

Emergency Situations

Various public services prime themselves for worst-case scenarios

Design by Karen Schwartztrauber/Index

Kirksville prepares against terrorism

Community Emergency Response Team trains to protect Kirksville

Alan Venneman
Staff Reporter

Vigilant citizens are uniting with agencies across Kirksville to prepare for worst-case scenarios close to home.

Members of the Community Emergency Response Team train together so they will be ready if disaster comes to Kirksville. Members would be able to assist their community beside emergency agencies in the city. The Fire Department has been training the team since the Sept. 11 attacks.

Randy Behrens, Kirksville fire chief and emergency manager said that after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, Kirksville received money to update its emergency plans to include terrorist attacks. Kirksville has run through two full-scale exercises to practice emergency plans this year, he said.

"We see if we can do what we thought we could do, and we did," Behrens said. "When you do these drills, it is a learning experience, so we can see if we can do what is in the plans."

Behrens said that if new information comes out from the Department of Homeland Security, for instance, he is sure the information filters down to all the people in Kirksville's emergency-response team.

Campus is cautious about crises

Campus emergency procedures exist for potential disasters

Emily Humble
For the Index

University personnel have a plan for a variety of emergencies, ranging from a fire to a tornado to a plane crash on campus.

David Hoffman, assistant dean of student affairs, said the University's emergency plan is ready for various situations.

"The plan is laid out, but it has to be flexible and adapt to the circumstances," Hoffman said.

He said that when it comes to emergencies, it's necessary to assess the situation and then act accordingly.

In the case of a residence hall evacuation, Hoffman said the plan is designed so every hall has a short-term location as well as a long-term site for the residents to meet.

"If there is a short-term emergency, the halls are evacuated, and they have a designated meeting point," Hoffman said. "If there is a need for a longer-term shelter, then we would identify another building on campus."

Hoffman said long-term evacuations are generally those lasting longer than 24 hours. Determining the long-term location depends on the specific emergency and the buildings affected.

Hoffman said.

"It is just a plan that kind of depends on what type of emergency or disaster it might be because a place that we are planning to go might not be available," Hoffman said.

Hoffman said there are challenges to finding places to relocate students.

"Most of our residence halls are much larger than our academic buildings in terms of holding folks," Hoffman said. "There is never really an ideal place when it comes to moving students."

Andrea O'Brien, director of Residence Life, said Residence Life has training sessions for its staff in order for evacuations and emergencies to run as smoothly as possible.

"We do our best to do scenario training within the halls and within our staff to try to give them as much preparation and as much advanced thought on how to handle situations," O'Brien said.

O'Brien said that in the Residence Life office, they start hall director training at the beginning of the school year and incorporate updates and changes in the training plans.

She also said training ses-

sions are offered throughout the school year. She is confident with her staff, she said.

"I think with most emergencies, the hall directors on staff are trained well enough that they will know what to do," O'Brien said.

Ryle Hall Director Mike Lueder stated similar sentiments as O'Brien on preparedness.

"For the situations that are more probable, we are very well trained for," Lueder said. "For situations that aren't as likely to happen, we obviously have protocol. I know them, and the staff knows them."

Lueder said that in Ryle, he and his staff try to inform students about emergency procedures.

He said they inform students about what to do in case of different emergencies at the beginning of the school year, and signs are also posted around the residence hall to let students know what to do.

Lueder also said that as seasons with weather-related emergencies approach, he revisits the policies for those types of emergencies with his staff.

He said he also tries to send out e-mails to remind students of what to expect from Missouri weather for the specific time of

ism by having a heightened awareness of his or her surroundings, Jefferson said. He said citizens must look for suspicious activities and people.

"It just needs to be reinforced that you need to prepare yourself and be involved," Jefferson said.

Freshman Liz Morrey said she does not think a terrorist attack are likely in Kirksville.

"I think that since they haven't had anything like that before, they probably wouldn't respond well," Morrey said. "Sure, you are supposed to take precautions for that kind of thing, but it's not like that's ever happened before. It would kind of catch them off-guard."

Morrey said she would want the city to keep her informed and protected in the event of an attack.

Adair County Sheriff Leonard Clark said the first step in an emergency is to evacuate the area. Clark said he would call on everyone in the sheriff's office in an emergency. He said other agencies would come as well, even the Salvation Army and the Red Cross with food for the first responders.

