

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Looking back on 2025, I'm proud of what our team accomplished and appreciative of the effort that made it possible.

Over the past year, we made steady and meaningful progress in strengthening our services, supporting professional development, and advancing key priorities. These accomplishments reflect the flexibility, collaboration, and dedication of our team as we navigated challenges, adapted to evolving needs, and continued to build a strong foundation for the future.

This year, one of our key accomplishments was updating our Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). Developed with input from our staff and community partners, the 2025 EOP update strengthens coordination, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and better positions the county to respond effectively to emergencies of all types.

Training and education remain central to preparedness. This year, we invested in I Love U Guys Standard Reunification Method training to provide our education and response partners with a common, trauma-informed framework for safely reuniting students with caregivers after an incident. This training strengthens coordination, reduces chaos during high-stress events, and supports faster, more compassionate recovery for families and schools.

And finally, the Boone County Girls in Emergency Management (GEM) Camp was honored with a 2025 Missouri Association of Counties Achievement Award in recognition of its success empowering young women, building leadership skills, and strengthening community preparedness. This award highlights the camp's innovative approach to engaging the next generation in public safety and emergency management.

To our community partners, thank you for your trust and collaboration. Your support inspires us to innovate and improve. I look forward to another year of progress as we build a stronger, more resilient Boone County.

Respectfully,

Christopher Kelley
Director, Boone County Office of Emergency Management

ABOUT OUR OFFICE

The mission of the Boone County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is to provide a comprehensive and integrated emergency management system that coordinates community resources to protect lives, property and the environment through mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery from all natural and man-made hazards that may impact our county.

A small agency with a critical mission, OEM works with key stakeholder agencies within Boone County, along with other local, state, and federal agencies, to save lives, protect property, and safeguard the environment.

Disaster response and recovery relies on the effective coordination of planning, training, exercise, and stakeholder engagement efforts. It truly takes the whole community to recover from a disaster.

Because of this, our office would be unable to do our job without the support of our elected officials, public safety partners, community members, and other key stakeholders too numerous to name.

To all, thank you for helping foster those partnerships necessary to build resilience here in Boone County!



OUR TEAM



Chris Kelley, Director

Chris provides overall leadership, strategic direction, and executive-level coordination for the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), ensuring county-wide readiness, compliance, and effective disaster response and recovery. Serves as the principal advisor to the County Commission and municipal leadership on emergency management issues.

Jake Waller, Deputy Director

Jake supports the Director in managing the day-to-day operations of the Office, providing operational leadership, continuity, and coordination across all functional areas. Jake directly supervises the Emergency Management Specialist team and assumes delegated authority to act on behalf of the Director when needed.





Della Luster, Administrative Coordinator

Della is responsible for staff payroll, department procurement and accounts payable, and grants management. Della also supports administrative functions such as meeting room scheduling, supply ordering, and the ongoing development and maintenance of our public safety active shooter kit program.

Bart Messer, Administrative Assistant

Bart is responsible for front desk operations, managing the office email account, and supporting administrative functions such as meeting room scheduling within the building, ordering supplies, processing invoices, and equipment and generator maintenance.



Matthew Brown, Training & Exercise Specialist



As a FEMA Master Exercise Practitioner, Matt plans, coordinates, delivers, and evaluates emergency management training and exercises to strengthen county-wide preparedness and response capabilities. Matt is also our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program manager.

Mya Franklin, Planning & Preparedness Specialist



Mya leads office public information and communications efforts by updating our social media pages, maintaining our Crisis Communications Plan and working to ensure accurate, timely, and coordinated messaging before, during, and after emergencies.

Chris Lewin, Mitigation & Recovery Specialist

Chris is responsible for our hazard mitigation planning and disaster recovery efforts, including maintaining our Disaster Recovery Plan. Chris is also our Local Emergency Planning Committee coordinator and Girls in Emergency Management (GEM) Camp project manager.



Tommy the Tornado, Mascot



Tommy the Tornado serves as the friendly and approachable face of the Office of Emergency Management, helping connect preparedness messaging with residents of all ages. He is used in online campaigns, educational content, and internal communications to make emergency preparedness more accessible and engaging.

