

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

SPRING 2021

## ACTIVE SHOOTER AT MILLER BREWERY BY AARON LIPSKI, ACTING CHIEF, MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

**INTRODUCTION.** It is reported in law enforcement, fire, and EMS circles that the majority of Active Shooter events are over within minutes, with the vast majority of those ending with the assailant committing suicide. While this is a strong statistical foundation upon which to build a coherent unified response, the effort exerted is only as strong as the real-time information developed from each incident's unique particulars.

Having managed the Milwaukee Fire Department's EMS (and later Hazardous Materials) response to the active shooter incident at the expansive Molson Coors complex in Milwaukee's Miller Valley on **February 26, 2020**, it is clear that information management and communications play nearly as pivotal a role as the armed men and women running down the shooter and the highly-trained and equipped EMTs and Paramedics put in place to save the savable.



**THE COMPLEX.** The entire complex spans nearly eight city blocks from east to west and six city blocks from north to south, with **West State Street** serving as the primary arterial roadway bisecting the complex from east to west along its curvilinear route. Many people travel right through the complex along West State Street between North 45<sup>th</sup> Street and North 37<sup>th</sup> Street, utilizing the route as a conduit between the west side and downtown. There in *Miller Valley* (so named after one of Milwaukee's oldest brewers, **Miller Brewing**, now owned by Molson Coors), West State Street winds in a bow-like arc, dropping in elevation as the mid-rise buildings climb higher until all awareness of the surrounding city and its neighborhoods is obscured from view.

Dozens of adjoining buildings of various shapes, sizes, and uses line both sides of the street, including many unseen but attached structures jutting off the rear of the main buildings, some several deep and themselves interconnected to adjacent structures. **Within this complex, there are multiple building / department addresses along West State Street, West Highland Boulevard, West Wells Street, and West Bluemound Road.** Most folks from outside this area would have little awareness of how intertwined this complex is with surrounding single- and multi-family residential neighborhoods, small commercial and light industrial operations, as well as a public elementary school tucked into its southeastern reaches.

**THE CALLS AND EARLY RESPONSE.** Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) and Milwaukee Fire Department (MFD) Dispatchers (separate entities) began receiving telephone reports of an active shooter at Molson Coors (formerly Miller Coors) shortly after **2:00pm** on the chilly, overcast, windy late-February afternoon.

Reports included the detail of at least one confirmed victim down and indicated the address of one of Molson Coors administration buildings along **West Highland Boulevard.**

Upon receipt of this confirmation, Milwaukee Fire Department Dispatchers began work on getting an enormous response package inbound. Our parlance for this response is "**SHOOT2**" (**Active Shooter – Confirmed**) and includes nearly twenty assets and a pre-determined framework for staging and deployment. Responding resources include Engine Companies, Ladder Truck Companies, a Heavy Rescue, Paramedic Units, and Chief Officers.

I had just sat down at a planning meeting in Wauwatosa, one of our

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Shared Services partners (a mutual aid subset of **Division 107**), and heard the call over my radio. I packed my files and headed towards my vehicle (my radio call-sign was **Car 2A**), hoping it was an inaccurate report.

While **eastbound** on West State Street from downtown Wauwatosa, I began running through our Active Shooter operating guidelines in my head. Having heard the Highland Boulevard Address, I inquired with Dispatch as to a distant-staging location (a unique methodology we

*(Continued on page 2)*

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY KEVIN BIERCE, CHIEF, PEWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND PRESIDENT, MABAS WISCONSIN

Wildflowers and Wildfires, ah the smell of spring is in the air! Just finished watching our World-Famous **MABAS Public Information Officer Chief Pete O'Leary** on TV this morning reaching viewers in the entire MABAS Southeast Region as well as the southern third of the East Central Region (see page 10).

What a great job he did explaining the critical role MABAS plays in today's fire suppression world. With wildfires becoming more common and urban interface now becoming a common approach to residential development,

it's time for each of us to look at our box cards again.

Brush Fire Box Cards address our plans for these very high demanding events that need very unique resource allocations. I understand that many of us have a great background in these type of events, but for many of us, it's a new game.

So check your box cards, make sure they reflect the equipment you need and that those needs can be met with the agencies you have listed.

Unfortunately we are seeing more box cards not being reviewed and thus resource requests not being filled.

Plan early, plan often... the party might get bigger than you thought!

The annual MABAS conference this September is a great opportunity to network with those who have expertise you may be lacking.

So 'till the next box, Kevin.



## ACTIVE SHOOTER AT MILLER BREWERY - CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 1)*  
utilize to minimize the chances of driving into the middle of a dynamic scene). My fellow Assistant Chief who oversees Operations (**Car 2C**) had jumped in with the City-Wide Commander (Car 3) for the response and was **westbound** from our downtown headquarters. He replied that all units should stage at the intersection of **North 35<sup>th</sup> Street and West Highland Boulevard**, two blocks east of the given address.

Nearly simultaneous to this, the local Engine and Ladder Truck Companies were arriving near the staging location. Truck Company 9's Officer immediately jumped on the radio with information that a seasoned Company Officer knows may be pivotal to the early success of the operation.

He offered that he was noting a large volume of police vehicles heading southbound from his location and turning westbound on **West State Street** and down into Miller Valley. And, being aware that as 911 calls from this vast complex are typically trunked through and often reported as the main administration building on Highland Boulevard to which we were initially responding, we should consider that the actual incident location may actually be in one of the production plants down in the valley.

The distant staging location was quickly adjusted to the intersection of 35<sup>th</sup> & State Streets.

**DETERMINING THE HOT ZONE.** I was eastbound at a clip on West

State Street, rapidly approaching Miller Valley from the west. I slowed to a crawl in order to keep out of the fray. As I began the descent into the valley, I pulled to the side of the road  
*(Continued on page 3)*



**1 - initial location given of incident. 2 - Car 2A location. 3 - Car 2C & Staging of responding units. 4 - actual location of incident. 5 - a school. 6 - residential area. Note the difference between (1) and (4).**

## ACTIVE SHOOTER AT MILLER BREWERY - CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 2)*

as I now had real reason to believe the hot zone was directly in front of me. Indeed, I watched from a distance as Milwaukee Police Officers bravely stormed one building, quickly redirecting to a building across the street.

At about this time, **a mutual-aid Paramedic Unit, not responding to my numerous orders on the radio to stop, sped past me and drove directly into the middle of the scene** and then was hailed down by MPD Officers. We later learned that there had been some confusion regarding the radio channel that patches our two departments together and they had not heard the established staging location nor the creation of a **hot zone**.

