. A State Patrol Sgt. suggested WI-TERT and we were called in. We worked the mobile command post on the police side and eventually had one of our dispatchers in the

*(Continued on page 4)*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This issue takes a look at dispatching, both from within MABAS and from resources that are available to your communication center. MABAS looks at the dispatch centers and telecommunicators as integral team members just as they would the engine company and the personnel on board. Our goals are for you to gain an appreciation for the demanding and stressful job they have, and introduce a valuable resource to your center in Wisconsin called the Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (WI-TERT).

This issue also puts a spotlight on the very first MABAS division in Wisconsin. Division 101 was very much the pioneers of organized mutual aid in Wisconsin. The MWIA staff had an opportunity to have a discussion with Chief Paul Guilbert (Pleasant Prairie Fire and Rescue), a fire service leader and MABAS-WI's first president, as he shares his experiences moving this beneficial mutual aid system into our state.

Finally, as fire service mutual aid becomes further refined in Wisconsin, our goal is interoperability – communications, resources and operations. To that end, we have begun to look at water supply interoperability with hopes of setting a MABAS standard. Many fire departments from across the state, urban, rural and the interface between gave MWIA input over several months – we are providing the results of that survey for your review.

Thank you and enjoy the newsletter,

Brian M. Satula, President  
MABAS-Wisconsin



### Inside this issue:

Results of Water Movement Survey	2
Inside the Comm Center	2
MABAS Division Spotlight	3
What keeps the Comm Center Busy	5
What is MABAS	6



An agency in training follows along on a MABAS Box card as a radio drill is conducted by SE Region Coordinator Bill Rice at MABAS Division 107. Seeing the card while hearing the radio responses enabled those who would be using the radios understand the difficulties encountered by the Comm Center when transmissions are unclear, distorted, or stepped on.

(Photo by Wm Mokros)

## MABAS-WISCONSIN IN ACTION

### RESULTS OF WATER MOVEMENT SURVEY

BY TERRY SCHMIDT AND GARY SCHMIDT—DATA COMPILED BY ED JANKE

Earlier this year, Fire Departments were asked to complete a Water Movement survey, designed to assist MABAS Wisconsin in obtaining perspective regarding interoperability. Seventy-five departments responded. The first 4 questions were for contact information. Listed below is a summary of the responses to the remaining 10 questions. Note: in some responses, the question was not applicable and in some cases, multiple answers were given.

Question 5: Water is predominately supplied by:					
Municipal water system with hydrants	Dry hydrants	Drafting from static water source	Mix		
52	7	15	1		
Question 6: Total Stored municipal water supply capacity for response area:					
0 to 100,000 gals	100K to 500K gals	500K to 1M gals	1M to 5M gals	5M+ gals	No Limit lakes, streams
9	15	9	19	6	17
Question 7: Are water supply operations normally assigned a separate operating frequency:					
Yes	No				
46	29				
Question 8: The Steamer Head or large connection size is:					
4" NST	4.5" NST	4.5" special	5" Storz	5" special	6"
7	40	1	21	1	2
Question 9: Hydrants are color coded consistent with NFPA:					
Yes	No	N/A			
16	51	8			
Question 10: Engine supply lines are:					
2.5" lines with NST couplings	3" lines with NST couplings	4" lines with Storz couplings	5" lines with Storz couplings	Larger	
6	1	13	54	1	
Question 11: Tenders are generally filled from:					
Portable Pumps	Engines	Self-Filling	Hydrants	N/A	
7	27	12	16	13	
Question 12: Tender fill lines are:					
2.5" with NST	2.5" with Cam Locks	2.5" with Storz	3" with quick coupling adapter	3" with Cam Locks	3" with NST
9	15		1	1	7
Question 12: Tender fill lines are: (cont)					
3" with Storz	4" with Cam Locks	4" with Storz	5" with Storz	Overhead 6"	
1	1	23	16	1	
Question 13: Average % of department fire incidents where mutual aid is requested (stricken agency) for water supply operations:					
< 5%	5% to 10%	10% to 25%	25% to 50%	> 50%	
36	15	9	3	12	

### INSIDE THE COMM CENTER

BY GARY SCHMIDT

I asked several Communication Centers about the use of MABAS. Here are some of the responses:

#### What are the main challenges to a Comm Center during a MABAS event?

- Staffing – the goal is to allow the MABAS Dispatcher to focus on the event, but this is not always possible.
- If you dispatch proper apparatus correctly, then it is easier to have everything else fall in line

#### What is often overlooked with respect to MABAS Comm Centers?

- What we need the most is more MABAS calls to occur or more refresher training so our Dispatchers get more experience working the calls. We have 14 Dispatchers and we don't even have 14 MABAS calls a year, so you might only dispatch one every two years.