Clark said he keeps in close contact with the fire chief, the Red Cross and other emergency agencies in town about emergency procedures.

"I would say that we have very good cooperation between all of these agencies," Clark said. "These are the people you'll be calling on in an emergency. They are here to help."

Clark said the various city agencies meet once a month to discuss emergency drills and updates. Stan East is the leader of the Local Emergency Planning Commission and organizes these drills. Afterward, the agencies come together and critique their performance during the drill, he said.

"You can't plan for everything, but you got to have some plans in place so you can have some idea of what you are going to do," Clark said. "Then you just modify to the specific incident you have."

David Hall, director of the Kirksville Regional Airport, said that after the events of Sept. 11, the airport went through major changes to security and is still in the process of implementing more security measures.

Hall said the Federal Aviation Administration issued new airport regulations to follow a more in-depth plan for airports across the nation. Kirksville followed these

emergency plans so far, but it is too early to know what the updates will be, he said.

"There's been a lot of changes since [Sept. 11]," Hall said. "We didn't have terminal security previous to Sept. 11."

Brian Carter, supervisor of the water treatment plant, said the plant has measures in place to limit the access people have to the plant, but there is little to prevent someone from tampering with equipment. In the next couple of weeks, the plant will install cameras and gate openers to restrict access to plant facilities, he said.

Carter said security measures are in place now, and he will oversee further measures to prevent access to Hazel Creek and Forest Lake. He said it would be difficult to poison either lake without detection. The plant has chemical techniques and filters to clean the water of bacteria and anything a terrorist could put into the water, he said. Terrorists would have to destroy both water supplies and every safety measure the plant has, he said.

"It's real hard for someone to poison the lake," Carter said.

Carter said he has worked with CERT for training exercises that prepare for chlorine spills. He said more training with CERT is in place for the future.

"We have lots of eyes out there just to make sure that no one is doing anything bad to our water supply," Carter said.

"It is all awareness, and as far as terrorism goes in this part of the country, it can happen."

Marc Jefferson
Kirksville Fire Department Captain

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The Hannibal, Mo., Emergency Response Team approaches the Kirksville Moose Lodge parking lot April 19 during an exercise with Kirksville's Homeland Security Response Team.

Photo submitted by Steven Tharp

Be Prepared for Any Disaster

Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit with the following objects:

Water	First aid kit	Duct tape
Nonperishable food	Car keys and cash	Fire starter
Warm clothes	Radio	Pocket knife, hammer
Blankets	Flashlight	Toiletries

Reported by Alan Venneman Design by Karen Schwartztrauber/Index

Evacuation Guidelines for campus buildings

1. Take keys, purses, wallets, coats and other personal belongings.
2. Do not use elevators.
3. Close, but do not lock doors.
4. Turn off all electronics, including computers.
5. Evacuate in groups to ensure all are able to get out.
6. Provide assistance for those with physical disabilities.
7. Evacuate in a safe, orderly manner.

Only Public Safety can issue the order to return to a building.

Source: <http://police.truman.edu>
Design by Karen Schwartztrauber/Index

some assistance."

Johnson said the plan Truman has is solid and is in the updating stages with a little tweaking here and there.

Johnson said that if students want more information, they can go to the Public Safety Web site.

"The information on the Web site is a good source for people just to take a look at," Johnson said. "The best time to prepare for an emergency is when no emergency is going on, so you can just make yourself aware of what is out there."

Johnson attributed the strength of the plan to the way that people

and people in the community working together successfully.

"Our biggest strength is that we do collaborate with the community," Johnson said. "If something were to happen in town or on campus, we're all going to be affected, so we all work together very well."

Johnson also said Truman's location proves to be a weakness when it comes to emergencies.

"Being in a small community, you are kind of isolated here," Johnson said. "It may take longer to get things here if we need

Emily Finnegan
for the Index

They sent Dorothy to Oz, put St. Louis under water and rattled New Madrid.

Natural disasters are new more than just the stuff of movies. Although they might not loiter at the top of Kirksville residents' minds, natural disasters are a reality even in northeast Missouri. Knowing what to prepare for and understanding what disasters could affect the area can help Kirksville remain safe.

All northeast Missouri including Kirksville is prone to weather-type disasters, said National Weather Service meteorologist Mike Hudson. Hudson said the northeast Missouri region provides all three of the basic ingredients necessary for violent weather — moisture, a source of cold, dry air and strong winds provided by a strong jet stream.