As I could not raise them on the radio and they had now unwittingly entered ground-zero for this incident, I crept my vehicle ahead so I could verbally redirect them out of the hot zone.

On my arrival, I found life-saving measures being administered to a trauma victim by Milwaukee Police Officers. The Paramedics quickly

evaluated the patient and officially determined what we all already grimly understood. We had just encountered the first fallen victim. I ordered them out of the site and told them to report to the distant staging location.

I have taken many courses, attended many tabletop exercises, and engaged in numerous live-action drills about responding to active shooter incidents. **No amount of training can replicate the total information vacuum created by fast moving law enforcement officers bent on running down an active shooter, nor can they prepare any single person for navigating and way-finding in a complex environment (literally and figuratively) against a moving threat.** Worse, how do we collectively communicate (and digest and operationalize) where we have been, where we are, and where we are going in this immense, dynamic, and irregularly configured industrial environment?

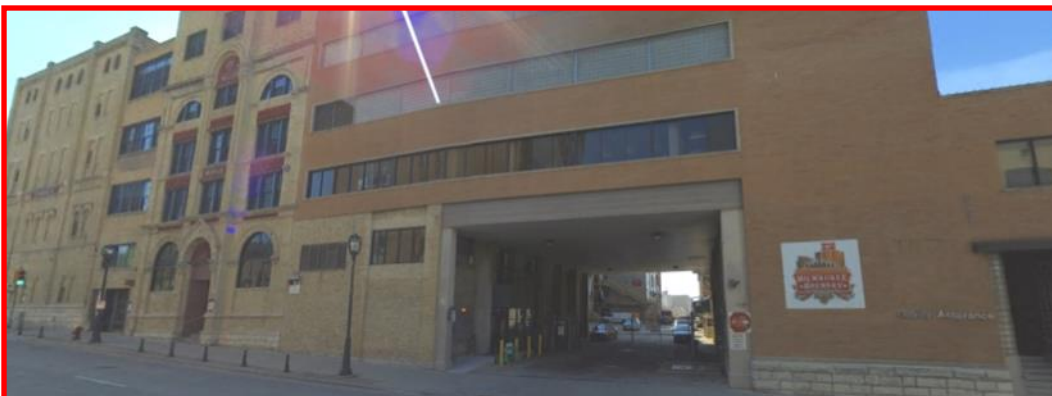
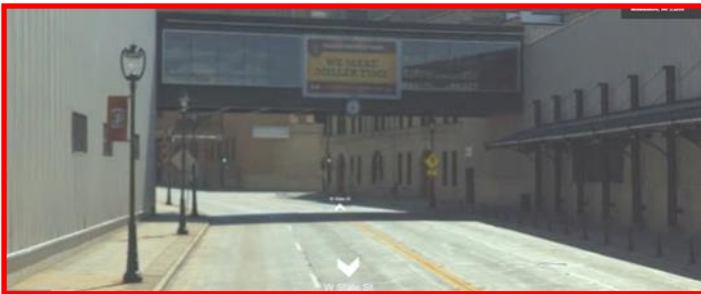
**COORDINATING WITH POLICE.** I watched as dozens of law enforcement officers, and then dozens more, sprinted down West State Street from both directions,

many with long guns. They all followed, as best I could tell, the footfalls of the officers who were running steps ahead of them, turning southbound into an alleyway covered over by a skywalk connecting two of the larger buildings on the southeast corner of 41<sup>st</sup> & State Streets.

Where they went beyond that, I could not say for sure in that moment. I radioed **CAR 2C** in our Command Post near **35<sup>th</sup> & State** to see if he had been able to locate a Command Officer on the law enforcement side to establish a **Unified Command**. The answer was no. I asked numerous Police Officers at the entry to the alleyway who was running their operation on the law enforcement side. Nobody seemed to know.

**ORGANIZING THE FIRE RESPONSE.** This bit of information (and the aforementioned unification of Command) is critical to forming and safely deploying **Rescue Task Forces (RTFs)** and **Evacuation Teams (EVACs)** so that critically injured victims throughout the **warm zone** can receive care as rapidly as possible.

*(Continued on page 4)*



Top Left: eastbound view CAR 2A had.

Top Right: westbound view CAR 2C had.

Note the hot zone's numerous windows, doors, buildings, passageways.

Near left: the alleyway where victims were brought out from an inner left side doorway.

## ACTIVE SHOOTER AT MILLER BREWERY - CONTINUED

(Continued from page 3)

More than that, it allows the otherwise unprotected EMS responders to enter areas that would not otherwise be entered.

The **hot zone** is any area that has not been cleared by law enforcement. The **warm zone**, then, has been cleared at least once, but the shooter or shooters have not been confirmed neutralized.

This implies that the shooter, at a minimum, is to be presumed mobile and might potentially reappear in a previously cleared area. This is not like the movies, there are no real-time tracking devices built-in to our glasses, and if nobody *immediately* begins organizing the mass of moving responders (on BOTH sides of the house), tracking those already deployed and directing those rapidly inbound, it will never be caught up with while it matters.

In the early haste of this incident and in the absence of Unified Command, much of the information we were able to glean came in flickers of information overheard on passing Police Officers' radios or passed along in tiny sound bites before they disappeared to wherever they were going.

This included a rapidly changing understanding of critical data points: the number of victims, the number of shooters, the location of the shooter or shooters, and shortly thereafter, whether or not the only identified shooter had indeed ended his own life.

This played itself out in frustrating fashion on the sidewalk in front of the alleyway into the complex as we were repeatedly unable to get confirmation from MPD as to who in their command structure was leading their charge and whether or not the area in front of the buildings along West State Street could even be considered a warm zone.



***We were fast burning time within the golden hour of survival for any victims down within this complex.***

We were finally able to get an MPD supervisor to link up with our Command Staff at the Command and Staging location and RTFs were being assembled.

Our format, based upon joint training created and implemented across both departments in 2013, calls for four FF/EMTs and four Police Officers in each RTF. Each RTF is equipped and trained to perform rapid triage and severe hemorrhage control for a specific number of victims – detailed reporting up each RTF's chain of command directs the EVAC teams to enter and remove the savable victims to the **Casualty Collection Point (CCP)**.

We assembled several RTFs and were ready to deploy when **CAR 2C** up top flatly advised me that he now had zero law enforcement officers assigned; a different MPD supervisor had walked up and removed all assembled Officers from the RTFs and reassigned them elsewhere.

It was about this time that a law enforcement officer dragged a second victim out to the mouth of the alley near the first victim and began life-saving efforts, followed by requests for EMS being verbally communicated to me.