2025 OEM INTERNSHIP

Recognizing that no organization is immune to disasters, our office builds strong partnerships before crises to ensure effective emergency management. This year marks our inaugural internship program, welcoming students from diverse fields to support this crucial work.

Interns immerse themselves in daily emergency management tasks, gaining hands-on experience in disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. They benefit from comprehensive training, networking opportunities, and impactful projects - such as designing community outreach initiatives, participating in simulated exercises, and learning about local government's role in disaster management.

Through real-world scenarios, our program helps interns apply classroom knowledge, develop professional relationships, and sharpen critical thinking and communication skills under pressure. For those seeking careers in emergency management or public safety, a BCOEM internship provides an ideal springboard for protecting lives, property, and community resilience.

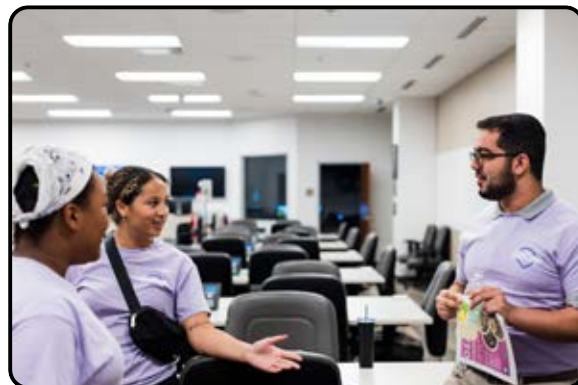


Photo: Summer intern Azooz talks with Specialist Mya and a GEM Camp participant. Azooz was an integral part of the logistics team for the Girls in Emergency Management (GEM) Camp.



Photo: Intern Bella assists with public outreach during the 2025 Business In Motion Expo in Columbia.



Photo: (L to R) 2025 interns Bella, Azooz, and Robbie (pictured above) performed critical tasks for our office such as meeting coordination and logistics, social media content creation, and outreach booth staffing. Well done all!

EXERCISE & TRAINING

The Boone County Office of Emergency Management's Exercise and Training section strengthens community readiness through hands-on programs that evaluate and improve countywide emergency plans. Realistic exercises and targeted training help identify preparedness gaps, enhance coordination, and build the skills needed to respond to a wide range of hazards.



Photo: This year our office brought in the "I Love U Guys" Foundation to teach their Standard Reunification Method.

Using large-scale exercises and specialized training, Training and Exercise Specialist Matt Brown ensures that emergency personnel, volunteers, and partner agencies receive the support they need. These collaborative efforts strengthen immediate response capability while building long-term community resilience, helping Boone County remain ready, responsive, and resilient.



Photos: Kevin Burd with the "I Love U Guys" Foundation teaches the Standard Reunification Method to educators and first responders from across the region. This training focuses on a predetermined, practiced process that helps ensure students are safely reunited with their parents or guardians following a school emergency.

ASIM BASIC TABLETOP EXERCISES



Photo: Participants refine their active shooter incident management strategies during one of our tabletop sessions.

This fall, we worked to coordinate several Active Shooter Incident Management (ASIM) Basic courses to provide critical, hands-on training for our local responders. These courses were provided by Boone County instructors representing law enforcement, emergency medical services, emergency management, and the fire service and introduced participants to the core framework and foundational principles of active shooter incident management.

Through instructor-led discussions and carefully structured tabletop simulations, learners gained a comprehensive understanding of the Incident Command System (ICS) and how to apply the “Stop the Killing/Stop the Dying/Start the Recovery” approach.



Photo: Exercise participants assumed different command and coordination roles, allowing them to practice decision-making and operational actions in a low-risk tabletop environment.

G402: ICS OVERVIEW FOR OFFICIALS COURSE

This fall, our office coordinated an offering of G402: ICS Overview for Executives/Senior Officials for officials from the County of Boone, City of Columbia, the Missouri State Legislature, and local municipalities.

This half-day executive-level course familiarized officials with the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS), clarified their role in supporting effective incident management, and explained how key command and coordination elements work together during emergencies.



