

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 2017

## 3 BOYS MISSING 21 HOURS NEAR DODGE COUNTY MINE

BY GARY SCHMIDT, TREASURER, MILWAUKEE FIRE BELL CLUB; EDITOR, MABAS WISCONSIN IN ACTION NEWSLETTER

July 10, 2016 was a typical summer day. Three teens, Tate (16 years old), Zach (also 16 years old), and Sam (15 years old), set off on their bicycles in rural Dodge County. They were to return home before it got dark. They all live near Highways 67 and 33, about 10 miles west of I-41, near Iron Ridge, Wisconsin. It was now 9pm. Where were the boys? Why haven't they called from their cell phones?

In the area is the old abandoned Neda Iron Ore Mine. Now owned by the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee (UWM), the mine is over 150 years old, but has not been used for 80 years.

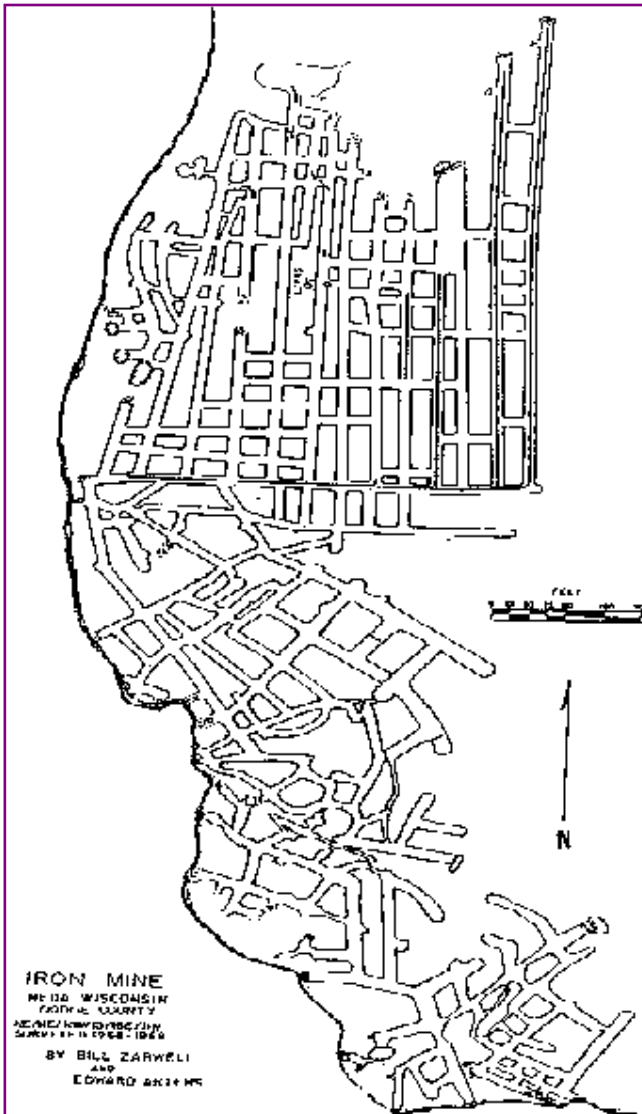
It has become a hibernaculum - the caves being a natural refuge for hundreds of thousands of bats.

This Sunday afternoon was hot, sunny, and humid, with temps reaching 90 degrees. The caves were cold, damp, 30-40 degrees cooler, and mostly dark. Only scientists from UWM and the DNR enter the cave's secured entrances a few times each year to study the bats.

Could the boys have found a way to enter the caves?

If so, are they lost, hungry, cold, or injured? Could they be trapped?

**The story continues on the next page....**



The map above shows the approximately one dozen north-south pathways and one dozen east-west pathways of the Neda Iron Ore Mine. The southern portion is much more unstable and has more changes in elevation (hills and drop-offs). (Map courtesy of the Mayville Historical Society)



### Inside This Issue:

Division 129 In Action: My Son Did Not Come Home Yet - Should I Be Worried?	2
Mine Entrapment - Madison Rescue Team Prepares For Cave Entry	6
Mine Entrapment - Madison Rescue Team Enters the Mine	7
Boys Trapped in Mine - Milwaukee HURT Organizes a Response	8
We Found The Boys!	9
Boys Trapped in Mine - After Action	12
Dear Badger Red	13
Command & Dispatch Conference	14
Division 129 In Action: Ellington Fights House Fire In 50 MPH Winds	16
MABAS Division Map	18



*"Our lives will never quite be the same again, the work you chose to do will be forever remembered" - Sam's Family*

# DIV 129 IN ACTION: MY SON DID NOT COME HOME YET - SHOULD I BE WORRIED?

BY JASON BOECK, CHIEF, IRON RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND SERGEANT, DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

I was just coming home from dinner with my family and I noticed my neighbor coming over with another person who I recognized as a family friend of many years. They made some small talk and then a comment was made that **"it's really weird that my son did not come home yet and did not call me. Should I be worried?"**

Iron Ridge is a small community in the Town of Hubbard. Immediately to the north is the unincorporated area called Neda. Up the main highway (WI-67) is the City of Mayville. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an iron ore mining operation began. The Iron Ridge Fire Department was formed in 1888 to support that endeavor.

I grew up in Iron Ridge. My grandfather and father were on the **Iron Ridge Fire Department** and I have followed in their footsteps and am now Chief. However, like most Fire Departments in the area, we are

a volunteer department. This means we all have full time jobs. Mine is being a Sergeant on third shift of the Dodge County Sheriff's Office. I was not scheduled to work that night.

Living here all my life, you get to know a lot of the residents of the towns and villages spread about this area of Dodge County, many from childhood. Now, our own kids attend the same schools or events in the area.

Tate's mom knew I was both a Deputy Sheriff and the Fire Chief. Tate, Zach, and Sam were planning on camping out in Tate's backyard that night just west of Neda. The three teens left home around noon on Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup> riding their bikes, going to Iron Ridge to play and even going swimming (it was in the 80's and humid).

It is common for kids in the area to take the back roads to avoid the highways where traffic is going 55 mph so traveling along the mine area

is normal. As a child, I never entered the mines, but had some friends that claimed they did. The abandoned mine's entrances were secured. What I did not know, is that over time, with the seasonal shifting of the earth due to frost-thaw cycles, new access points open to the mine's interior in any given year. Researchers say it's hard to keep up with those. What we did not know is that around **3pm**, the kids were riding by and decided to do some exploring.

It was **7:15pm**. I told Tate's mom that we should start worrying when it got dark (around 9pm). Perhaps the kids went to another friend's house on their bikes. There was a concern that his phone went to voicemail. Later, after piecing together the clues, the fact phones were "out of the area" and going directly to voicemail made me suspect the mine.

Tate's mom came with me in my pickup truck and we began driving the back roads. Tate's Dad, was waiting  
*(Continued on page 3)*

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

Well here it is June already with our Conference right around the corner! I understand it is a very busy time for all of us, but hopefully you can turn out for our annual professional development opportunity.

Speaking of professional, since I was elected, I spend a great amount of time analyzing our mission and resources. I am sure you all know it, but the individuals behind the scenes certainly make **MABAS Wisconsin** stand apart from other organizations I have been associated with.

As with any organization there are just so many individuals who make the wheels turn to make it successful. For us we have a very dedicated group of Regional Coordinators who work the Operational side on a daily basis and do a hell of job making it happen.

It amazes me to this day how they juggle those resources to get aid where needed.

On the Administrative side of the house, we have the Executive Board and committees who put the wheels in action as training and the financial side come in to play.

If you think for a moment it's not a 365-day job to keep the bus rolling, think again. I just want to tell you how impressive of an organization you belong to!

To your part, **STAY ACTIVE!** Attend the conference, let us know what you need, attend your local meetings...Stay in touch! We need you! The State needs you!



So once again thanks to Gary for putting together a great Newsletter! I hope to see all of you at the Conference and until the next BOX, be safe!

