

**Notes from the  
Alpena Community College  
Emergency Management Team Tabletop Exercise and Discussion  
December 17, 2019**

The Alpena Community College Emergency Management Team and Alpena Police Department Officer Chet Spencer gathered at 9:00 a.m. on December 17, 2019, for a tabletop exercise and discussion.

In attendance: Don MacMaster; Richard Sutherland; Deborah Bayer; Carolyn Daoust; Nancy Seguin; Jeff Blumenthal; Mark Grunder; Nick Brege; Cindy DeRocher; Chet Spencer; and Jay Walterreit. Absent: Melissa Fournier. County Emergency Director Mark Hall was invited but did not attend.

Jay Walterreit thanked the participants for attending and gave a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting. According to the agenda, the purpose of the meeting was to:

- Present an emergency scenario to the ACC Emergency Management Team and local emergency authorities.
- Enhance knowledge of and communication between ACC and local emergency responders.

Nick Brege then introduced the scenario to be used as the basis of the exercise and discussion: a tornado event in Alpena.

Following are notes from the discussion:

- Mark Grunder noted the campus phones are now set up to broadcast messages to all phones. The phones will act as speakers for the message. He also noted the hallway speaker system works but needs a pre-recorded message.
- Brege introduced the tornado scenario: a tornado has touched down and all people have been advised to seek shelter immediately. What do we do?
- Jeff Blumenthal asked about alerts sent by county emergency notification systems. He asked if there is a service that communicates with all cell phones in a given area. Officer Spencer said he would research that possibility with the county.
- Brege then went through the next steps in the scenario. Communication needs to happen. Who would do the communicating? Deb Bayer advised the group that all duties need to be staffed three deep to ensure that someone would always be available to handle the duties. For School Messenger, those people should be Jay Walterreit, Jess Ruppert, and the switchboard operator.
- The group discussed how communication would happen outside of normal business hours. Exit maps were noted; on each exit map is indicated where tornado shelters are located. Maintenance and custodial staff would be present on campus; they would have to get the message out to other staff in the case of an emergency.
- President MacMaster expressed a desire to have a chain of command followed if at all possible. He asked that he, Deb Bayer, and Dick Sutherland be informed about situations.

- Walterreit asked what the message to be communicated would be. What should people be told? He asked who would determine the message to be sent. In the case of a tornado, local emergency responders would have a message to communicate; using that message (which would probably be “take shelter immediately”) would be the message to immediately communicate to ACC employees and students.
- Dick Sutherland expressed his opinion that each employee has a responsibility to help others during an emergency.
- Grunder noted that maintenance and custodial staff do not have access to School Messenger. They would have to communicate with someone else to get the message to School Messenger.
- Walterreit asked Officer Spencer about how much time could be expected between a tornado warning and when it would hit the College. He noted there were a number of factors, but a guess would be about five minutes.
- Moving the scenario along, Brege stated that after he was notified of the emergency situation he would contact Walterreit. Walterreit (or whoever was contacted) would then use School Messenger to distribute a message. After School Messenger, then Walterreit would access the campus phone system to repeat the message.
- The group asked about pre-written messages to be used in various scenarios. Walterreit noted he has assembled a list of messages which could be modified to suit the specific situations. In the case of the scenario, the message would be a version of the notification from the county. Eventually an “all clear” message would need to be issued.
- The group then discussed what process would be necessary if the campus sustained damage. Officer Spencer outlined the incident command process and what he would do if he was on campus. Spencer emphasized that good, detailed communication in the first five minutes is very important.
- Bayer followed up on that thought by emphasizing that if someone is calling 911 they should stay on the phone after they have delivered their message. Don’t hang up until the dispatcher tells you to.
- President MacMaster asked Officer Spencer for guidance on how the College should engage with the media and public after an incident happens. Officer Spencer said he would refer the media to the president; the president would decide on an initial message then follow up with the media later once more facts were known. There is no need to rush to put out information. The information which does go out needs to be accurate and tailored to meet the needs of the situation at that time.
- Brege brought the group back to the tornado scenario. The anticipated steps were:
  - The initial emergency message comes to Brege
  - Brege contacts Walterreit and they determine the message to be distributed. The message is: a tornado has been reported; take shelter immediately.
  - Walterreit would send the message via School Messenger.
  - Walterreit would then use the campus phone system to make a broadcast of the announcement.
  - Then, when appropriate, someone would need to send an all-clear message. The group asked who would make the all-clear determination. Consensus was the central dispatch or National Weather Service. Once determined, the all-clear message would be sent via School Messenger and the campus phones.
- After further discussion the group decided to conduct a test of the outlined process for notifying the campus about an emergency. The test will happen on Friday, December 20. President MacMaster will initiate the exercise by contacting Brege at an undetermined time; Brege will contact Walterreit; Walterreit will send out a prepared “this is a test” message using the phone

system first, then School Messenger. Blumenthal and/or Grunder will then use that message to make a broadcast over the hallway speakers.

- “This is a test of the Alpena Community College emergency notification system. This is only a test.” (17 words, 99 characters with spaces.)
- The group then discussed how to facilitate 2-way communication between classrooms and outsiders in the event of a active shooter situation. Possible ways included an intercom system, placing ACC phones in classrooms, and the hallway speakers.
- Bayer asked if all doors could be locked. Brege said most doors could be locked, but not all. Sutherland noted some concerns from the fire department about door locks. MacMaster asked that someone research electronic locking mechanisms for doors.
- Brege asked if there was a way to send broadcast messages to the apartments. Grunder noted that fiber optic cable had been run to the apartments but cable would have to be pulled through the buildings. Grunder volunteered to research types of systems with Cisco.
- Grunder noted the College was currently having issues with the phone system, which was networked through Merit. Grunder was working on the issue with the provider.
- MacMaster asked if the students at the Oscoda Campus would also receive the messages through the phone system and School Messenger. Grunder confirmed the Oscoda phone system was tied into the Alpena Campus system and Oscoda phones would broadcast the message. It was suggested that someone notify Dana McGrew at the IRESA of the test message since the IRESA people would be the only occupants of the Oscoda building on Friday. MacMaster volunteered to contact McGrew.

The group discussion ended at approximately 10:20 a.m.

Submitted by Jay Walterreit