Photo: Mitigation and Recovery Specialist Chris Lewin discusses the disaster recovery process with attendees during the G402 course.

SEC ATHLETIC TABLETOP

On June 11, our office conducted a tabletop exercise for the Southeastern Conference (SEC) Athletic Event Managers focused on game-day command and coordination.

The scenario progressed through escalating severe weather impacts at Faurot Field, prompting discussion on preparedness, command, messaging, sheltering, and response.

In a no-fault tabletop setting, participants assumed different roles, practiced decision-making, and identified opportunities to strengthen coordination and readiness at their home agency.



Photo: Participants worked through a series of scenario injects during the SEC tabletop exercise, using each prompt to spark discussion, share perspectives, and compare how different SEC schools would respond to similar challenges.

NEW SANDBAG MACHINES

In 2025 our county invested in two sandbag filling machines to help during flooding events along the Missouri River. These machines, made by sandbagstore.com can fill and seal 1,200 sandbags per hour with only four operators.

Flooding is the county's most frequent natural hazard, regularly threatening river communities such as Rocheport and Hartsburg, where past events have required large-scale sandbag operations to protect homes, infrastructure, and transportation corridors.

By investing in modern equipment like the Ultimate Bagger, thousands of consistent, properly filled sandbags can be produced with fewer personnel, allowing faster, safer, and more efficient flood response while reducing strain on staff and volunteers.

This proactive approach strengthens local resilience, ensures readiness before river levels rise, and helps minimize damage, displacement, and recovery costs when flooding occurs.



Photo: Boone County OEM purchased two Ultimate Baggers this year to help with flood preparedness.



Photo: Boone County Treasurer Jenna Redel learns how to fill sandbags during a public demonstration in Rocheport, MO.

COLUMBIA REGIONAL AIRPORT TRIENNIAL EXERCISE

In April 2025, our office, in coordination with Columbia Regional Airport, conducted a full-scale exercise simulating a commercial aircraft crash involving a mass casualty incident. The exercise was designed to test a realistic, high-consequence scenario and included more than 40 simulated victims. Participating agencies exercised their ability to rapidly initiate Incident Command, establish Unified Command, and coordinate fire suppression, emergency medical services, law enforcement security, and airport operations in a complex, live-airport environment.