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

To Receive MABAS Emails, including the newsletter, visit the list server site, enter your email address & name and click "subscribe":  
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## DIV 129 IN ACTION: MY SON DID NOT COME HOME YET - CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 2)*

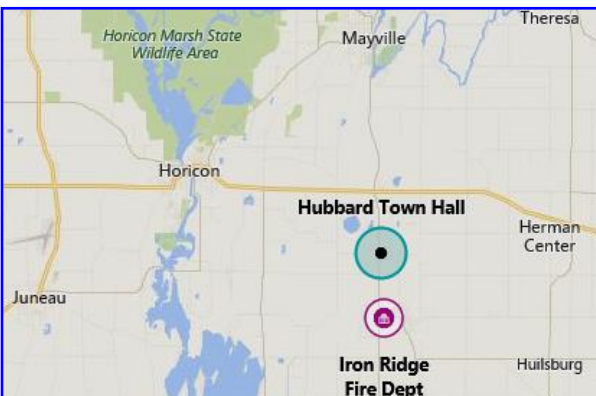
at home, but then did the same. So did Tate's uncle who is a member of my Fire Department. Word was beginning to spread that the boys' whereabouts were unknown.

At **9:43pm**, we officially contacted the Dodge County Sheriff. At the same time, Zach's mother was in contact with the Mayville Police Department. At this point, this was a full-scale law enforcement operation and I was in law enforcement mode.

A lot of different things were occurring. Witness accounts of the boys' sightings were being pieced together. With the kids being on bikes and even their homes a few miles apart, the search area involved many towns and villages in a 5-mile area.

There was no evidence of bike marks near the mine. Local Law Enforcement checked county parks in a 5-mile area. Friends and family began searching. There were a lot of leads where they like to hang out. The local towns are miles apart, so it took a long time to search and follow-up on leads, including checking ditches and going to friend's houses. We all were retracing steps. I went to known mine entrances and there were no signs of entry, but my gut instinct kept telling me that it was the mine area. I had another deputy double check.

We tried to ping phones – the last known tower that connected with phones had a 5-mile coverage radius.



Approximate Area of Initial Law Enforcement Search

Not helpful. Nearby is the Horicon Marsh Wildlife Refuge area. Gas station convenience stores, industrial sites, and pools were checked, along with a myriad of parks and trails, using squad cars, ATV's and UTV's.

A challenge to contacting witnesses was it was nearing midnight and the darkness made searching difficult. The railroad was notified to keep an eye out along the tracks that run through the area. An abandoned factory building was searched. The teens' known friends and acquaintances were contacted. Around **1am**, a brief shower passed through the area.

We reconvened at sleepover location at Tate's house at **2am**. The 2<sup>nd</sup> shift Dodge County Sheriff Lieutenant was relieved by 3<sup>rd</sup> shift. Upon driving home, something told Lt. Brian Loos to go back to the entrance he previously searched and he discovered the bikes by walking in the grass at **2:40am**.

We all left the house. At **2:41am**, the **Iron Ridge Fire Department** was paged out along with Woodland and Neosha Fire Departments (automatic-aid). I am now transitioning from Law Enforcement to the Fire Chief role. We created a unified command (joint law enforcement and fire) at the **Hubbard Town Hall** on Neda Road and WI-67, just west of the mine.

The finding of the bikes provided an area of focus, but the law enforcement effort continued alongside a fire department search effort.

I am part of the Dodge County Sheriff Child Abduction Response Team (CART). I knew how to conduct grid searches, maintain evidence, and mark areas being searched. That enabled me to tell the Fire Department Responders how to conduct the search.

It was possible that there was an abduction with the

bikes being tossed out of sight. Or, the kids could be lost or injured in the area. Or, they could be in the caverns of the mine.

At **2:56am**, I requested GIS (geographic information system) Maps, a digital representation of the area, from the Dodge County Office of Emergency Management. Also, a University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (UWM) contact was needed for someone who was familiar with the mines in the event the search leads us into the mines. Being the middle of the night, we were reaching people at their homes and it would take time (hour or more) for them to travel to their offices. The teens were last seen about 15 hours ago; time was not on anyone's side.

At **3:04am** (July 11, 2016), I pulled **MABAS Life Safety Card 22-12-3** to the box alarm level. Throughout the night, I would upgrade to higher alarms. The Life Safety card was not developed for missing person searches. I had to modify when escalating, like indicating that full turnout gear not needed (was a detriment due to humid weather) but flashlights were needed. I tried to get seven personnel from each department to assist in search, but not deplete a department. I exhausted the card (there were passes) by morning.

These resources were used to conduct a grid search, including stable edges of the mine. This was a wide area being covered. Sector officers were assigned. We taped off areas to designate sectors and areas searched. Due to time and exhaustion, tape helped relief crews understand what was searched already. The process was dynamic due to vastness of the area. We eliminated cliffs and ledges where the boys may have fallen and be injured.

We have wind turbines in the area and previously I had researched what resources I could call upon if a maintenance worker had an accident

*(Continued on page 4)*

## DIV 129 IN ACTION: MY SON DID NOT COME HOME YET - CONTINUED

(Continued from page 3)

and needed rescue way up the structure. This is how I learned about **Madison and Milwaukee HURT (Heavy Urban Rescue Teams)**. I had a thought that the boys may have fallen down a ledge in the mines or there was a collapse. We aren't trained to repel down a 30' drop in a mine cavern entrance. So at **3:36am**, I made contact with the **Madison Fire Department**.

Between **3am and 4am**, we also made contacts for helicopters with white or infrared search lights. Air One (Winthrop Harbor, IL) and the US Coast Guard were contacted but were either unavailable or grounded due to low ceiling conditions (clouds).

**Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM)** was contacted and they tried the Wisconsin Air National Guard

(eventually unable to respond). WEM contacted the DNR to see if they would accept the search mission. The DNR has a fixed wing plane with FLIR (forward looking Infrared camera), but the earliest the pilot could fly would be 6-7am. WEM also contacted **Badger Red** – two personnel from Appleton would be on the way to offer guidance and support.

At **4:22am**, a **K-9 team from Beaver Dam** was requested. Periodically, Law Enforcement would try calling the boys' cell phones. At **4:49am**, a **chaplain** was called to the Town Hall Unified Command Post.

By **4:50am**, we set up a media staging area at the Iron Ridge Fire Department about 1 mile away (the Sheriff had sent out a press release via Facebook). The Town Hall Command Post was used for Law Enforcement, the Fire Department Staging area, and we set aside an area for the parents of the missing boys.

At **4:57am**, we asked Wisconsin Southern Railroad to stop all trains in the area.

At **5:02am**, we put out a call for reflective vests, radios, and flashlights.

At **5:30am**, Flight for Life was contacted to see if they would come onsite to stand-by. Being that it was only a 13-minute flight, they notified their crews to be aware, but their 2 birds would stay in hangers and would be called once any potential extrication begins.

At **6:14am**, the K9 tracking began. The dogs were able to track from the bikes to a general direction of the mines, but

the earlier rain shower made tracking too difficult and that was called off.

At **6:23am**, the US Air Force Rescue called saying they can be contacted if the DNR plane can't fly.

We rotated crews every 60-90 minutes and used busses to get them totally out of the area to properly clear their minds during rehab. We established three different search groups. We determined that we needed to split apart **Fireground Red** radio traffic, so we assigned search teams on the outside of the mine area to use **Fireground White** and those near or entering the mine to be on **Fireground Blue**.

The general public became aware of the situation when sun came up and saw TV reports. Also, local traffic on the roads saw the emergency lights and vehicles (the Town Hall is alongside Highway 67, the main road in the area).