With no clear alignment as to whether or not West State Street was a warm zone and with zero force protection now provided even if it was warm, I was left to try to get the supervisors I was receiving these requests from to reverse-engineer a command structure on their side to re-establish some semblance of unity.

During all of this, the MFD created Groups and Divisions (and a matching Communications Plan to de-conflict radio traffic) to sort our resources and manage needs. These included Operations, Staging, EMS Transport, and an early concept for a Casualty Collection Point.

Our EMS Transport Group was established several blocks to the west of the alley entrance to the hot zone, near the **Miller Visitor Center at 4251 West State Street**.

Our then-Deputy Chief of EMS established that site as it was not clogged out with police vehicles as was the case to the east. Further, it put any transporting ambulances on a near direct course with our area's Level 1 Trauma Center, Froedtert Hospital.

He also made contact with the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management (OEM)-EMS Medical Director to check and verify capacity at various area hospitals (and to warn him up to the potential for a large number of inbound gunshot wound victims).

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## ACTIVE SHOOTER AT MILLER BREWERY - CONTINUED



The Fire Department staging area at 35th & State, a few blocks east of the brewery (credit: TMJ4 News).

*(Continued from page 4)*

### **DEFINING AND MANAGING ACCESS TO THE WARM ZONE.**

Given the frenetic pace at which law enforcement officers (from as many as six and likely more agencies) flooded into area, we were confident the area on West State Street and in the entry way to the alley was warm.

What remained undefined was the depth into the complex (in multiple directions and across multiple floors) to which this warm zone extended.

Out on West State Street, I struggled, still, to receive actionable information in this regard. Ultimately, we were able to impress our desire to bring order to the scene and set about breaking the complex into more manageable chunks; a somewhat more methodical clearing and reporting mechanism began in earnest.

This frustration would resurface intermittently as later-arriving clusters of law enforcement officers from multiple agencies would appear on the scene and set in motion their own plans – indeed, I would later watch a well-outfitted unit arrive and begin a tactical sweep of a building that had already been cleared by previous officers. When I tried to advise them that the building had already been cleared by law enforcement *AND* RTFs, it was clear that my input was not welcome.

Numerous law enforcement officers arrived in privately-owned vehicles, pulled very near the scene, geared up in protective clothing, armed

themselves with a variety of pretty serious weaponry, and then ran unfettered directly into the warm and hot zones. While any checking in with whatever command structure existed on the law enforcement side may have happened outside of our purview, it was clear that whoever arrived at a full sprint resembling a law enforcement officer (to include those in street or undercover-style clothing) were barely given a second look as they ran headlong into the hot zone. I cannot conceive of a situation presenting a higher risk of friendly fire injury or death to an officer.

### **RTFs ESTABLISHED AND DEPLOYED.**

The MFD had continued building and equipping RTFs in hopes that we would be provided the force protection we needed to deploy into whatever warm zone had been established. When we were finally (again) provided force protection, our personnel conducted 'just in time' training on West State Street with the provided Police Officers to ensure that the unity of purpose and common operating picture were understood for each RTF. Within minutes of this, we deployed the RTFs to begin their work.

By this time, we had received multiple disparate reports including: reports of numerous additional victims, a possible second shooter (it was reported early on that one or two firings had occurred earlier in the day and this was believed related), a possible second shooter was seen in the neighborhood between Miller Valley and downtown, and that the

shooter was believed deceased at his own hand. Each of these reported factors in turn continued to change, some several times over.

In addition to this, MPD received information that a car believed to be the assailant's car had been located. It was reported that the vehicle would need to be cleared for possible explosives. This was handled by law enforcement alone.

The MFD had long since established a grouped and divided Communications Plan, designed to organize, filter, and disseminate information in a coherent and trackable manner. As they worked their way through the complex, we were able (based solely on deliberate location tracking and information de-confliction efforts) to determine that there was a total of six deceased individuals, to include one shooter. We would continue to double-check this based upon continuing reports from law enforcement indicating different numbers. Our number stood.

**RTF BREAKDOWN.** On two separate occasions, while forward deployed in RTFs into the warm zone, MFD Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics were abandoned without notice by their law enforcement counterparts. Suffice it to say, this is not a desired standard of performance. It was never determined with any precision why they disappeared and left our personnel exposed – at a minimum, we were immediately made aware of it and had our personnel backtrack to safety.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## ACTIVE SHOOTER AT MILLER BREWERY - CONTINUED

(Continued from page 5)

**HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.** A short while after we were informed that the single shooter was confirmed down, we were informed that MPD had a Command Post up and running in a building on the north side of West State Street.

We made our way to that building and were led to a conference room where the majority of the MPD's Command Staff was located along with Molson Coors' security and human resources personnel. The Mayor and Fire Chief arrived a short time later.

A few minutes beyond this, we noted numerous Tactical Enforcement Unit (MPD's SWAT) Officers moving swiftly through the hallways and conducting a tactical sweep of the building. We were informed that this portion of the complex had not previously been cleared; now it had.

As that moment passed, we made contact with a leader from Molson Coors who informed us of two concerns related to the areas involved in the shooting.

First, numerous pressurized vessels containing a wide variety of hazardous chemicals were in the area and if any had been hit by an errant bullet a deadly leak could be well underway.

Second, there were complex chemical processes underway when the attack occurred – these processes required direct hands-on control. Left untended, major hazardous materials releases were imminent. Sadly, it had been confirmed at this point that the individuals responsible for these complex processes were casualties.

I communicated our need for a Hazardous Materials response with Command, a Group and Comm Plan was established, and we worked directly with Molson Coors and MPD personnel to enter those areas and prevent further catastrophe.

Molson Coors personnel, having trained with the Milwaukee Fire Department for many years on both incident command and hazardous materials response, performed extremely admirably, especially while grappling with the intensity of their losses that were just being fully realized.

### REFLECTIONS ON PERFORMANCE.

On review, we were proud of our Firefighters, Paramedics, Tactical Enforcement EMS (TEMS) Team, and Chief Officers. Naturally, the nuances and intricacies of that afternoon run on a loop in your head over the hours and days that follow. This self-review and self-criticism process is healthy if applied towards future growth.

The initial Dispatch of the SHOOT2 occurred with a few components not in fact dispatched. These were later caught up with, but a note was made to ensure that our Computer Aided Dispatch protocols matched our operational protocols.

Further, while it may seem wise to leave the determination of a distant staging location to responding units, it may be wiser to allow Dispatch to set that location at the time that they dispatch companies to the incident.