#### What advice would you give Divisions just starting out?

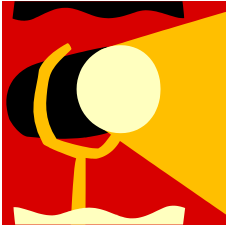
- Do some table top practices. Dispatchers just want to practice saying the initial dispatch.
- Become fully aware of expectations through conversation with Division leaders and your neighboring Division communications centers.

#### As more Divisions are coming online, what issues have you run into with respect to other Divisions?

- Too much radio traffic. You are asked to monitor MABAS all the time, but when other incidents in other Divisions are going on, you really can't listen to them while you are busy with your own department.
- The only time issues arise is when there are two incidents going on at once. It can make it hard to get time on the radio to make the necessary transmissions as well as the problem with agencies stepping on each other when trying to talk.
- We may turn down the speaker volume if another division's radio traffic makes it hard to hear our own radios.

#### What could use improvement?

- Better accuracy in units identifying themselves properly, and calling out properly and calling each other properly (don't call yourself a ladder when you are an engine).
- Dispatcher needs to understand the fire scene and what is happening.
- More training and riding with the FD could help Dispatchers. Perhaps going to IC school.



## MABAS DIVISION SPOTLIGHT—DIVISION 101

BY GARY SCHMIDT AND PAUL GUILBERT JR, CHIEF, PLEASANT PRAIRIE FIRE & RESCUE

**Kenosha County, MABAS-WI Division 101**, went active July 1, 1987; they were a MABAS Division before most of the current IL Divisions. **Paul Guilbert Jr**, President of MABAS Division 101, takes great pride in being the first MABAS Division in Wisconsin. MABAS Wisconsin In Action asked Chief Guilbert for his perspective on MABAS Wisconsin.

**MABAS Wisconsin In Action:** How does MABAS Wisconsin differ from MABAS Illinois from your operational perspective?

**Guilbert:** From an operational perspective there is almost no difference between the two states in keeping with the original goal identified when MABAS-WI was formed: "Protect the Franchise!" Simply stated we would continue the provision of mutual aid in the same manner as Illinois to ensure interoperability. What is different is the administration of MABAS-WI. MABAS-WI receives its authority through state statute WEM 8 and is organized as Divisions within regions, those regions being the six Wisconsin Emergency Management Divisions.

**MWIA:** Was it hard to transition to MABAS Wisconsin - what were the initial challenges?

**Guilbert:** The need to create and organize ourselves as MABAS-WI grew from the fact we had distinctly different problems to solve than did MABAS-IL. MABAS-IL was quite mature, larger, well organized and had a funding structure. MABAS-WI with the exception of Division 101 was quite young. In 2004 it was the desire of the approximately eight organized divisions in Wisconsin, to seek our own identity and to create an organization that would travel the state providing information and assistance in creating other divisions. We worked at the local and county levels to provide the education and training necessary to form a division. We worked the state level to gain the support of the elected officials as well as WI Emergency Management. The initial challenge, all of the work was done in a volunteer effort; in addition to your regular fire department duties and without the benefit of paid expenses. Many of the representatives of the eight divisions used personal finances to cover the expenses of travel, copying documents and vacation time.

**MWIA:** What advantages did you experience with the formation of MABAS Wisconsin?

**Guilbert:** The most important was our identity. We were an organized Wisconsin fire service organization with the purpose of coordinating fire, emergency medical and specialized rescue team mutual aid. At some unidentified point in the history of MABAS-WI, the WI fire and emergency medical service as a whole began to recognize that MABAS-WI was real, organized and committed to improving the provision of mutual aid at the local, intrastate and interstate levels.