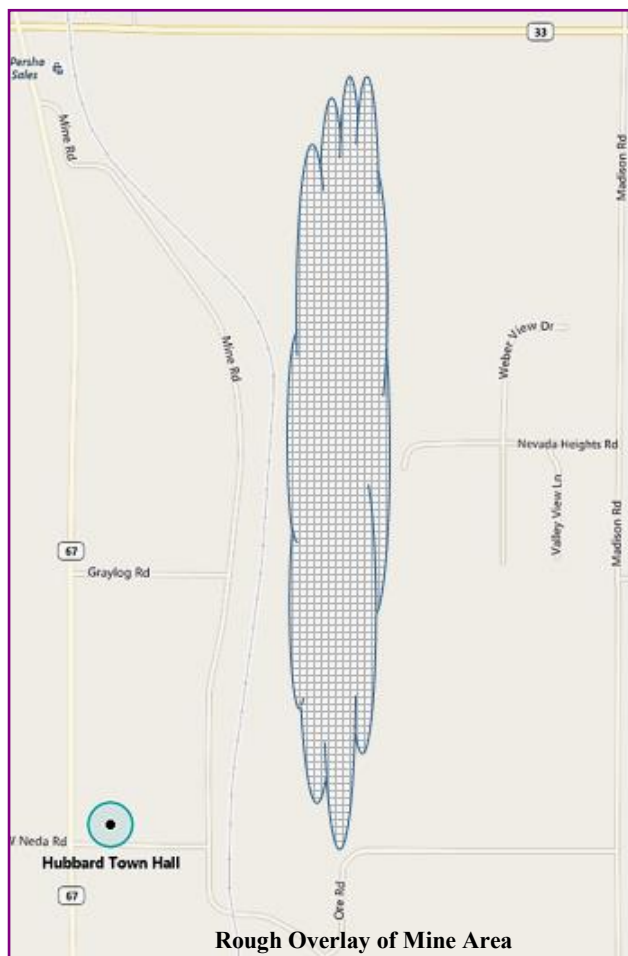
News media helicopters were causing too much noise (to hear any calls for help), so the FAA at Chicago Air Traffic Control was called and a restricted air space / no fly zone was established of 2 nautical miles up to 2,000 feet by **6:45am**.

Some civilian volunteers showed up. Keep in mind, a Law Enforcement action was also occurring and this could be a child abduction. CART training requires that volunteers be vetted. Such volunteers were directed to Iron Ridge Community Center away from the action.

At **7:56am**, an ATF response team from Milwaukee were on the way to assist local law enforcement to canvass neighborhoods for leads in case there was an abduction.

A few firefighters on their way to their full-time jobs stopped by and offered to help but were told that if this extends, most likely their Department would be called later on.

(Continued on page 5)



## DIV 129 IN ACTION: MY SON DID NOT COME HOME YET - CONTINUED

(Continued from page 4)

The Madison Incident Commander let me know that they would be needing a break. At **7:30am**, contact was made with the **Milwaukee Fire Department** to relive the Madison HURT team. They said they would gather a team to send.

At **8am**, the DNR plane was overhead, communicating on MARC-2. At **8:26am**, through Badger Red, we requested an **Interdivisional Task Force of Squads from Washington County MABAS Division 111**. Specific instructions were to wear light gear (brush fire gear), hiking boots (not FD boots), and flashlights.

At **8:41am**, the railroad reported 3 people walking near a railroad crossing near Beaver Dam; it turned out to be 2 boys and a girl. Law Enforcement was still looking for potential leads and canvassing the areas, looking for anything suspicious. At **8:59am**, more maps of the area came from Land Resources personnel.

Jennifer Redell, a DNR Conservation Biologist and cave/mine expert, called at **9:05am** to say she was enroute.

Throughout the morning, as the word of the "Breaking News" spread, calls kept coming in recounting the times and locations that area residents saw the boys the previous day as well as various descriptions of "suspicious adults seen with kids". We had the area cordoned off by Law Enforcement. "Locals" would walk up to the edge and offer suggestions to searchers about possible entry points. An elderly woman had a map that we photocopied. Local businesses began offering ice, water, and food.

Around **10am**, we began the process of setting up a 2<sup>nd</sup> operational period – interdivisional and local county resources who did not respond on the box alarms. We were trying to keep it as local as we could but still replace everyone including me as I had been up for over 24 hours. So we started to

call local departments to see what may have been available for operational period #2 at 4pm, including entire command staff. This included a **Strike Team from Waukesha Division 106**. We started to look in the Fox Valley area for another HURT team utilizing the Badger Red resources from that area.

In the meantime, many area residents who lived their whole lives in the area (like myself) came forth with various potential entrance points that they had used as kids (despite always being warned to stay away). We had a lot of local experts. I knew some as a kid and could vet those who had knowledge as I knew they went into the mines as kids. One resident did know of an "entrance that was not really an entrance".

At **10:38am**, the DNR scientist, **Jennifer Redell** arrived. She stated she "**would find the boys within an hour of entering the mine**". I hoped that she would be right.

(Photo: Clay Christenson)

At **11am**, the **Emergency Operations Center** with a tip hotline was activated and planned to be staffed at least through midnight. Around **noon**, **Ben Schoenborn, the East Central Regional Coordinator for MABAS**, arrived on scene.

I was concerned with the emotional & physical toll occurring on the rescuers. The longer the incident dragged on, the more they were tied into this, particularly my firefighter who was the uncle of one of the boys. It was difficult to get them to rehab and everyone was starting to get overly tired.

It also was a tough balancing act keeping the parents informed about what the potential was of the kids being trapped, or worse, and what to

keep within the command staff. We allowed the families to be near the command trailer and we gave them hourly briefings.

Both Law Enforcement PIO (Public Information Officer) and myself gave the families updates of where we were searching, and any updates on leads, which was very effective. It should be noted that there was a pond in the area that we looked at early on with the dogs to see if there were any scents (about 35 years ago there was a drowning). We discussed having to call in a dive team as the pond was within walking distance of where the bikes were found. So, there were a number of different avenues we were looking at.

Since the Command Post was away from the search area, this was extremely tough on the families as there was little action or movement for them to see. We showed them the maps we were using and told them of an article of clothing we had found.

Earlier, around **10am**, the families saw about 30 shovels and other hand-digging equipment being dropped off. We told the families that there were reports of hearing pounding coming from underneath the ground (this would later prove to be a false alarm).

What we did not say was that due to the instability of the mine, heavy equipment, such as excavators, could not get close to the area. Digging by hand would take a long, long time.

**The next page details the activation and planning of the Madison Fire Department's effort....**

Your contributions to the various columns will make this newsletter a success. Let us know about your MABAS response activity at [garyschmidt@wi.rr.com](mailto:garyschmidt@wi.rr.com). In particular, pictures are needed of actual emergencies or Division-wide training events.

## DIV 129 MINE ENTRAPMENT - MADISON RESCUE TEAM PREPARES FOR CAVE ENTRY

BY CLAY CHRISTENSON, ASSISTANT CHIEF, MADISON FIRE DEPARTMENT

The distance from Madison to the NEDA Mine area was approximately 60 miles. We arrived on scene in about 75 minutes from notification. A total of 11 Madison personnel were sent - one commander and ten MADISON HURT members. **This was the farthest Madison's Heavy Urban Rescue Team (HURT) has ever traveled to an incident.**

**3:45am.** Received notification from OIC (on-duty Officer In Charge) Burrus of an out-of-the-city request for HURT personnel to respond to Dodge County to assist with missing children incident - children were possibly lost in underground mine owned by the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee (UWM). Confirmation of the HURT Team to be dispatched was given to OIC Burrus and the team was dispatched. I responded as Incident Commander (IC) for the HURT Team.

No additional resources were needed for the response team; however upon arrival, the OIC was instructed to backfill the HURT personnel back in Madison because it was obvious the incident was going to be time consuming.



**The main ventilation shaft - an unlikely point where the boys may have entered the Neda Mine, but with lacking any other options at the time, it was the home base for the search.** (Photo by Clay Christenson)

**5:00am.** Upon arrival on scene we attended a briefing in their mobile Command Center located in the parking lot of the **Hubbard Town Hall** and developed a plan for the search:

- Madison HURT was assigned with the search of the interior and exterior entries into the NEDA mine.
- Along with the 11 Madison HURT members, approximately 8-10 members of local FD's were assigned to the search team.
- A UWM representative familiar with the mine and area was also assigned as a resource to the search team.

We would begin a search for entry points and search of the interior of the mine. The UWM rep provided maps of the mines and also gave basic instructions and comments about the mine: air quality was good, meaning the mine was well ventilated and did not require SCBA (self contained breathing apparatus), depth of water levels in mine, and ropes should not be used due to snagging and possible knocking of supports causing disruption of the caves.