This would have likely cleaned up the accidental Paramedic Unit arrival into the middle of the scene.

The importance of pre-planning, joint training, common operating pictures, and unification of command and purpose cannot be overstated. Arriving on such a scene to find out that different agencies are operating from completely different playbooks (or none at all) is about as frustrating as it gets. When it was all said and



(Credit: TMJ4 News)

done, we were all left with the pit in our stomach that accompanies a huge and purposeless loss of life – there had been no savable individuals located.

Had there been a person bleeding out, hidden under a desk or in a broom closet, their wait would have been needlessly extended and very likely the defining factor in whether or not they survived. This singular point should drive an aggressive desire from multiple agencies to engage in a thorough after-action review, guideline updating, and high-priority joint training.

The Milwaukee Fire Department has enjoyed an extremely positive and truly collaborative environment in dealing with current Milwaukee Police Department leadership. We are confident that the learning opportunities presented during this seminal event will be seized upon by both the MPD and the MFD to craft a better service for the citizens.

### Fire Response Summary

Engines: 4 Milwaukee, 1 Mutual Aid  
Trucks: 2 Milwaukee, 1 Mutual Aid  
Squads: 1 Milwaukee (Heavy Rescue)  
ALS Meds: 8 Milwaukee, 1 Mutual Aid  
TEMS: 1 Milwaukee (Tactical ALS)  
Chiefs: 11 Milwaukee  
Special: Milwaukee Haz Mat, Cmd Post  
Fatalities: 6, including the shooter

To view past newsletters, visit:  
[www.mabaswisconsin.org](http://www.mabaswisconsin.org)  
(see left side column of links)

## MANY CHALLENGES IN HAMBURG DAIRY FARM FIRE BY RYAN DEBROUX, CHIEF, HAMBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT

At **9:09am, December 30, 2020**, a 911 call came directly into the Marathon County Sheriff's dispatch center from the **Double P Dairy, 134027 Co Rd A**. The **Hamburg Fire Department** was originally paged for a "fire inside the shop area".

This was a small shop directly attached to the milking parlor and office area. There were also offices and a break room/kitchen area on the second story. The parlor consisted of a **rotary style parlor**. This farm housed approximately 2100 cattle and milked 3 times per day.

I was at work, about 25 minutes away. It was snowing that day, so everyone's responses were delayed a bit. Our Deputy Chief was one of the first on scene. We are a rural 100% volunteer department, so no one was at the station. It happened on a Wednesday, so many of our volunteers were at their regular jobs.

The initial response was Hamburg Engine 1, Hamburg Tender 1 and

### The Challenges Faced

- ◆ It was snowing
- ◆ Volunteer Firefighters at regular jobs
- ◆ Thousands of cattle in the way
- ◆ LP Tank valves exploding
- ◆ Hydraulics to Milking Machine lost
- ◆ Keeping up with water supply demand
- ◆ Roof collapse, trapping animals
- ◆ Lots of flammable oils & solvents
- ◆ Mutual Aid tens of miles away

Tender 2, Hamburg Utility Rig, and Hamburg EMRs. Later came Hamburg Engine 2 (used to refill the tenders) and our rehab trailer. For this area, we do have auto-aid with Corning FD out of Lincoln County for an engine, tenders, and manpower.

Initial scene size up consisted of very heavy black smoke spreading from the shop to the parlor area. At that time, Athens FD was requested for full response.

Seven minutes after arrival, we upgraded to Marathon County **MABAS Division 130 Card 69-12 to the Box Alarm level**.

We had two engines set up almost right away, and due to the smoke and wind direction, we set up a third engine to keep clear of the smoke.

This added to the communication stress of making sure each tender was going to the correct engine.

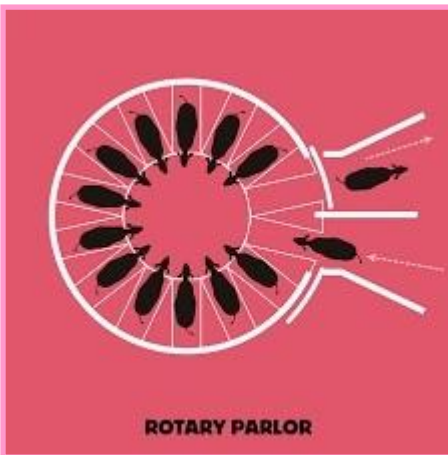
Being a rural dept, we do not have any hydrants. We had 2 rural ponds that we set up to refill tenders at, both within a mile of the scene. The snowy roads created a minor issue, but the Marathon County Hwy Dept was able to provide sand/salt trucks to keep the roads in good shape.

Shortly after we set up the third engine, we were struggling to keep each engine's basket full of water. Knowing there was a drive time concern, we upgraded Box 69-12 to the **3<sup>rd</sup> alarm at 10:07am**.

This was a steel frame, wood post building. We had early onset of the roof failing on the shop area, and when the fire spread to the parlor area, those roof trusses failed rapidly.

There were approximately ten employees assisting the first due engine company. They were helping in any way possible both with us, and in keeping the cattle away from the incident (the cows knew it was time to be milked, so their learned behavior was to head towards the milking parlor).

*(Continued on page 8)*



### What is a rotary milking parlor?

- 1) Cow enters a stall and is attached to milking machine
- 2) Parlor slowly rotates as more cows are added
- 3) Rotation speed matches time it takes to milk cow
- 4) Milking cups are removed and cow exits

(Diagram from dairydiscoveryzone.com)



**The remains of the parlor milking stalls.** (Photo by Hamburg FD.)

## MANY CHALLENGES IN HAMBURG DAIRY FARM FIRE - CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 7)*

All but eight cows were cleared from the area of the fire. Those eight cows were trapped on the 30-stall rotating parlor. The hydraulic hoses that control the rotation of the parlor were melted and blown.

Once all the roof steel fell, it hindered being able to get water on the seat of the fire. Another challenge we had was some of the eight cows still trapped on the parlor were now under some of the roof.



We hooked a chain onto one of the stalls, and using the farmer's tractor through a large overhead door, pulled and spun the parlor to free the trapped cows.

We were fortunate that there was an excavator on scene with an operator, so we were able to "peel" the steel away and reach the wood and fire to extinguish.

There was a lot of oils and flammable materials inside the shop that attributed to intense fire spread. The fuel load was heavy.

During overhaul, we discovered six 20 lb. LP tanks that had their valves blown off inside this shop area. Resources were on scene for about 6.5 hours.