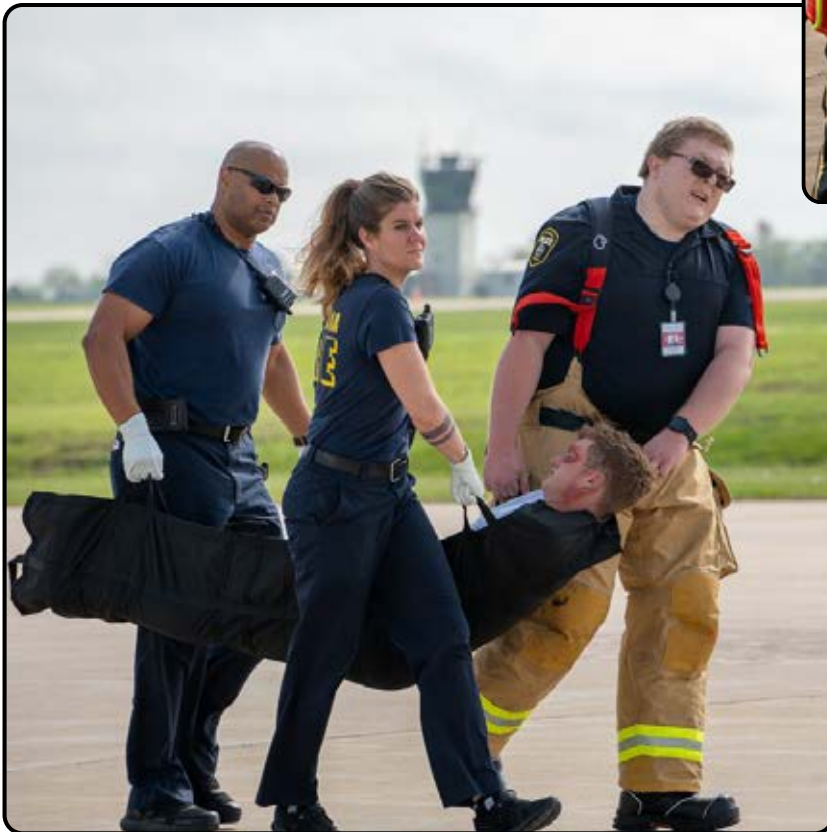


Photo: Boone County stakeholders from a wide spectrum of disciplines train together in the Boone County EOC. Multiagency, multidisciplinary trainings like this course help build critical relationships before disasters occur (Credit: City of Columbia Communications Department).



Photo: Exercise volunteers wearing moulage participate in a pre-exercise briefing ahead of the Columbia Regional Airport (COU) triennial exercise, helping create realistic conditions to test response coordination, communication, and emergency operations (Credit: City of Columbia Communications Department)

The exercise provided a valuable opportunity for local, regional, and private-sector partners to practice integrated response operations. By bringing together first responders, airport personnel, airlines, volunteer organizations, and emergency management staff, the exercise strengthened interagency coordination, reinforced roles and responsibilities outlined in airport and county plans, and enhanced overall preparedness for a large-scale aviation emergency.



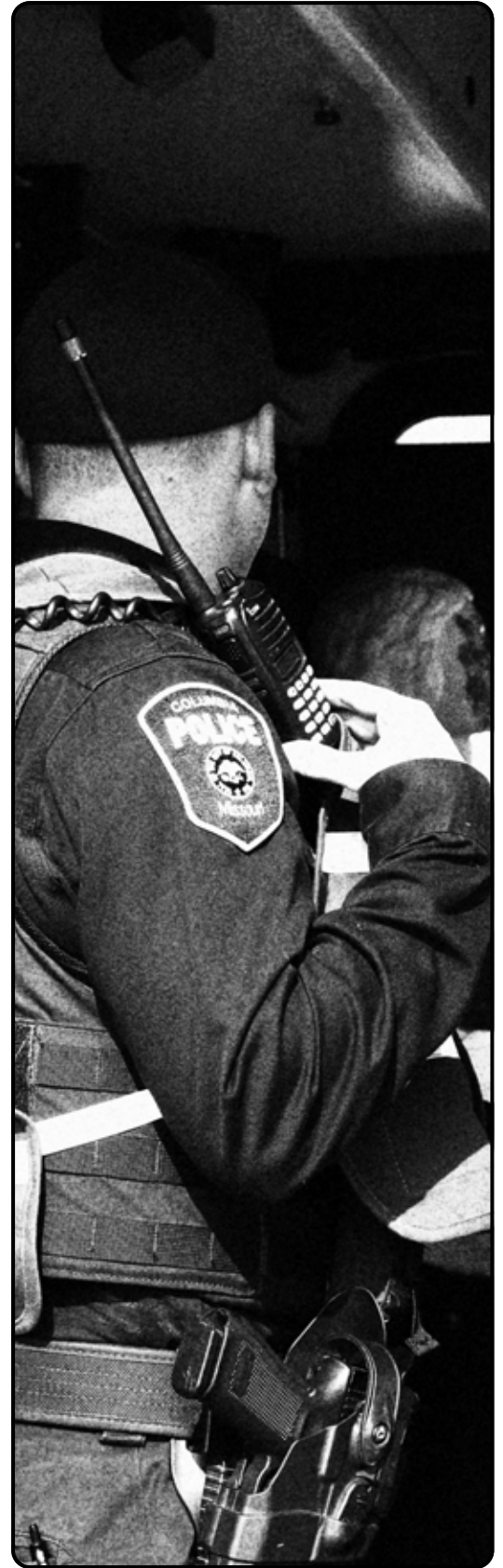
Photos courtesy of the City of Columbia Communications Department unless otherwise noted.



Photos courtesy of the City of Columbia Communications Department unless otherwise noted.



Photo courtesy of MU Air Medical.



Photos courtesy of the City of Columbia Communications Department unless otherwise noted.