**MWIA:** Your division, along with others, like Division 102 and 107, encompasses a large city and frontage on a major shipping lake. Are there any special box card or other considerations to covering a large City (Kenosha)?

**Guilbert:** Actually there are not any special cards to cover a large city. It is the belief of MABAS-WI that each community, large or small must identify the potential need for aid and to create their cards accordingly. Simply stated, MABAS-WI does not create 'special cards'; that process is kept at the local and division levels.

**MWIA:** Does Lake Michigan present any unique operational opportunities?

**Guilbert:** Yes and it is a personal frustration for me, I cannot get mutual aid east of Pleasant Prairie! Mutual aid responses should be based in using concentric circles, start at the center of your community (district) and work outwards bringing aid from your closest neighbors. Those of us on 'the Lake' find our mutual aid response distances become exaggerated because we must bring aid from departments farther, south, west and north because no aid is available from the east. This same situation exists for all areas of the state bordered by larger bodies of water.

**MWIA:** Your division is also geographically wide (east-west), which is similar to the majority of counties in the State (although many also stretch a great distance north and south as well). What should developing divisions be aware of when creating box cards with respect to distance?

**Guilbert:** Response time and distance is the basic premise to follow when creating cards. Where is the aid and how long does it take for the aid to arrive in my community. Factors such as staffed or unstaffed stations, time of day, weather conditions, travel routes and traffic congestion all play a part in how long it takes for aid to arrive and should be considered when creating box cards.

**MWIA:** Your division also has what I call an urban area (meaning Kenosha with an unlimited water supply) and rural areas. Does that come into play when forming box cards or has MABAS been in existence so long, that urban and rural firefighters are cross-trained?

**Guilbert:** MABAS-WI requires that all fire fighters re-

*(Continued on page 5)*

**MABAS-WISCONSIN IN ACTION**

**HOW WI-TERT CAN ASSIST DURING A MABAS INCIDENT — CONTINUED**

*(Continued from page 1)*

city’s communication center because of interoperability issues. Otherwise we probably would have only worked the mobile command post”.

A Fire Chief or any public safety agency can call for a WI-TERT deployment. This is done through the On-call WEM Duty Officer. WEM has an SOP they follow for WI-TERT deployments, which includes asking the requesting agency some basic information to start the deployment process.

<b>DEPARTMENT NAME:</b> Cudahy		<b>BOX ALARM TYPE:</b> Structure Fire			<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> December 4, 200!	
<b>BOX ALARM #</b> 14-01		<b>LOCATION OR AREA:</b> Entire City			<b>AUTHORIZED BY:</b> Chief Da	
<b>LOCAL DISPATCH AREA:</b>						
<b>ALARM LEVEL</b>	<b>ENGINES</b>	<b>TRUCKS</b>	<b>SQUADS</b>	<b>AMBULANCES</b>	<b>CHIEFS</b>	<b>SPECIAL EQUIPMENT</b>
STILL	Cudahy	Cudahy				
FULL ASSIGN.	Cudahy Cudahy St. Francis Oak Creek	South Milwaukee		Cudahy Cudahy	Cudahy South Milwaukee Oak Creek St. Francis	Command
<b>MABAS BOX ALARM:</b>						
<b>ALARM LEVEL</b>	<b>ENGINES</b>	<b>TRUCKS</b>	<b>SQUADS</b>	<b>AMBULANCES</b>	<b>CHIEFS</b>	<b>SPECIAL EQUIPMENT</b>
BOX	Franklin Greendale	Greenfield		Oak Creek (ALS)	Wauwatosa Greenfield Greendale Franklin	Milwaukee Fire Bell Wauwatosa Rescue 33 Wauwatosa RIT Oak Creek Command * Milwaukee County Bus
2ND	West Allis Hales Corners	North Shore			NorthShore Hales Corners West Allis	
3RD	South Shore Caledonia	City of Brookfield		Waterford	City of Brookfield South Shore	* ARES Communication * TERT
4TH	Pewaukee North Shore	West Allis			Caledonia Pewaukee	* LTIMIT
5TH	Tichigan Raymond	Racine		Union Grove-Yorkville	Racine Raymond	
<b>INTERDIVISIONAL REQUEST</b>		1st Choice 101	2nd Choice 109	3rd Choice 4		
<b>INFORMATION</b>		* Designates Local Dispatch Must Call		( W/ EX ) Designates extrication equipment needed		

WI-TERT team members are prepared to be deployed for a minimum of 72 hours. The WI-TERT Regional Coordinator will be in continual communication with the deployed WI-TERT team. The stricken agency is not required to have WI-TERT team member (s) in order to request a WI-TERT response. However, your agency can prepare by first completing a WI-TERT Agency Survey. The survey is intended to provide key information that will help deploy the most effective WI-TERT Team to your agency.