Hamburg (in Division 130) borders to the north Division 155 (Lincoln County) and nearby to the west is Division 159 (Taylor County) & Division 152 (Clark County). This was a weekday call, mid-morning. The majority of our members work outside of the fire district, so staffing was delayed.

Our closest department to this fire is Corning FD in Lincoln County. We have an excellent working relationship with all our surrounding departments.

Travel times were hindered due to the snowy roads. Corning and Athens FD's are about 10 miles away, and Edgar FD is about 12 miles. All these departments are volunteer as well, so for the members to get to the station, then drive to the scene, added to the delayed response.

Units were paged on Marathon County paging channel and while enroute those resources stayed on this channel. Upon arrival on scene, we mainly used "Blue" channel for fire grounds ops, and we used "Red" channel for the water supply comms.

All tenders, pond sites, and the water Incident Commander utilized the Red channel to keep everything going. We did not have any issues getting resources from Lincoln County. Our dispatch center calls theirs via phone, and then Lincoln County dispatches those resources.

Being on the county line, we go back and forth between the two counties frequent enough that it does not hinder responses or communications.



I would just like to thank all the different entities that were able to help and support us on this call.

### Helpful Coincidence

We do not receive many calls to Double P Dairy, however, we were called on December 1, 2020, for an employee who became trapped in the rotating milking parlor, and needed to be extricated using hydraulic tools. This patient was also air lifted. On a side note, she is one of the fastest female runners from Kenya. This rescue event made the national news there!

That call did familiarize several of our firefighters and help us understand the layout of the inside of the parlor area and how the parlor operated, since we did need to turn it to remove some of the stuck cows.



(All photos by Hamburg FD.)



# MY FIRST MABAS BOXES - DIVISION 130 BY RYAN DEBROUX, CHIEF, HAMBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT



The Double P Dairy fire had been only the second time we have utilized a MABAS box alarm or higher since our first set of cards were drafted in 2015.

We have been called out on other departments cards, and we have trained on them a fair amount, so I do not feel it is/was difficult to call the box.

We have color coded books in all our fire trucks, and all of our officers carry a set as well. Both times we have used these cards, we have had great experiences. They were larger fire calls, and both times I felt very good about how we built the cards.

We were able to get the resources we needed with ease using very little

radio traffic time. It is much easier for the Incident Commander (IC) when they don't have to think about which departments to call and for what. That has all been done ahead of time.

I feel that during those first critical moments of any call, it brings a peace of mind using MABAS. It takes all the thought work out of it so the IC is able to focus on the incident at hand and does not need to worry about which units he needs or has called for yet.

I have been extremely happy the two times we used MABAS.

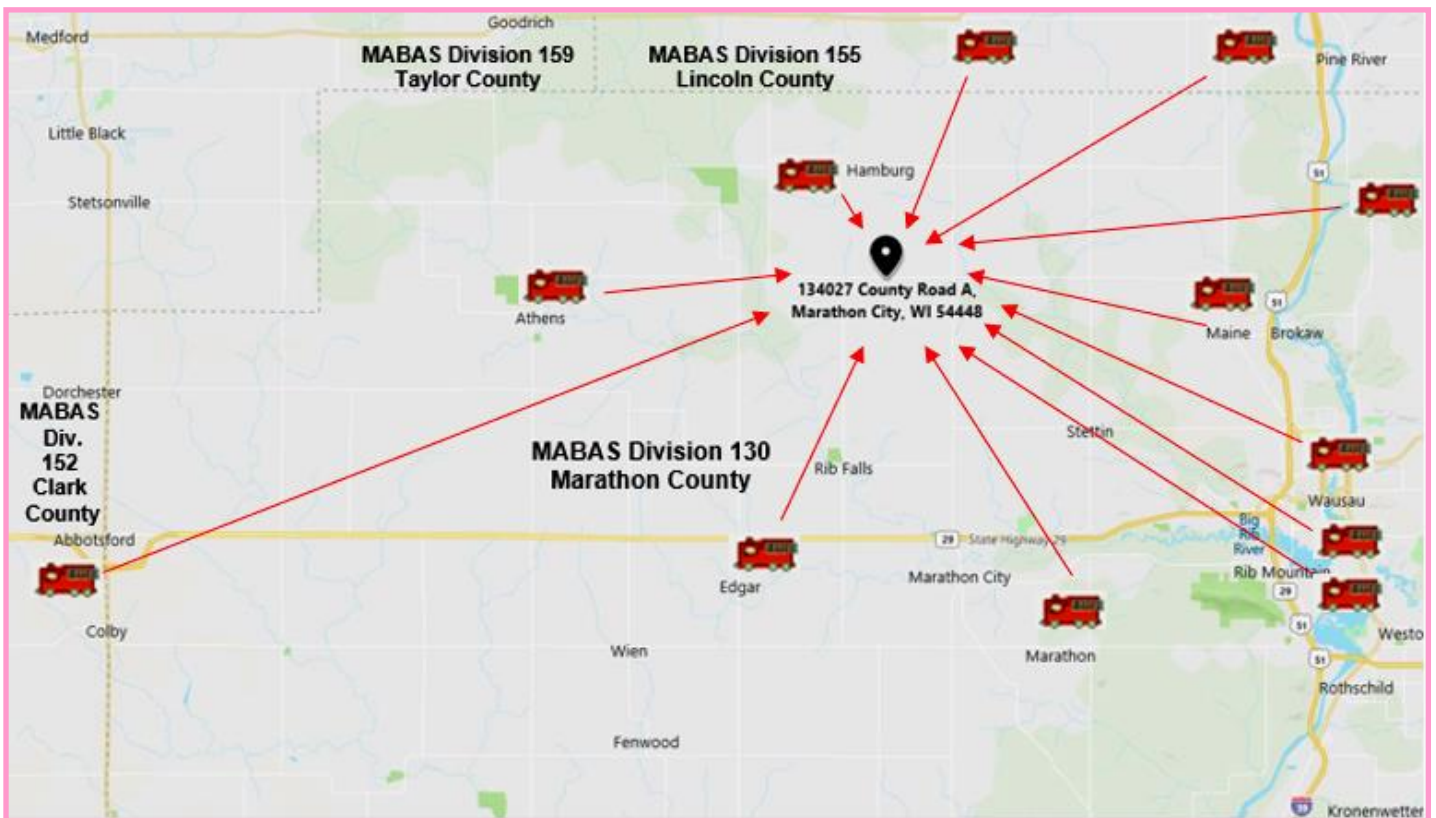
We are getting more comfortable now that we have used it a couple times, and are likely to use MABAS more frequently in the future.