O-305 - TYPE III INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM COURSE

During the year, Boone County Office of Emergency Management hosted two O-305 Type III Incident Management Team (IMT) courses, delivering advanced, position-specific training for personnel supporting all-hazards incident management. The course strengthens operational and leadership skills by emphasizing complex incident management, team integration, command and general staff roles, and application of the Incident Command System during extended incidents. Hosting the courses locally helped build a shared, consistent approach to IMT operations among responders from Boone County and surrounding jurisdictions.



Photo: Participants collaborate as an Incident Support Team during a scenario-based exercise, building real-world experience in managing complex incidents.

Together, the two courses expanded the region's pool of qualified IMT members and reinforced a shared operational framework across agencies. Scenario-based discussions and exercises strengthened coordination, decision-making, and resource management during complex incidents. Hosting multiple O-305 courses in one year reflects Boone County OEM's commitment to building incident management depth, improving interoperability, and preparing the region to manage incidents beyond routine response.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)



Our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a community-based organization of residents who learn how to take safe emergency response actions until professional emergency responders can arrive.

The CERT basic curriculum focuses on skills such as disaster preparedness, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue for trapped survivors, incident command, and more. CERT volunteers serve as a force multiplier during incidents, assist with preparedness outreach, and help bridge the gap between residents and response agencies.

In 2025 our CERT volunteers provided hundreds of hours of support to events and incidents in Boone County, such as the Salvation Army's Holiday Parade, MU's Homecoming Parade, the Boone County Ready Festival, Fire in the Sky, as well as several exercises and EOC activations.

These efforts underscore CERT's role as a dependable, well-trained extension of Boone County's preparedness framework. Together, their service reflects a strong culture of volunteerism and readiness that continues to enhance the county's overall resilience.



Photo: CERT members practicing Basic Life Support (BLS) skills during recertification. CERT volunteers participate in monthly training to maintain critical skills.

GIRLS IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (GEM) CAMP

The Girls in Emergency Management (GEM) Camp is a free, five-day outreach initiative that introduces young women to careers in emergency management, public safety, government, and related fields. Coordinated annually by our office, this summer camp provides a hands-on, immersive look at how agencies prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, featuring interactive activities, expert speakers, and exposure to the wide range of opportunities within the field.



Photo: Firefighters from the Boone County Fire Protection District give a tour of their apparatus to GEM Campers.



Photo: A group photo taken in the KOMU 8 studio. GEM Campers get to experience a wide range of emergency management related fields, such as communications, public safety, and meteorology, to name a few.



Photo: Located on MU's South Farm, researchers at Mizzou's real-time weather station talk about using weather balloons to monitor the upper atmosphere to collect data on temperature, humidity, wind, and pressure.

Participants were introduced to the breadth of career opportunities within emergency management through direct interaction with professionals from government, nonprofit, and private-sector organizations, including Washington University Emergency Management, Missouri River Relief, and the St. Louis Zoo.

One camper this year said, "I had a lot of fun learning things about your choice in career as an emergency manager. It has indeed made me question my choice in a career path. So much so, that I have officially declared emergency management as my major for my upcoming college career."

Thanks to our community partners and dedicated volunteers, these young women left with a clearer vision of how they can serve their communities while forging their own leadership paths. We look forward to continuing to expand this transformative program in the coming years.

Each day during the week was themed:

- Monday: Intro to Emergency Management
- Tuesday: Communications & Public Safety
- Wednesday: Weather & Natural Hazards
- Thursday: Career Exploration in St. Louis
- Friday: Life Skills & Career Certifications

In addition to building practical skills, such as crisis communications and community organizing, the camp prioritized leadership development, teamwork, and confidence-building.



Photo: GEM Campers get an inside look at emergency management careers during a Lunch and Learn with Washington University emergency management staff.

2025 PHOTOS



Photo: OEM Director Chris Kelley speaks about the importance of elected officials to local emergency managers at the 34th Annual Missouri State Emergency Management Conference.