To view past newsletters, visit:  
[www.mabaswisconsin.org](http://www.mabaswisconsin.org)  
 (scroll down for newsletter links)

**5:30am.** The Team loaded appropriate gear that may be needed for search and were transported to the central access to the mine, the main ventilation shaft. This access point has a locked panel built with an angle iron restriction of approximately 54" corrugated metal pipes. This was established as a home base and I became the Search Base Incident Commander.

At this point, we split into two groups - an interior search group and an exterior group.

The **Exterior** team was comprised of the HURT Leader, four Madison members, the UWM rep, and two local FD members. They searched for exterior entries and evidence of the boys entering, as the main shaft was obviously not accessible by the missing boys.

A Local Fire Department member was assigned to the communications to the IC at the Town Hall.

With time running out, the **Interior** teams were briefed on the layout of the mine and it was decided to search the northern portion of the mine which was more of a grid pattern as compared to the area south of the main access.

**The story continues on the next page as the Madison FD enters the mine....**

### MABAS WISCONSIN IN ACTION STAFF

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## DIV 129 MINE ENTRAPMENT - MADISON RESCUE TEAM ENTERS THE MINE

BY CLAY CHRISTENSON, ASSISTANT CHIEF, MADISON FIRE DEPARTMENT

It was nearing **6am on Monday morning, July 11, 2016**. The **Madison Heavy Urban Rescue Team (HURT)** was about to enter the Neda Mine. Were the missing boys in the mine somewhere? The interior search team had to keep track of what was searched and prevent from getting lost themselves. This was something they really have never planned or trained on. However, their confined space training proved to be a good preparation for this incident. The darkness within the mine provided our personnel some comparisons of searching at fire scenes in dense smoke conditions.

The **Interior** Team was further divided into three Search Teams of 4 people each. Each interior search team would be comprised of 1 or 2 Madison HURT members and 1 or 2 additional personnel from the local departments.

Teams were kept in groups of 4 so as the teams could go in the main shaft and search the shafts while maintaining vision/sound to another member of the team at all times. In other words, drop a member every 100-200 feet as they made their way down the shaft.

The 3 teams would then hop scotch over the other teams as they finished the mine shafts leading off of the main access.

One member of the Local FD was assigned accountability of the Interior team as they entered the mine. Names were taken and assigned to the different interior teams. The Accountability officer was assigned at the main entrance of the mine.

The teams worked for several hours, completing a rigorous search of the northern portion of the mine.

Upon exiting the mine from the initial search, the Interior and Exterior Teams reassembled at the main entry. A team briefing occurred and then the southern portion of the mine was entered. This area was much more meandering and also had many more areas with water that ranged in depth from inches to 6-8 feet of depth.

A boat that was left in the mine to access some of the deeper water areas of the mine was utilized. Around **10am**, Incident Command was informed that the south portion of the mine was searched, but some areas were still not accessible.

One team was maintained to the exterior search and went on to search another area on the exterior not yet checked.

**It was now 10:40am.** We were informed that the Milwaukee HURT had arrived. I went back to the Command trailer to brief the Unified Command and Milwaukee's HURT team who were going to assist in the search and possibly eventually take over phase 2 of the search.

**At 11:20am**, I received notice that the exterior team had found an additional entrance. A relative (family member or friend) showed the location of a new entry. Madison Team members were moved to the new entry area.

Lt. Stebnitz had four of the team members enter and found what they considered to be fresh foot prints in that entry to the mine. The foot prints were found approximately 100' from that entrance.

The remote entrance entry team informed Lt. Stebnitz of rumbling and shaking inside the mine when vehicles were driving on a nearby vehicle trail.

This was relayed to the Unified Command and people were set to restrict vehicular access on the trail near this location.

The MADISON Team did as much of the search as they could access and then exited and briefed Lt. Stebnitz.

**12 noon.** We decided to deploy the Milwaukee team at two locations, the remote entry and at the southern main entry.

The Milwaukee team was to do the search and Madison HURT would comprise the back-up teams.

**The story continues on the next page as the Milwaukee Fire department responds....**

### Madison Fire Department HURT (Heavy Urban Rescue Team)

- Formed in 2009 as part of a State of Wisconsin initiative
- No longer a State asset, but Madison FD has continued its team/training in
  - Rope rescue
  - Confined space / Silo rescue
  - Trench entrapment
  - Collapse
- 57 trained members total
- Headquartered at Station #8
- Typical Daily Staffing:
  - Engine Company (4 members)
  - Truck Company (4 members)
  - Paramedic rig (2 members)

### Madison Fire Department HURT (Mine Rescue Responders)

Search Command –  
A/C Clay Christenson

HURT Team Leader –  
Lt. Ryan Stebnitz

Team Members –:  
A/Lt Eric Fredrickson (Search leader)  
Wade Raddatz  
Artur Dinkins  
Cory Hessling  
Richard Scott  
Adam Phillipson  
Kevin McDonald  
Michael Oconnell  
Joshua Ball

## BOYS TRAPPED IN MINE - MILWAUKEE HURT ORGANIZES A RESPONSE

BY DAVID VOTSIS, DEPUTY CHIEF - OPERATIONS, MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The **Milwaukee Fire Department Heavy Urban Rescue Team (HURT)** was officially requested by the incident commander (Iron Ridge Fire Chief) through Wisconsin Emergency Management at approximately **7:30am** on the morning of **July 11, 2016**.

Milwaukee HURT was called for the purposes of assisting with the search and possible rescue efforts of a four-mile-long abandoned iron ore mine in Dodge County, where three teenagers were presumed trapped since 3pm the day prior.

The on-duty crews of Engine 24 and Rescue 2 (one of two on-duty HURT fire stations), along with Med 19 (Paramedics) and Car 5 (myself as the Special Operations Commander), gathered the anticipated needed rope rescue equipment and met at Station 16 (near I-41) at **9am** to begin the convoy.



MFD arrived at the Neda Mine in Dodge County, Wisconsin at **10am**. MFD commanders were led to the command post where they received a briefing of the operations and backstory up until this point:

*Three teenage boys (ages sixteen, sixteen, and fifteen) had been out riding bikes and playing and had not returned to their homes at dusk the night before (July 10) as ordered by their parents.*

*At around 9:45pm, one of the boys' parents had notified the Iron Ridge FD Chief at his residence that her son was missing.*

*The Dodge County Sheriffs Department, with no leads, began looking for the reportedly missing boys around 11pm on July 10. An officer located three bicycles around 2am laying in tall grass and weeds near the mine. While riding their bikes between houses that afternoon, did the boys decide to do some impromptu exploring as they passed the Neda Mine?*

*The Sheriff's Department, now joined by local fire departments and K-9 units, began to isolate their search to the heavily wooded and overgrown areas on top of and surrounding the mine. Throughout the night and the next morning, many citizens showed up at the site in order to assist with the search efforts and to support the rescuers.*

*After failing to locate the boys in the areas surrounding the mine, the Iron Ridge FD Chief called for assistance from the Madison Fire Department Technical Rescue team at 5am on July 11 in order to go into the abandoned mine.*

*The mine was used for iron ore extraction from the 1860s through 1915. The mine entrances were blocked in recent years, with secured access allowed only to university and DNR personnel. The mine shafts and tunnels currently serve as the largest bat sanctuary in the Midwest, owned by the University of Wisconsin system since 1976.*

*It is pitch dark with a maze-like configuration inside the mine, which spans four square miles. Did the boys get lost and could not find their way back through the maze?*

*The boys could have been utilizing the flashlight feature on their cellular phones for light inside the mine, leading to the phones' quick discharge. Maybe they were now stuck in the pitch dark mine, a bat*

*sanctuary harboring up to 200,000 bats, with no light, no communication to the outside, no food or water, and nobody knowing where they were. Within a day or so, dehydration and hypothermia would set in.*

While going through the briefing and being shown on a map where the bikes were found, we determined that there had to be another access point where the boys squeezed through into the southern portion closer to their bikes.

A Wisconsin DNR scientist, familiar with the caves, came on scene and reported into the command post. She agreed with this assessment, but warned **"the southern portion was a very difficult-to-navigate maze with unstable sections of past collapse and some very narrow tunnels and corridors"**.