"Our unique geographic position gets us these ingredients," Hudson said. "The Gulf of Mexico gives us moisture and warm air from the south, and the open prairies of Canada and Alaska provide cold, dry air from the north. The cold from the north collides with the warm from the south, strengthening the jet stream and helping storms develop."

Hudson said that because of its location, Kirksville potentially could see disasters ranging from tornadoes to flash flooding to severe thunderstorms and winter storms.

Although a tornado devastated Kirksville in 1899, Hudson said the

risk of another twister is statistically fairly small. Kirksville sits slightly east of tornado alley. The statistical formula used to calculate the chances of a tornado occurring in one's backyard determines Kirksville could expect to see a tornado about once every 23,000 years, he said.

"It's very rare, but when it does happen, it's devastating," Hudson said. "We put a lot of emphasis on preparation, helping the community ready itself."

Flash flooding also is a local risk. But northeast Missouri is outside the Missouri river basin, which makes it less susceptible to river flooding. The only major tributary in the area is the Sheraton River, and most nearby lakes are dam-controlled to prevent flooding, Hudson said.

Paco Gomez, assistant professor of geological sciences at the University of Missouri, said earthquakes, though not a large danger in Kirksville, could affect the area.

The New Madrid fault runs through the state and often is cited as a source of impending doom. The fault caused larger earthquakes in the early 1800s, leaving many to speculate on if another quake could occur.

The real zone of seismic activity centers around southeast Missouri, Gomez said, near the New Madrid, Mo., area.

"There is a lot of small earthquake activity in the New Madrid area, but Kirksville has the advantage of having considerable distance from that," Gomez said.

The degree to which Kirksville

Hospital prepared for outbreak

Committee creates health crisis plan, Fire Department runs drills

Rebecca Easterwood
for the Index

Many departments in the county have plans and perform drills for health crisis emergencies.

Ron Stewart, City Council member and health emergency planner for region B (which includes eight counties in northeast Missouri), said an outbreak of a disease could happen anywhere, even at Truman.

"In Toronto, Canada, that lady that was exposed by accident to SARS could have happened in any community in the United States or anywhere," Stewart said.

He said a committee called the Local Emergency Planning Committee meets quarterly to discuss and update emergency plans for a wide range of disasters, such as health disasters, hazardous material and natural disasters for Adair County.

He said the committee is made up of healthcare providers, emergency facilities, transportation services, local industries, volunteer groups and many other agencies in Adair County, including Truman.

Stewart said many members of the LEPC have emergency plans of action for a health crisis.

When the Adair County Health Department hosted a free clinic providing flu vaccinations Sept. 27 at the NEMO Fairgrounds, the health department practiced a plan for what would happen in Adair County if a health epidemic were to happen. This also is called a Strategic National Stockpile drill, Stewart said.

He said the SNS holds vaccines and medication for diseases, and the health department was practicing how to provide vaccinations before people were diagnosed with a disease.

"The primary purpose of SNS is to provide prevention, not necessarily care," Stewart said.

Stewart said that if a disease that has a vaccine came to Adair County, first the federal government would send supplies, and the county would open the SNS at the point of distribution.

He said that secondly, the media would let the public know what was going on and ask the public to come to the point of distribution, which would be the NEMO Fairgrounds.

Next, he said, people needing the vaccine would be asked questions about symptoms so the nurses, doctors and pharmacists would know whether or not the clients already have the disease. If they do, health care providers would send them to the hospital or family doctor depending on how severe it is, he said.

Stewart said that after the questions, the clients would register by filling out some papers and then go on to a screening process to make sure nothing medical is preventing the person from being able to have the vaccine.

Once this was done, he said, the clients would go through the

dispensing process where they receive the vaccine, and afterwards the clients would receive information about the disease and finally go home.

Stewart said the flu clinic was carried out with the same steps and was a success with 800 clients.

"In two hours, over 500 were served," Stewart said. "We handled it well, and everything went well."

Stewart said the health department is considering having another point of distribution at Truman.

Dan Holte, the emergency room director at Northeast Regional Medical Center, said no preventative vaccine exists yet for avian influenza, the virus H5N1 that only spreads among birds. However, some humans have received it from birds and it has the potential to become contagious from human to human.