## No Trucks on Most Box Cards.

The Hamburg Fire Department covers a mostly agricultural area, and many of the houses are older farm houses with long driveways. Many times we do not have room for ladder trucks, so we do not list them on most Box Cards.

Due to how far we are spread out, by the time we get there, most fires are well passed the "room and contents" stage. We do have a few Target Hazards listed on Box Card 69-18 that list Truck companies that we would utilize if necessary. We do operate off ground ladders frequently.

We also list Trucks on our Technical Rescue Box Card 69-17.



**“G’me a 3rd alarm box”** is all it took to get Fire Department resources from three counties to descend upon the Double P Dairy in Central Wisconsin. Such preplanning is the centerpiece of MABAS. It does not matter if you are in a densely populated area or a rural agricultural region, MABAS works the same way, providing as many resources as needed to mitigate the emergency at hand.

# WHEN MABAS SENDS YOU TO A DAIRY FARM FIRE, YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF “THINKING OUTSIDE THE (MABAS) BOX”

BY RYAN DEBROUX, CHIEF, HAMBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT

*Editor's note: One day you may be requested to respond to a MABAS incident (or be on a MABAS change of quarters) and find yourself encountering a situation for the first time - dealing with dairy cows - and this may force you to “think outside the (MABAS) box”. Here are some helpful hints.*



I have been on barn fires where before we arrive on scene, the farmer let all the cows loose and responding crews encountered a small herd of cattle on the driveway entrance to the fire. We had to wait until the spooked cattle would move. Then while we are fighting the fire, we had cows try to get back into the barn that was on fire. It is common for them to do that as cows are creatures of habit - they have their milking and feeding times down as routine.

Cows can panic as they do not like change, especially if they are inside the barn. If cows are backed into a corner / run out of room to naturally go somewhere, you have to be careful not to get trampled as the average dairy cow weighs about 1200 pounds. For the trapped cows in the milking parlor, it sounds crude, but with the assistance of the workers, we actually lassooed the cows and hooked a skid steer to them to pull them to an area we could get them up and walking again.

At a dairy farm fire, if you lose power to the well pumps, you will have the issue of providing water to the cows. Dairy cattle drink a large amount of water daily. They will also get hungry. If they are not milked on schedule, their udders are not able to be emptied, and therefore they are in pain. You will be still working at the fire but must make room for cattle trucks to move thousands of cows to another farm. Hopefully, the farm will have multiple driveways.

Let us know when you have a circumstance where you find yourself “thinking outside the MABAS Box card”!

## MABAS IN THE NEWS - SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN SUBMITTED BY QUENTIN POPP

*Editor's note: On early Friday afternoon, April 2, 2021, Wisconsin experienced its largest wildfire so far this year. It happened in northern Waukesha County, and involved fire departments in at least six MABAS Divisions, lasting over 8 hours. The details will appear in the next issue of this newsletter. News coverage was extensive for several days.*



We got a media request from TMJ4 News in Milwaukee last evening (Monday, April 5, 2021), that I worked with MABAS Public Information Officer (PIO) Peter O'Leary on! Chief O'Leary was able to appear on the 6am newscast the next morning!



Follow the link below. Some good PR and good work by the PIO. Social Media platforms are sharing the heck out of it including the WI-DNR who liked and shared the tweet, and the stricken MABAS agency, Menomonee Falls FD, on their Facebook page!

<https://youtu.be/bOKcRko24wg>

Great Work PIO O'Leary!

(Credit: TMJ4 News)

If you see MABAS described in your local community news, please let us know at: [mabaswinews@gmail.com](mailto:mabaswinews@gmail.com)

# STANDARDIZATION IS KEY TO MABAS SUCCESS

MABAS is a regional solution to a local emergency, in use in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, with Iowa, Minnesota, and Missouri moving towards implementation. To make this work - being both functional and effective - standardization is mandatory.

MABAS in all States use the same radio frequencies (IFERN, Red, White, Blue), same terminology for resources, same announcement script over IFERN, same minimum staffing, same firefighter certification, and same Box Card format.

This "sameness" allows for seamless integration for any participating department. The stricken Incident Command staff can rely on getting as many resources as needed. In a 2010 deployment test, 300 rigs responded from 3 States and arrived in Chicago within 90 minutes (see MABAS Wisconsin In Action newsletter Volume 3, Issue 1).

With hundreds of Divisions and thousands of Fire Departments participating, member-departments must adjust their procedures to meet the organizational standards and policies in order to keep MABAS strong, valuable, and efficient.

**Division Presidents  
Fire Chiefs  
Company Officers  
Dispatch Administrators**



**Firefighters  
Dispatchers  
Emergency Managers  
EMS Providers**

We are excited to bring the 10th annual MABAS-WI conference to the Holiday Inn and Conference Center in centrally located Stevens Point. The training opportunities for this year's conference will prove to be beneficial to all. If this is your first MABAS conference, or you're a seasoned veteran, there is no better place to learn alongside fire service personnel, emergency managers and 911 emergency dispatchers.

**The Conference registration cost is only \$125.00 (which includes 2 lunches and the Friday evening picnic).**

To make room reservations online, use the left side column of links on the main page of <https://mabas-wi.org> or by calling (715)-344-0200, press "3", and use the Block Code of "ABA" for the Group Name "Mutual Aid Box Alarm System Assn-MABAS".

Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center, 1001 Amber Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54482  
State Rate: \$82.00 Single Occupancy • \$109.00 Double Occupancy

Division Presidents Meeting Thursday Evening, September 23, 2021  
General Conference Begins 8am Friday September 24, 2021

## MABAS WISCONSIN IN ACTION STAFF

- Content Editor...Gary Schmidt (Milwaukee Fire Bell Club)
- Format Editor.....Terry Schmidt (Milwaukee Fire Bell Club)
- Contributor .....Drew Spielman (Green Bay Fire Dept)
- Contributor .....Matt Gerber (Green Bay Fire Dept)
- Contributor .....Chuck Liedtke (Milwaukee Fire Bell Club)
- Contributor .....Tim Snopek (Waukesha County)
- Contributor .....Jeff Rudolph (Kenosha/Racine Counties)



The 2021 **WEMA** conference will be held **October 20-21, 2021.**

Contact WEMA President with questions at [keith.hulbert@iowacounty.org](mailto:keith.hulbert@iowacounty.org)



## A LOOK AT MABAS STAGING

BY DAN SMITS, FIRE CHIEF & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR, MONROE FIRE DEPT

### What is staging? Can't everyone just go to the scene?

A staging area should be designated so that units can protect their flexibility if needed at the scene. This includes the need to stay far enough away to go to the other side of the scene or possibly grab another hydrant on the way in, as examples.