**The story continues on the next page as the Milwaukee HURT enters the mine ....**

### Milwaukee Fire Department HURT (Heavy Urban Rescue Team)

- Formed in 1995
- Rescue 1 & 2 are twinned rigs, used for:
  - Confined space rescue
  - High and low angle rope rescue
  - Structure collapse rescue
  - Heavy vehicle extrication
- Rescue 4 contains additional equipment used in:
  - Collapse rescue
  - Trench rescue
- 87 trained members total
- Southside location houses Engine-12, Rescue-1, Rescue-4 (shared staffing)
- Northside location houses Engine-24, Rescue-2
- Typical Daily Staffing at each station:
  - Engine Company (4 members)
  - Rescue Company (5 members)



## WE FOUND THE BOYS! BY CAPTAIN BRIAN MCNULTY, CO-DIRECTOR, MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT HEAVY URBAN RESCUE TEAM

We left the briefing area at the Town Hall and were shuttled to the mine area. There we met the Madison FD HURT members. You could tell they were tired. They were covered in mud. While often there is a competitive nature between fire departments or even within a fire department, there wasn't any sense of competition or judgement. It was "there's a job to be done, this is what we've been doing". A local resident had pointed out an entrance that Madison HURT was directed to; they had made entry but did not go too deep without the mine expert who was not on scene yet (she arrived about the same time we did). There was a great willingness to transfer any knowledge they had and I had a lot of respect for them as they had spent the night busting their tails doing the searching. Now it was our turn.

I am a **co-director of the Milwaukee Fire Department Heavy Urban Rescue Team (HURT)**. I woke up that Monday morning (July 11, 2016) on my second off-day (I normally work a 24-hour shift followed by 48 hours off) and heard the story on the news that the boys were missing.

One of my sons (I have 7- and 9-year old boys) was still home. I was just about to walk out the door to go to the grocery store when Deputy Chief Lintonen called me and said the HURT team had just been requested to Iron Ridge. He indicated that we would be sending half of the on-duty team to Iron Ridge, keeping the other half in the City. For major activations, the co-directors are called in.

Chief Lintonen asked me who I wanted on the team (while all members are trained in HURT disciplines, such as high and low angle rope rescue, structure collapse, and confined space, members will have varying experience and specialization and may be more suited for a particular assignment). He told me to come to Engine 24 (the north side HURT firehouse) to meet with then Special Ops Battalion Chief Votsis and leave from there.

I was able to find some child care and upon arriving at the firehouse, Tom McMenamain was just ending his 24-hour shift. Being a very experienced Lieutenant, I asked him to stay over and drive with me and he agreed. Co-director Tim Halbur was working overtime at another firehouse and came over to Engine 24 to accompany the rescue team.

Tom and I would drive together in a Fire Department car. Tim would go with the Rescue unit. Chief Votsis would meet us at the scene.

While driving to Iron Ridge, Tom and I got some info along the way about the Madison HURT effort. We were expecting some kind of shaft that we would have to negotiate, so we started talking about what type of rope equipment would be needed, handlamps, etc. We decided to keep it pared down and go with the basics so that it would be easy to maneuver. When we found the kids and if they were trapped, we would then call for extrication equipment.

We never trained for caves. At every HURT scene, we are a little bit innovative; our goal at training is to get ourselves thinking and learning how our equipment works, and to become skilled to problem solve using the tools we have. Sometimes we need to get really creative.



I have been on the job in Milwaukee 18 years and never worked with a rural fire department or Madison HURT. Upon arriving at the Hubbard Town Hall Command Post area, my impression immediately was overwhelming positive.

In Milwaukee, you don't really get to practice or be part of a large-scale exercise often but when you do, everything is sectored off - an area for family, the command post, logistics section, and so on.

When we arrived on scene, right away I felt like Iron Ridge had done this several times because it just

seemed very busy but very organized at the same time. I would have thought they (local FD's) did this a lot more than rare occasions because they were so organized and communications were so clear despite fatigue setting in.



We met with the Madison HURT commander at the command post (along with the Iron Ridge commanders, the Sheriff, Emergency Management and the DNR) and he brought us up to speed with what his guys were doing, where they were and what they had done. He was very clear and knew the map very well. I did not detect any differences with us and Madison HURT techniques - the experience as well was very positive.

I wanted to narrow down what part of the tunnel overlay had Madison searched to the point that we did not have to cover their tracks (they were highly confident in what they searched). We were told where the bikes were located. I needed to know what Madison experienced so far - what places could you walk thru, where you were on your belly, what hazards were seen, such as water or collapsed areas, where were the entrances located. The DNR Guide was most familiar and knew of some entrances not marked on the map.

We had fourteen members of the Milwaukee Fire Department now at Iron Ridge. Chief Votsis would remain at the Town Hall Command Post and act as communications

*(Continued on page 10)*

## WE FOUND THE BOYS - CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 9)*

“Command” for our operations. Two paramedics would operate as an EMS/RIT (rapid intervention team) should that be needed. Captain Halbur would be “Operations”, remaining on the exterior. The remaining HURT members would divide into two entry teams: I would command Team 1 - Joe Koskovich, Josh Hinsenkamp, and the DNR guide. Team 2 would be led by Tom McMenamain.

We came down to the access roads, going towards one of the known entrances. Team 2 went to a known entrance, a four foot wide culvert with a screen on it, 100 feet long, that led into the mine proper.



While we were driving there, we had a report that Madison HURT located a spot where they noticed some footprints around an area of the mine that was very unstable. One of the local residents knew of a small fissure that one could crawl into and he may have seen some kids around that area. This is where Team 1 would enter.

Anytime we go into a confined space, we like to be roped and harnessed. We kept our harnesses on, but we found out pretty quickly that our ropes were going to be unmanageable. This was due to the amount of rope we were going to need and the way we had to traverse the space we were heading into. It was too much for the 3-person firefighter + DNR guide team.

The DNR Guide wanted us to use only lights - it was a matter of what we were comfortable with. If something happened to one of us, the harness would make it easier for our guys to extract that person. It was cool but comfortable - about 55 degrees. We just wore our t-shirts and street gear, helmets and boots.

One of the biggest things we were worried about was communication. We knew radios and cell phones would not work. So we worked off of “time”. Everything we did was timestamped – if we made entry at such and such time, we will be spending an hour in the mine; if we are not back in an hour, another team needs to be sent in looking for us.

Visibility was fine with flashlights; without – complete darkness. Every once in a while, we would turn off our lights and stand still in case the boys had a light and would try to signal us. We’d do a call out and then remain silent listening for a response.

We had our meters with us to know the air was good. This was bareface exploration. The Entry point was narrow. There were a lot of loose rocks and large rocks that hadn’t fallen and the DNR Guide said “don’t pull on them”. Some were around 3’x3’, others as large as a room that could fall at any time, so there was a collapse hazard. We thought that may have been one of the things that may have happened where something fell on one of the young gentlemen and they couldn’t get out of the mine because of that.

Since we did not have ropes, the DNR Guide used a roll of red reflective tape. Whenever we made a turn, she would tear off a piece and lay it in a pretty visible spot so that as we came back, we shined our lights to find our way back.

At least there were no bats – this was the time of year when the bats migrated I later learned from the DNR.

As rescuers, we try to maintain a positive attitude. Of course, it creeps in the back of your head that Madison HURT had been at this a long time, and the folks from the community fire departments had been at this for a long time, and they searched a

lot of spaces, and I felt like the clock was ticking. Some people were thinking that the kids would just pop up in a corn field; I felt we were passed that point, after all night and the middle of the next day, they would have exposed themselves. I felt confident that they were in the mine.

I mentally prepared myself for what we might encounter. As we walk through the space, I had to think about if they are injured, how do we get them out. How are we going to navigate an extrication rescue through what was difficult to navigate on our own?

Based on what we were encountering, once the boy’s lights went out, without any reference points (such as walls and a flat surface), the absolute right thing would be huddling together, staying put, and banking on a rescue.

It wasn’t extremely physical, but we had to crawl on our bellies, up and over some rocks and we got to a large cavernous area. As a group, we talked about which direction to go towards and we all looked up and saw a spot and were thinking what would we have done if we were youngsters and we all decided we would have climbed up there.

We determined if any space looked like it might have some adventure on the other side for a 15 or 16 year old boy, that would be the place we would be searching.