Additionally, your agency can proactively prepare by gathering materials such as local maps, lists of CAD codes/ commands and other items that would assist and increase the efficiency of WI-TERT team members deployed to your agency. In Division 107, the Cudahy Fire Department lists TERT on their Box Card (3rd Level Special Equipment) as a reminder of that available resource.

**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**

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## MABAS DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: DIVISION 101 — CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 3)*

sponding on interdivisional boxes be trained as a minimum as Wisconsin certified Firefighter 1 (one). Firefighter certification as well as training within the local department play an important role in assuring that all firefighters on a MABAS alarm can work together. Kenosha County does in fact have areas both urban and suburban that are served by fire hydrants and areas of the other extreme, absolutely no hydrants. MABAS cards are created to address responses with hydrant areas (an Engine Box) or to those areas without hydrants (Tanker/Tender Box). A Tanker/Tender box typically brings in a greater response of Tanker/Tenders to supply the water needed for any particular fire.

**MWIA:** Many divisions are in the formation stage - what rural firefighting challenges come into play that MABAS can help alleviate (to me, I would think distance and water supply are the main areas of concern in rural firefighting)?

**Guilbert:** The Incident Commander needs to identify the need for mutual aid early and activate MABAS early; requesting the appropriate type and amount of equipment. Activating the system early is the best way to address an emergency either urban, suburban or rural.

**MWIA:** Your division borders another state. What should similar divisions that are forming along the State border think about that most other divisions do not have to worry about?

**Guilbert:** The contracts and agreements are in place or

are in the process of being put into place. We encourage communication (talking) with mutual neighbors either in-state and in particular out-of-state to identify needs or pitfalls. When bringing 'change of quarters' aid in from other states, MABAS WI has a Knox Box Program that will assist in working with the Knox Keys from other states, to assure aid can enter the respective fire station when needed.

**MWIA:** Did you or do you encounter any radio issues within your division and how do you mitigate them?

**Guilbert:** We have not experienced radio issues within our Division when providing mutual aid.

**MWIA:** Being established for a long time, does Division 101 still conduct any training drills of any type?

**Guilbert:** Quite regularly; as Division 101 we have hosted no less than one major mutual aid drill both fire and disaster at a minimum in each of the last five years. The drills have included other divisions from both WI and IL.

**MWIA:** What advice would you give other divisions?

**Guilbert:** Talk, talk, talk to your neighbors before, during and after creating your Division. Familiarity with each other is the foundation of having an incident handled successfully.

**MWIA:** On average over the course of a year, how many MABAS responses does Division 101 have and what types (Structure Fire, Grass Fire, etc) are most prevalent?

**Guilbert:** Ten, with the most common being structure fires.

## WHAT KEEPS THE COMM CENTER BUSY BY GARY SCHMIDT

When an incident escalates to the MABAS level, the local Communications Center can become overwhelmed. Here is a list of activities that they may be involved with:

- Call in additional Police
  - Firefighter call backs
  - Calling for tow trucks
  - Calling for Gas, Electric, and other Utilities
  - Contacting the DNR
  - Health Department notifications
  - Calling Board Up Companies
  - Making Humane Society arrangements
  - Notifying Railroads of blocked tracks
  - Contacting Airports
  - Contacting Hwy Departments
  - Facilitating DPW requests
  - Diggers Hotline and Pipeline notifications
  - Calling Elected Officials
  - Calling Emergency Management personnel
  - Red Cross Notification
  - Facilitating numerous requests from Law Enforcement Incident Command
  - Facilitating Fire Department requests
- Also, numerous incoming calls may flood the Comm Center from:
- News Media
  - Citizens
  - Possible victim family members.