"At this point and time, there is not a vaccine for it," Holte said. "I hope there will be one before there is an outbreak. From what I've heard and what I've read about it from the CDC, it's pretty much a given that there will be an outbreak of it."

Avian influenza symptoms sometimes are fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches, and some people get eye infections, pneumonia and severe respiratory distress according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site.

Holte said he hopes a vaccine will be made and distributed before the potential outbreak.

"By that time, hopefully we'll have everything in place that we need," Holte said.

He said that if a vaccine exists and an avian influenza outbreak happens, the government first will distribute the vaccine to the people working in the hospitals and the military so they can be healthy to help others who are sick with avian influenza.

Holte said that if a vaccine does not exist before an outbreak, the hospital would use antiviral medications that help with influenza symptoms.

There are certain medications called Tamiflu that helps lessen the severity of the flu," Holte said. "What's it going to do for this flu, I don't know."

Holte said a major risk in the case of an avian influenza outbreak is his staff getting sick and not being able to perform their duties because there are not enough protective suits for all staff.

He said the hospital is equipped with three rooms for negative pressure isolation where air constantly is being sucked into the room with no air getting out and nine protective suits that operate in the same way. He said they are planning for more equipment.

"We're looking into the possibility of getting more equipment like this," Holte said. "Every year we get approximately \$11,000 from the government to buy stuff like this. ... [W]hat happens with [avian influenza] depends on what [the hospital] gets next year."

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would feel the effects of an earthquake in the New Madrid fault would depend upon the strength of the quake, he said.

"At a larger earthquake, like the magnitude of seven or more, Kirksville would not emerge unscathed, but it wouldn't be wiped out," Gomez said. "You're not going to see every building completely leveled, but walls might be cracked."

More than the natural disasters sensationalized on the big screen, Hudson said Kirksville residents should be concerned with extreme temperatures. Since 1950, 207 people have died statewide from extreme heat or cold, compared to 186 deaths attributed to tornadoes, he said.

In the summer months, residents should not overlook excessive heat. Too often, people don't take the warnings on television and radio seriously enough, he said.

"Excessive heat is very difficult to prepare for, and there's not much we can do except educate people about it," Hudson said. "It's a silent killer."

Hudson said that for any natural disaster, the best advice he can offer citizens is to stay informed.

"Watch the news, listen to the weather, purchase a weather radio for your house," he said. "Get information — that's key to how you will respond. Have a plan, especially for tornadoes and floods and things that happen in a quick fashion."

Randy Behrens, fire chief and emergency manager for Kirksville, said he agrees being prepared is the



Sophomore Bill Elam receives his flu shot Sept. 27.

Holte said in the case of a chemical spill, the hospital is at the lowest of three levels for how many people can be decontaminated at one time before running out of supplies. As of now, he said, the hospital can decontaminate 25 people an hour through its decontamination tent for a duration of six hours. He said the hospital could be moved up to the next level in the next two years, which would mean the hospital would have more equipment and be able to decontaminate more patients faster.

He said that when there is a chemical contamination situation, the hospital would lock all its doors so no one could come in or out until the victims have been decontaminated.

"When they've gone through our lines, then they can enter," Holte said.

He said the hospital has a group that meets once a month to discuss contingency plans and put them into practice twice a year as drills.

Randy Behrens, Kirksville fire chief and emergency manager for the city, said that in dealing with health dangers such as chemical spills and radiation, the Kirksville Fire Department has drills of its own.

Behrens said Fire Department personnel participated in a drill

in charge of the situation.

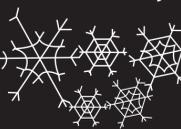
Behrens said the Fire Department performs a drill for every place they have made plans for an emergency situation, including Pershing Natatorium and the water treatment plants.

"Drills are for learning experiences that check to see if you can do what's on paper," Behrens said.

Behrens said in the case of an emergency, members of the community should pay attention to the emergency broadcast instructions.

"Listen to the TV. Listen to the radios," he said.

Snow Safety



Driving tips during snowstorms

1. If you don't have to drive, don't.
2. Check your tires.
3. Keep the gas tank full.
4. Stock up on supplies.
4. Make sure the defroster is working.
5. If your car's heating system isn't operating properly, fix it now.

Source: www.progressive.com
Designed by Karen Schwartztrauber/Index