*(Continued on page 11)*



Underneath the tree line is the mine

## WE FOUND THE BOYS - CONTINUED

(Continued from page 10)

We got to a point, a large spot, like a T-intersection. We decided that we were going to split into two groups, with Josh & Joe to the left and myself and the DNR guide to the right. In 15 minutes, we were to meet back at this spot.

The DNR guide and myself went 25-50 feet and came upon another "T". We decided to split for 5 minutes and return. I thought it would be very easy to hear ourselves, but as soon as I made a turn, I could not hear the DNR guide. She later explained that in these caves, sound does not travel around corners.

I just went down an embankment and just about to come over a rise and I heard something, but couldn't make it out back in the cave, so I decided I better turn around to see what it was. As I got back to the original "T", I heard Joe yelling, "we found them... we found them... we found them... we found them..."

That's when my heart locked up because he didn't say he found them.... well, let's say... I didn't have enough information. I reached Joe and he said Josh found them, all three of them are together, and they are alive up on this ridge. **It was 11:45am.**

### Milwaukee Fire Responders

**MFD IC:** Car 5 DC David Votsis  
**MFD Operations:** Capt. Timothy Halbur

**MFD Entry Team 1:**  
Capt. Brian McNulty (team leader)  
HEO Joseph Koskovich  
FF/P Joshua Hinsenkamp  
DNR Guide

**MFD Entry Team 2:**  
Lt Thomas McMennamin (team leader)  
Lt Nicholas Poliak  
HEO Matthew Trepczyk  
FF Ryan Burke  
FF Joseph Flick  
FF Ryan Gaeth  
FF Jared Bertsche

**EMS (RIT) Standby: Med-19:**  
Lt/Paramedic Christopher Lucas  
FF/Paramedic Justin Doerr

Josh and Joe had gone down their part of the T and climbed an embankment. As Josh relates: *"the boys saw my light, but due to the sandstone absorbing sound, I did not hear them calling until I was about 20 feet away. Upon reaching them, the first thing they said was 'Who are you'? They were cold, but wanted to get out. Being a paramedic, I observed that they were able to walk and climb over the piles of rubble and did not need any immediate medical help"*.

It was great seeing the boys, an outstanding feeling. The worst-case scenario had been creeping into my mind as part of my responsibility (as a director), and when you now find them and look at them, they're not pinned, they're all alive, despite being in a cave, cold, tired, thirsty and hungry.

The DNR guide, being experienced, had water and some granola bars that they shared. We let the boys orientate themselves, especially upon exiting, as it was the first time they saw light in about 15 hours.

We guided them back, being super careful with them. We understood they were probably dehydrated, and our only concern at that point was they did not slip and fall until we got them out of the cave.

I had a great sense of pride for my team. Madison HURT also had done an outstanding job. But, one of the hardest parts was, **I had another group of individuals in part of this mine and they still are working as hard as they can.**

Per the DNR guide, I knew Team 2 was in part of the cave that was a partial collapsed area and I was worried about those guys. Normally, when we find who we are looking for, we make a radio announcement so that others stop putting themselves in harm's way.

In this case, I felt uneasy as there was an amount of time that the other team was still putting themselves in harm's way and we couldn't radio them.

Our goal was to turn over the boys to some of the Madison guys and other local EMS crews, drive to the other team's cave entry point, and go in to get to a point where we could get in communication with the other team. That took another 15 to 20 minutes.

Our entire team, when we were coming back, were all happy we had found the kids safe. As they were shuttling us in the back of a small pickup truck to the Town Hall Command Post, it was just amazing to us as it seemed like everything was right. I felt the whole town had hit the pause button and everybody had stopped their lives to come out to organize around this family, around this fire department, around the community, to save these kids. When they had found out, as word traveled pretty quickly, they were cheering for us, they were clapping, yelling "thank you" - it was just a great, great thing.

While in the cave, when the rescued kids were drinking the water, I joked that they "may as well enjoy this point, because they will be pretty mad at you when we get out", as I would be with my two young sons. When we arrived at the staging area, we saw the kids with their parents and it was something we just don't get to see that much and it was a really great feeling.



(Photo: WBAY)

## BOYS TRAPPED IN MINE - AFTER ACTION COMMENTS

### **From Jason Boeck, Iron Ridge Fire Department & Overall Incident Commander**

- When the boys were found, for me, it was straight out of a movie. It was euphoria. It was the ultimate. I couldn't believe they were found. Having the privilege of telling the families that they were found was just unbelievable and hard to describe - all of the hard work, hundreds of people that I was looking at, all working together - everyone played an important part.
- Knowing the kids and parents personally made this incident very different for local responders.
- At one point costs were mentioned and Badger Red confirmed that HURT would be called through MABAS (at no cost to us).
- I can't say enough of Madison and Milwaukee coming to help from such a distance and providing their expertise. They did not come on scene and take over; they worked and acted so professionally with the "rural fire departments". It was so critical.
- About 8 years ago, the mine experts were putting an emergency operations plan together and we had discussions with local experts and they thought all entrances were secured and only professionals were entering the mines. We did not ever expect using MABAS for this.
- Drawback to our MABAS setup - the Life Safety card used did not take into account of missing persons.
- We have altered the MABAS cards. All Division 129 departments have now considered missing person scenarios on their MABAS cards. I moved my search and rescue efforts to the disaster card, including the HURT teams.
- This incident made me understand the usefulness of MABAS and what I knew of outside resources. Prior to MABAS we only had preplanning for local resources - not such a regional response. Been using MABAS since 2013 and am a big proponent.
- Biggest advantage to MABAS - not having to think about who to call. Box card was set up. It was all automatic.
- Only issue was getting everyone to switch from local channels to IFERN.
- Two dispatchers were brought to the scene manning the mobile command trailer, timestamping important benchmarks that they were overhearing, handling phone calls, etc.
- The hero of the day was the DNR guide; it took a while to get hold of her, but when we did, she stated that she would find the boys within an hour. And she was right! She was in the mines many a time as the bat expert.

### **From Clay Christenson, Madison HURT Commander**

- Gear used by our HURT team members turned out to be a good fit for the search. Durable and lighter weight than structural turnout gear that was used by others.
- Search Teams were working for about 6 hours. There was limited refreshments available to the teams in or near the mine. Refreshments were brought out, but interior crews could have used portable liquids and possibly energy food.
- Communications were very limited. Relaying of information was essential. Even local communications were limited in the mine and outside communications were also not ideal due to the terrain. A/C Christenson and team leaders were best served with face to face and cell phone communication when conversation and important information was being exchanged.
- Lighting was critical and the duration required additional batteries for lights which was provided. Additional batteries would have been nice at the original entry to provide assured lighting.
- Mine maps were distributed at an early point and provided great information.
- All persons from local Fire departments, Milwaukee and Madison were the ultimate professionals. When instructed on the searches, which were very trying physically, I never heard one complaint, moan or negative comment throughout the entire incident.

### **From Dave Votsis, Milwaukee HURT Chief:**

- All Milwaukee FD members on the scene operated in a very foreign work environment within the plan with impeccable professionalism, advanced skill, and humility. It should be noted that some of the Milwaukee FD HURT members participated in this effort off-duty, which allowed enough HURT personnel to operate within a safe and effective plan in Iron Ridge, while still leaving a full team of on-duty HURT personnel to operate effectively as needed in Milwaukee.

### **From Brian McNulty, Milwaukee HURT Co-Director:**

- In the after action, the DNR Guide gave us tips about operating in mines and what to look out for. For the future, we'll make sure to bring some sort of trauma kit, water and food for both rescuers and victims.
- I was so impressed with so many agencies and people, from so many different backgrounds, including type of fire departments they came from, that it was a great melding of all these different communities towards one common purpose. There was no jockeying for control. Every ounce of energy was put in a positive direction.
- I've had 18 years in the fire service, all in Milwaukee. I've been involved in a lot of incidents, some very positive and some not so positive. I want to express to Iron Ridge this should always be looked on as a shining bright moment in this community and this fire department's history because it was so well run.