Common staging areas may be the last or next intersection from the scene, for those that are not the first apparatus in and necessary for the initial attack. It may be the last driveway where vehicles can turn around in a rural setting.

### What are the biggest concerns?

- ◆ Is the area big enough? Will angle parking be possible to allow all apparatus to be used and compressed so that walking is not difficult? This may make a lot of sense on an urban scene
- ◆ Will it interfere with operations? Can tenders still get by?
- ◆ Are departments coming in from multiple locations and possibly will

you need two staging areas based on direction of arrival?

- ◆ Is a Level II staging area (farther away from incident) necessary later in the incident? This is usually a much larger staging and provisions may need to be put in place to move personnel to the scene without their apparatus.

### Is the Staging Area for an Interdivisional Task Force or Strike Team?

- ◆ Is it a well-known area?
- ◆ Is it near a fuel point if needed for a long drive?
- ◆ Is it centrally located or on the various sides of your Division so that all departments can get there in a timely manner?

### Problems that can be avoided

- ◆ Consider pre-designation of Staging Officer or designate the closest apparatus as the Staging Officer automatically.
- ◆ Identify Staging at the time of the Box Alarm and at each level, if it changes.

- ◆ Make sure the Staging Officer is listening on a mobile radio in case radio transmissions are coming from a distance (a tender fill site or Level II staging away from IC).
- ◆ Keep all companies together
- ◆ If you need just the personnel, say so, but take into account future status requests - keeping drivers with vehicles can be an advantage when additional rigs are needed to move up to the scene.

### Other Key Concepts

- ◆ Keep sufficient resources to handle another incident or at the first scene. This can also be accomplished with sufficient Change of Quarters companies.
- ◆ Escalate alarms for additional incidents and assigning the next level to the next incident (when it rains it pours).
- ◆ If poor weather, or a very large incident, consider Staging near a facility that includes the ability to get nourishment and/or use bathrooms.

*(Continued on page 13)*



(Top photo by Gary Schmidt; Below photos by Chuck Liedtke)



**Top:** Staging in a **parking lot** - offers a lot of flexibility, but may be hard to find

**Left:** **Angle parking** - easy exit; handles more rigs

**Right:** **parallel parking** takes most room.



## A LOOK AT MABAS STAGING - CONTINUED

(Continued from page 12)

- ◆ Bringing a Task Force into your Division to a staging location centrally located so that the Task Force can handle anything else that occurs in your Division.

### What Staging Should Be

- ◆ Keeps firefighters from wandering onto the scene and keeps them ready when needed.
- ◆ Provides as a good place to have personnel from multiple agencies getting to know each other before going into the battle.
- ◆ Should always have a designated officer, especially if it contains a large compliment of apparatus.
- ◆ A place to hand out maps or check with personnel as to their familiarity with the area and ability to get to hospitals or stations.
- ◆ An area where companies can be briefed on the current situation in case they are activated into the scene.

### What Staging Should Not Be

- ◆ Staging is many times a forgotten or disregarded place to be, sometimes overlooked by the Incident Commander consumed by the event.
- ◆ IT SHOULD NOT BE A PLACE TO CRITICIZE WHAT IS HAPPENING. That usually occurs when they are too close to the scene and getting bored.

### Level I Staging

- ◆ It should not be a place to undress and relax.
- ◆ IT SHOULD BE A PLACE TO BE READY TO MOVE AT A SECONDS NOTICE AS THE NEXT PLACE YOU GO MAY BE FOR A MAYDAY!

### Level II Staging

- ◆ A more distant location to allow for flexibility of movement of personnel and equipment that is not blocking tenders or ambulances entering or exiting the incident.

- ◆ There is less of a chance that you may be called in a hurry.
- ◆ A location to leave apparatus if all that is needed is personnel.
- ◆ A place to undress and relax

### Use Staging to Your Advantage

I have been involved in MABAS for over 35 years and have been on small and large scenes. Staging has been, in some cases, miles away, and in other cases, up the block, but with a long walk to the scene.

The many great stories told are from having and understanding the roles that MABAS can play in speed of response, when seconds can count. Staging is just as important as your Change of Quarters companies and the Personnel standing in front of the burning structure.

When you are looking desperately for help, there is no better sight than more personnel coming to help you out.

### MABAS-Wisconsin Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

Index Number: B-01-01 Dispatch and Alarm Procedures

Subject: Dispatch and Alarm Procedures

Functional Area: Operations

Category: Procedures

Approved: Approved by the Executive Board on September 4, 2006

Revised/Approved: Nov. 10, 2011

**1. ALARM PROCEDURES:** In an effort to simplify dispatching and maintain organization, Incident Commanders (ICs) are strongly encouraged to utilize the MABAS Box Alarm Card System to request additional resources instead of *“piece-mealing”* resources to an incident. A request for a MABAS Box Alarm activation by an IC can be made either directly to the appropriate MABAS Dispatch Center, or through the local dispatch center of the stricken community and can be made either via telephone, or radio (on IFERN or IFERN 800), with the telephone being the preferred medium. The stricken community must provide the following information to the Dispatch Center when requesting the MABAS Box Alarm activation:

- 1.1 The name of the requesting Agency
- 1.2 The type of Alarm being requested (Life Safety – Tender, etc.) and Box Alarm Card number
- 1.3 Level of the Alarm requested
- 1.4 Nature of the incident, address, and the name of the building (hospital-school-factory-etc.)
- 1.5 Staging Location

# WAUKESHA COUNTY MABAS DIVISION 106 IN ACTION BY TIM SNOPEK, GARY SCHMIDT, AND MATT JAY



Employee's watch in disbelief of what is left of Michael's House of Prime restaurant, a well-known establishment, overlooking Pewaukee Lake at **W278 N2316 Prospect Ave.**

At **4:01am, Wednesday December 9, 2020**, Waukesha County Communications received report of the fire.

The **Pewaukee Fire Department** upgraded **Waukesha County MABAS Div. 106 Box Card 28-12** to the **Box Alarm Level** at **4:28am** and a **2nd Alarm for Tenders** at **5:09am**. The Box was struck out at **7:07am**. (Photo above by timsnopek.com)



At **2:43pm, Monday February 15, 2021**, the **Village of Waukesha Fire Department** responded to a fire in a non-hydranted area at **W256S5041 Oakdale Dr**. Upon arrival, flames were shooting from the roof. With water tender fill site hydrants frozen due to bitterly cold weather, **Division 106 Box Card 16-22** was requested to the box alarm level at **3:14pm**.

