

OUR TOWNS

Cedar County

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Cedar Co. EMS Does Training – With A Train

Car-Train 'Accident' Used In Disaster Preparation Drill

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RANDOLPH, Neb. — To the outside observer, the scene across the street from Randolph High School Saturday morning would have looked grim: A car/locomotive accident with flames and victims.

Fortunately, it all was staged as a full-scale disaster exercise by Cedar County Emergency Management.

"We simulated a train-versus-car accident, with an ethanol tank car attached to the train," said Cedar County emergency manager Kevin Garvin. "We had ethanol that we lit off as the responders approached, and they had to extinguish that before they could get to the victims in the vehicle."

"Following their emergency response guidebook for hazardous materials, they had to evacuate people within a half-

mile radius. They encountered additional victims at the Randolph High School, and successfully triaged all the victims and determined their need of medical care," he said.

Approximately 50 emergency responders from various offices participated in the two-hour exercise. All fire, EMS and law enforcement agencies within Cedar County were invited to participate, along with Nebraska State Patrol, Cedar County Emergency Management, Cedar County Roads Department, Mercy Air Care, Lifenet Air Medical and Randolph Public Schools.

The train was provided by Nebraska Northeastern Railways.

Overall, things went smoothly, Garvin said.

"Once they got the fire out and got the victims dealt with, the exercise was pretty well over," he said.

Full-scale exercises such as

this are performed every three years, as outlined by FEMA's Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Protocol (HSEEP).

"The way that the HSEEP continuum works is that we start with a tabletop exercise, then we do a functional exercise, where you simulate everybody sitting around in different rooms and discussing it individually. The culmination is the full-scale."

Planning for events like the one that took place Saturday can last "the better part of a year," he said.

"We assemble an exercise design team, and we look at the hazards that face the county, and then we've got pre-identified (items) in our regular emergency planning process," Garvin said.

"We pick whatever hasn't been done in a while or we haven't had



COURTESY PHOTO
Cedar County emergency personnel training during a disaster exercise held Saturday near Randolph, Neb. The mock disaster featured a train locomotive slamming into a car.

an actual occurrence of in a while. This is one that popped to mind."

The initial seed of the idea was planted when Cedar County Emergency Management attended a meeting with representatives from Nebraska Northeastern Railways.

"Nobody was really aware of what they were carrying, and

what their emergency procedures are," Garvin said. "The railroad had been anxious to do something like this, so we said, 'Well, let's seize the opportunity and work with them.'"

Events like Saturday's are a big part of keeping things functional, he said.

"These full-scale exercises

provide us with the opportunity to test the emergency plans we have in place currently and modify them based on the outcome of the exercise, prior to an actual event happening," Garvin said. "If a series of mistakes are going to be made, this is the place to make them, rather than the actual event."

MMC

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the search so far," she said.

The selection process has reached a crucial point, Weber said.

"The search committee has put in a lot of time and hard work," she said. "We still have a fair amount of work ahead of us, but it feels good to have this field narrowed down to five candidates. We look forward to having them come on campus and get to know them better."

The dates of the campus visits were finalized Monday, according to MMC interim president Carol Krause. The dates are as follows: Backous, Oct. 4-5; Zylstra, Oct. 7-8; Columbus, Oct. 14-15; Loftus, Oct. 18-19; and Shustowski, Oct. 25-26.

The full-day campus visits will follow a two-part format, Weber said.

"The candidate will meet with the search committee first and then spend the day on campus in meetings with various constituencies," she said. "Each finalist will meet with small groups of students, faculty, staff and administrators."

Plans could include two larger group meetings during each candidate visit, Weber said.

"They can meet with student leaders at a noon luncheon," she said. "At the end of the day, we hope to have a large forum with faculty and staff."

After the campus visits are completed, the search committee will forward its recommendations to the MMC Board of Trustees, Krause said. The trustees can then conduct additional interviews at their Nov. 12 meeting.

The trustees forward their recommendations to the monastery council, which makes the final decision, he said.

MMC officials remain on their original timetable of making a decision by December, Krause said. The new president would then take office in January.

Krause, serving his second stint as MMC interim president, said he would assist his successor as needed.

"Will I stay on (for a transition period)?" he asked. "It depends on whoever is selected and what the need might be. I have offered to help any way I can."

The 57 applicants represent a strong interest in MMC, Krause said.

"We had projected between 40 and 50 (candidates), so this was higher than our (expectations)," he said. "I think there is a perception (among the applicants) of what Mount Marty has to offer, and I think they see a lot of potential for the future."

The selection process has gone well so far, Krause said. The search committee thoroughly researched applicants and narrowed the field to 17 for phone interviews and reference checks, he said.

The finalists offer a strong set of qualifications, Krause said.

"These are leaders in business and industry, and they are leaders in higher education," he said. "They have good backgrounds and are diverse. And I think (the finalists) all did their homework, because they knew much about Mount Marty and Yankton."

Regardless of who is chosen, the next president must show strong financial skills, Krause said.

"The people we looked at were either involved in fundraising or development, or they had started

a new business and had just raised investment capital," he said.

Weber added: "We were looking for, but we didn't specify, that they had to be from higher education. Our primary criteria was someone upholding the mission of the college and the vision to lead the college into the future."

The finalists represent a mix of clergy and laymen, Weber said. Backous' selection would break new ground, as MMC has been led by Benedictine Sisters but never by a priest or monk, she said.

The presidential applicants, regardless of their background, seemed to share a common trait, Weber said.

"For the most part, they wanted to lead at a smaller Catholic college," she said. "I didn't see that they had aspirations of being at a larger type of institution. I think they applied because of their desire to serve, and this is where they would fit best."

Weber said she remains confident that any of the finalists would do well in leading MMC.

"It's just a matter of them getting to know us and (we) getting to know them more thoroughly, so we determine who among them makes the best fit possible," she said.

SAGE

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John Coffey, a member of the Frank E. Evans Association, said Monday that Eunice Sage attended some of the group's reunions and would introduce herself.

"When she met someone new, the first thing she would say was, 'Do you know my boys?' It just tugged everybody's heartstrings," Coffey said.

In an interview with the Norfolk Daily News in July, Eunice Sage remembered her days of worry during the war.

"I had to work. That's all I did. I didn't sleep," Sage said.

"All I did was worry about the boys ... and then they were gone," she said.

Her funeral services are slated for 10:30 a.m. today (Tuesday) at Niobrara Lutheran Church with burial in L'Eau Qui

Court Cemetery at Niobrara. For her complete obituary, see page 3.

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