October 18, 2016

Dear Badger Red (MABAS),

On July 10th our son, Sam, didn't come home at dusk when he was supposed to. I can't put into words the amount of fear we felt as parents. Sam also, would tell you about how scared he and his friends were for those long hours. As you know, Sam and Zach and Tate were found because of the help and dedication from many entities who aided in the search. From the time our deepest fears were being born until the time that the boys were found we were surrounded by people who worked very hard to bring them home safely. We just can't tell you enough how overwhelmed we are by the hard work and dedication that went into those hours they were missing. I truly wish we had the opportunity to shake each of your hands or give you each a hug for what you did to aide in the search or to support the search and us during those awful hours. We realize that you gave your time and hard work for us and we will be forever grateful.

Thank you for what you did to aid in the search. Your assistance with the deployment of fire personnel was truly appreciated and a tremendous help in finding the boys. We realize that they may have come from quite a distance and we just truly appreciate all the help that was given. It was comforting knowing that all involved were giving their best efforts to find them. That you gave of your time and effort to help us is very humbling.

It really saddens us in this day in age to see so many service officials not get the respect and admiration they deserve. We all truly believe that you were an answer to our prayers and the prayers of so many people that were said during those awful hours. God worked through each of you that day to help bring the boys safely back home. So again, thanks you so much for what you did. Our lives will never quite be the same again, the work you chose to do will be forever remembered!

Sincerely,

Sam Leir

Maya

Don

Madelyn Leir

## IRON RIDGE CHIEF TO SPEAK AT 2017 MABAS COMMAND & DISPATCH CONFERENCE

### 2017 Annual Command and Dispatch Conference Preview

#### Keynote Address - "Are You Prepared for the Response of the Century?"

By: Mr. Kevin Lauer, Fire and Emergency Services Management Consultant, University of Tennessee-County Technical Assistance Service.

*Lessons learned will be shared from the recent tragic wildfire season in Tennessee*



#### General Sessions

- **MABAS Division 129 Wide Area Search**

On July 11, 2016 the Iron Ridge Fire Department was paged to assist in the search for 3 teenage boys in the area of the Neda Mine which is located in the Township of Hubbard in Dodge County. This search was very resource intensive and required a MABAS Interdivisional Response as well as specialized resources from throughout southern Wisconsin.

- **Crisis in the Communications Center-Part II**

This is second portion of the Crisis in the Communications Center which we began at our 2016 MABAS Wisconsin Annual Conference.

As a quick review for those in attendance last year, you will recall Director Steve Rauter of WESCOM 911 of Plainfield, IL discussed the importance of having telecommunicators/dispatchers understand the basics of the ICS general staff positions of Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance as well as some of the basics which might be included in an Incident Action Plan (IAP) should a Communications Center be stricken with some type of emergency which impacts their ability to normal operations. For those in attendance last year they were given a homework assignment. That homework assignment was to bring a copy of their respective Communications Center's, Incident Action Plan or Continuity of Operations Plan to the 2017 Conference for review.

Crisis in the Communications Center Part II will feature a scenario which will disrupt the normal and emergency service delivery from our Communications Center. It will demonstrate the chaos which will likely ensue not only in the Center itself but also from the field responders and the public. Not being prepared is simply not acceptable. Be forward thinking and perhaps outside of the box! This demonstration will stress the importance and value of having an Incident Action Plan available in the Communications Center to provide direction thus ensuring the continuity of operations for staff, first responders and the public.

- **The Badger Red Dispatch Center**

Chief Randy Pickering and Mr. Brian Becker, Rock County Public Safety Communications Center will provide an overview of the service Wisconsin's Badger Red Center can provide to stricken communities (Comm. Centers) as well as what you should expect when you contact them.

- **Wisconsin Task Force 1 presents Mission Ready Packages**

Task Force Leader Rick James will define the purpose of Mission Ready Packages for specialized or long term deployments. Further TFL James will discuss the capability of Wisconsin Task Force 1 and their mission to support local first responders as a State owned resource. Finally, TFL James will also discuss the process for activation of Wisconsin Task Force 1.

- **MABAS Division 38 (Lee, County Illinois) Sublette, Illinois Campground Tornado Response**

On June 22, 2016 at approximately 2000 hours tragedy struck the small community of Sublette, Illinois (which is located approximately 90 miles west of Chicago) when a tornado struck. The Woodhaven Campground was in the direct path of this confirmed F2 tornado. The campground is privately owned and contains 6,144 campsites. Fortunately, the tornado struck on a Monday and as such only 300 of the campsites were occupied. 5 campground occupants sustained injuries with 1 person requiring transport to a local hospital.

Sublette Fire Department Lieutenant Nick Dinges, Lee County 911 Center Communications Director Shelley Dallas and Lee County Senior Telecommunicator Deb Killian will share their experiences and challenges associated with managing this devastating incident.

#### Break-out sessions

- **MABAS I** presentations are geared for responders who are new to the program or are new in their respective department assignments
- **MABAS II** is targeting individuals who have MABAS experience and are looking to expand their knowledge base.
- **Dispatch I** is intended for new or young Dispatchers.
- **Dispatch II** is targeting the more senior Dispatcher or Dispatch Supervisor who is looking to expand their MABAS knowledge base.

Visit <http://www.mabaswisconsin.org> for Registration Information

## MABAS WISCONSIN 2017 CORPORATE SPONSORS

As a 501(c)(3) organization, MABAS Wisconsin relies on donations and sponsors. For 2017, MABAS Wisconsin has announced the corporate sponsors to further its mission of mutual aid, associated systems and training:

**Solberg** is your one-stop resource for Class A and B firefighting foam concentrates and custom-designed foam suppression systems hardware. An Amerex Corporation company, Solberg has the expertise, capabilities and resources to serve the fire protection and firefighting industry.



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FIRE-BRAKE foam concentrate is designed to be used for wildland, structural and other Class A fuel fires.

Founded in 1908, W. S. **Darley** & Company is a manufacturer and distributor of firefighting pumps, fire apparatus, and firefighting equipment. They remain a family owned and operated company.

Darley has a current customer base of more than 50,000, which includes federal, state and local governments as well as customers in over 100 countries. Darley is headquartered in Itasca, Illinois and has manufacturing, engineering and operations in Chippewa Falls, WI, where Darley currently employs about 150 dedicated people.



Darley has a strong presence in the state of Wisconsin with sales reps covering the entire state.

**Paul Conway Fire** is America's #1 Helmet Shield Manufacturer and an industry leader in providing the highest quality in protective gear and safety equipment since 1985. We take great pride in supporting the men and women who selflessly protect and serve our communities.

**Paul Conway Safety** division serves individuals and businesses within the industrial safety field. From first aid to hard hats, protective eyewear to fall protection, traffic safety,



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FIRE**

respiratory to hearing protection, safety apparel and more.

**Paul Conway Law Enforcement/Tactical** division specializes in providing top-level products and services that you can depend on when it matters most. We are also a major U.S. dealer for OnCall® Body Worn Camera and the OnCall® Live Video System.

Our **Custom Shop** specializes in Gold Leaf vehicle graphics, striping, decals, embroidery, customized command boards, banners, signs and more.

**INTERSPIRO** has 90 years of experience as a groundbreaking innovator of respiratory protection for non-breathable environments. We develop, manufacture and market respiratory and auxiliary equipment for firefighting, work in hazardous environments and professional diving. INTERSPIRO is an Ocenco group company which ranks among the World's largest respiratory protection companies.



INTERSPIRO's strategic business areas are Firefighting, Diving and Maritime/Industrial. INTERSPIRO is a supplier of respiratory protection to fire and rescue services, defense/military organizations, industries, utilities, shipping, offshore and diving companies all around the World.

Our breathing apparatus has an outstanding reputation for reliability and performance. This is accomplished with innovative technical solutions and by applying the highest standards of quality to all parts of the value chain. Our innovation pedigree includes many technology milestones now considered to be standards in the industry.

**Mutual Aid Labs** provides world-class software to emergency services agencies without regard to their size. For too long size and budget has dictated the quality of technology available to these agencies, Mutual Aid Labs will provide software that revolutionizes processes and procedures, in such a way that it does not place undue burden on an agency's budget.