At **5:04pm**, a **2nd alarm for tenders** was called for. Battling the stubborn fire and weather took until **7:57pm** before the box was struck out. (Photos on right and below by timsnopek.com)



## WAUKESHA COUNTY MABAS DIVISION 106 IN ACTION - CONTINUED

At **12:55pm** on **Saturday February 6, 2021**, a fire was reported in a commercial structure in a business district paralleling I-94 just northeast of the City of Waukesha at **21795 Doral Rd.** The **Town of Brookfield Fire Department** responded and reported heavy fire showing.

With near-zero temperatures, **Div 106 Target Hazard Box 22-18** was requested to the **box alarm level at 1:01pm** and the **2<sup>nd</sup> alarm at 1:50pm.** The box was struck out at **2:58pm.**  
(Photos by Jeff Rudolph)





# MABAS - Wisconsin

## Mutual Aid Box Alarm System

Organized 2004

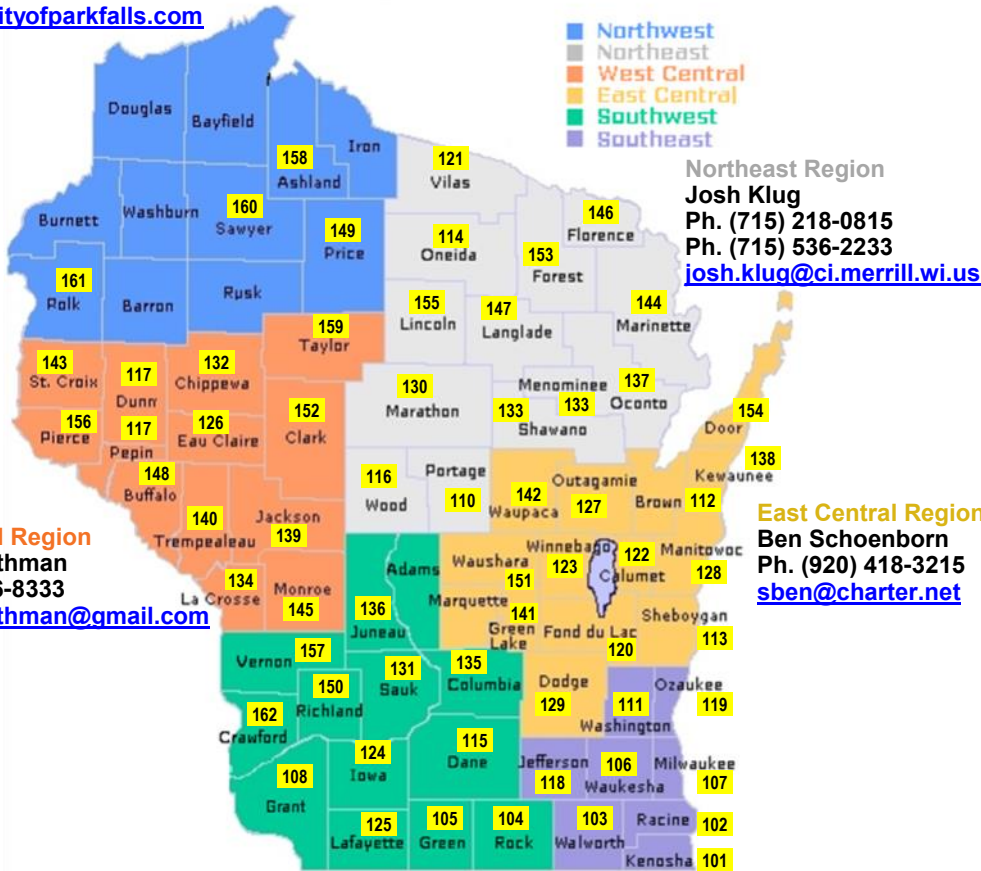
### MABAS Wisconsin Regional Coordinators

#### Northwest Region

Phil Bochler

Ph. (715) 492-7235

[assessor@cityofparkfalls.com](mailto:assessor@cityofparkfalls.com)



#### Red Center -

WEM Duty Officer

Ph. 800-943-0003 (Press 3)

#### Fire Service Coordinator

Tim Haas

Ph. (608) 220-6049

#### Wisconsin Homeland Security Council

Kevin Bierce

Ph. (262) 691-5610

#### MABAS OPERATING FREQUENCIES

IFERN	MABAS Alerting & Intra-Divisional Responses
IFERN2	Alternate Intra-Divisional Responses
MABAS1 (WISCOM)	Inter-Divisional Responses
	Contact with Wisconsin Red Center
MABAS2 (WISCOM)	Regional Coordinators - WEM Coordination

#### MABAS WI Divisions

- 101 – Kenosha County
- 102 – Racine County
- 103 – Walworth County
- 104 – Rock County
- 105 – Green County
- 106 – Waukesha County
- 107 – Milwaukee County
- 108 – Grant County
- 110 – Portage County
- 111 – Washington County
- 112 – Brown County
- 113 – Sheboygan County
- 114 – Oneida County
- 115 – Dane County
- 116 – Wood County
- 117 – Dunn/Pepin County
- 118 – Jefferson County
- 119 – Ozaukee County
- 120 – Fond du Lac County
- 121 – Vilas County
- 122 – Calumet County
- 123 – Winnebago County
- 124 – Iowa County
- 125 – Lafayette County
- 126 – Eau Claire County
- 127 – Outagamie County
- 128 – Manitowoc County
- 129 – Dodge County
- 130 – Marathon County
- 131 – Sauk County
- 132 – Chippewa County
- 133 – Shawano/Menominee Cnty
- 134 – La Crosse County
- 135 – Columbia County
- 136 – Juneau County
- 137 – Oconto County
- 138 – Kewaunee County
- 139 – Jackson County
- 140 – Trempealeau County
- 141 – Green Lake County
- 142 – Waupaca County
- 143 – St. Croix County
- 144 – Marinette County
- 145 – Monroe County
- 146 – Florence County
- 147 – Langlade County
- 148 – Buffalo County
- 149 – Price County
- 150 – Richland County
- 151 – Waushara County
- 152 – Clark County
- 153 – Forest County
- 154 – Door County
- 155 – Lincoln County
- 156 – Pierce County
- 157 – Vernon County
- 158 – Ashland County
- 159 – Taylor County
- 160 – Sawyer County
- 161 – Polk County
- 162 – Crawford County