**MutualAid**  
L A B S

Mutual Aid Labs is the provider of **EMABAS** full electronic implementation of the *Mutual Aid* Box Alarm System (MABAS). EMABAS converts box cards from static data to dynamic documents that change as departments and agencies change; EMABAS transforms the manner in which you plan and respond. The desktop version of EMABAS provides the main interface for creating and using box cards. It also provides interfaces into resources, contacts, dispatch and reporting. Additionally the system has the ability to aid agencies in the use of MABAS during actual Calls.

## DIV 127 IN ACTION - ELLINGTON FIGHTS HOUSE FIRE IN 50 MPH WINDS

BY JIM BENTLE, CHIEF, ELLINGTON FIRE RESCUE

On **Wednesday March 8, 2017**, at **3:01pm**, the **Ellington Fire Department** was dispatched to **N3750 Sunset Lane** in the Town of Ellington for a reported house on fire from the home owner. Sunset Lane is a dead end private single lane gravel road that has about 10 single family homes on it. The address for this call was located the farthest home in from Rock Road (the closest cross street).

At **3:07pm**, Ellington 2701 (Chief Jim Bentle) arrived on scene and advised all incoming units that it was a single family 1 1/2 story wood frame home with fire showing out of the D-David roof line. 2701 assumed Sunset Lane Command. (The A-side is the front and B-C-D sides are clockwise from the A-Side, so facing the house, the B-Side would be on the left, the C-side in the rear, and the D-side on the right).

Immediately, I requested Ellington **MABAS Box Card 2-2** to the **box alarm level** with staging on Rock Road and County Road S.

Units responding were: Shiocton with an engine and a tender, Hortonville and Center with tenders, Greenville with a squad and a change of quarters to Ellington station with an engine, a chief from Greenville, Ellington First Responders, Gold Cross Ambulance and Outagamie County CERT Team for rehab.

Ellington Engine 2721 arrived on scene and began a forward lay of 5" large diameter hose (LDH) from Rock Road and Sunset Lane. About halfway down Sunset, all 1000 feet of 5" LDH was laid out but was still too short for a supply line.

*(Continued on page 17)*



(Photo by Ellington Fire Department)



## DIV 127 IN ACTION - ELLINGTON FIGHTS HOUSE FIRE IN 50 MPH WINDS - CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 16)*

Engine 2721 continued to the scene to begin fire attack operations. Two 1 3/4" attack lines were pulled for initial fire attack operations on the A – Adam and D - David sides. The main body of the fire was knocked down with tank water and Class A CAFS (Compressed air foam system).

Wind was out of the south, south west at 45 - 50 mph with gusts of wind up to 68 mph. As the second-in engine finished setting up the supply line, the fire took off and engulfed the home. The second-in engine, (Ellington 2722) hand laid another 800 feet of 5" LDH to complete the supply line to engine 2721.

At **3:22pm**, a full **second alarm** was requested. Units responding were: Hortonville with an engine and an air trailer, tenders from Grand Chute, Black Creek, and Bear Creek, squads from Shiocton and Hortonville and a chief from Grand Chute.

At **3:30pm**, a **special request for UTV's** (Utility Task Vehicles) to help transfer personnel and equipment down the long road to the scene back up to the main road were all the other fire units were staged. UTV's came from Greenville, Black Creek, and Hortonville. As these units arrived on scene, two of them were redeployed to wildland fire attack operations to the east of the home. The high winds were causing fire brands to fly into nearby woods starting both a grass fire and numerous trees to torch out. This operation lasted for about 1 1/2 hours.

At **4:08pm**, a **third alarm request, for tenders only**, was sent out. Water supply points for this call were set up at the Ellington Fire Station (about 2 miles away, fire hydrants on the south side of Ellington (about 4 miles away) and Shiocton Fire Station (about 4 miles away). With long distances and fill times for tenders, water was getting critical due to high flows at the main fire building but also the wildland fire to the east. Tenders

responding were: Dale, Nichols, and Freedom. Around 65,000 gallons of water was used during the fire. After the water supply was set up, units never ran out of water.

Lines flowing on the scene were four 1 3/4" handlines, one 2 1/2" handline, and a deck gun (an aim-able, controllable, high-capacity water device often attached to the top area of a fire engine).

At **4:14pm**, a **third and fourth alarm request for squads** was sent out. Fire personnel were on scene over an hour and more personnel were needed. Squads responding were: Little Chute and Kimberly.

At **5:45pm**, the fire was under control and overhaul operations began.

The radio channels used were Outagamie County Fire Ground 4 for fire ground operations, and Outagamie Fire Ground 5 for water supply operations. No issues with communications were noted during this fire. **Badger Red Center was notified at the third alarm level** but no other resources outside of the box card were used.

MABAS works great and it is awesome knowing that if no other resources are available in your area, there are always some available in the next MABAS division. Ellington has been using MABAS since Outagamie County became a division (I think around 2010).

MABAS units began clearing the scene at around **6:30pm**. Ellington had an engine remain on scene until **11:40** the next morning to prevent any rekindles and to keep the scene for investigators the next morning.

The fire was investigated by the Outagamie County Sheriff Department and Ellington Fire Department. At this time it is ruled undetermined.



(Photos by Ellington Fire Department )



# MABAS – Wisconsin

## Mutual Aid Box Alarm System

Organized 2004

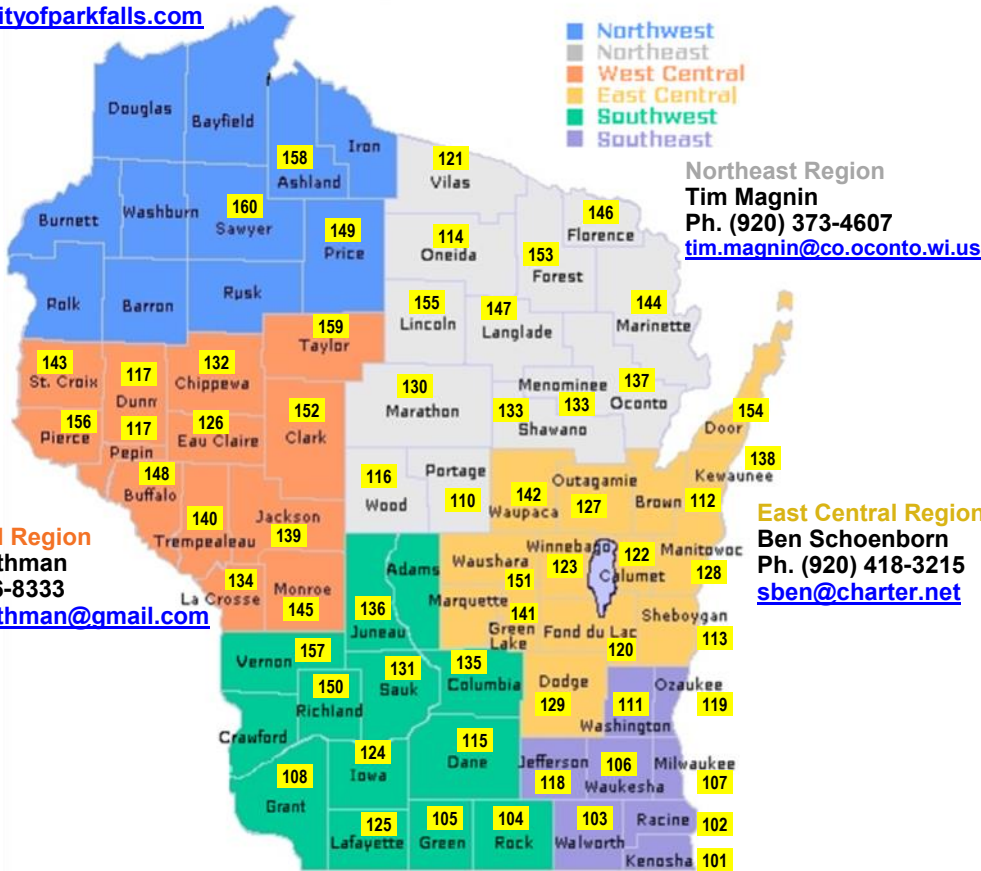
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#### MABAS OPERATING FREQUENCIES

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*
	*Future use

#### MABAS 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