Photo: Director Kelley accepts an award for the Girls in Emergency Management (GEM) Camp program from the Missouri Association of Counties at their fall conference at Lake of the Ozarks.



Photo: CERT team member D.C. hones his life-saving skills, practicing infant chest compressions during a CPR course.

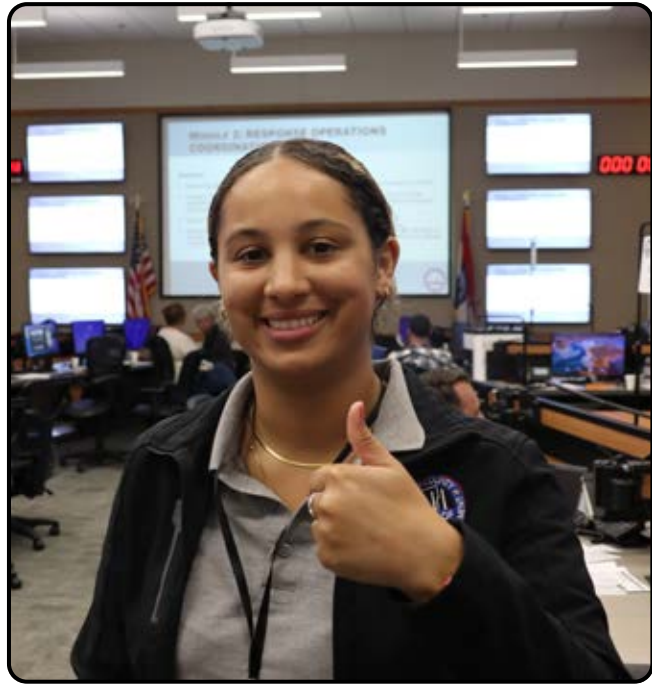


Photo: All systems go — Specialist Mya Franklin signals readiness during a crisis communications drill in the Boone County Emergency Operations Center, a reminder that non-verbal communication is a critical tool in emergency management.



Photo: Connecting with the community at Cosmo Park — a family visits the OEM booth during the August Family Fun Fest to learn about the emergency preparedness resources available to Boone County residents.



Photo: Deputy Director Jake Waller works through an exercise inject at a course in College Station, Texas. OEM staff attend hundreds of hours of continuing education and training each year to keep pace with evolving best practices.



Photo: Intern Bella teaches Stop the Bleed at the 2025 Business In Motion Expo.



Photo: MU students tour the Boone County Emergency Communications Center, one of many student and community group visits hosted by the Office of Emergency Management.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A strong public outreach program is vital to OEM's mission of promoting personal disaster preparedness. In 2025, our office dedicated hundreds of hours to community engagement through outreach events and the Boone County Ready campaign.

Examples of events where we staffed preparedness booths include:

- City of Columbia Juneteenth celebration
- Mid-Missouri PrideFest
- The MU Homecoming Parade
- Earth Day Festival
- Columbia Parks and Recreation Family Fun Fest
- Boone County Fair



Photo: Specialists Chris Lewin and Mya Franklin provide preparedness information and resources during the 2025 Earth Day, held on the MU Campus.



Photo: Trunk or Treat participants spin the preparedness prize wheel at Columbia Orthopedic Group's event, answering a preparedness question to win candy.

At each event, our team offers hands-on demonstrations, distributes preparedness materials, and shares simple tips for developing family communication plans, assembling emergency kits, and signing up for local alerts.

This direct engagement not only helps residents understand what to do during emergencies—it also encourages them to become active participants in building community resilience.

By fostering relationships and open dialogue, we create a strong network of informed individuals ready to tackle unexpected challenges together.

YOUTH PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

In 2025, we continued our commitment to building resilience among Boone County's youngest residents by delivering our Youth Preparedness Program at Sturgeon Elementary School.

Built on the foundation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Student Tools for Emergency Planning (STEP) curriculum, the program delivers age-appropriate, interactive presentations to K-12 students at schools and organizations throughout Boone County.

This interactive program introduces students to the basics of emergency readiness - teaching how to create family communication plans, familiarizing them with local first responders and showing the importance of preparing emergency supply kits.



Photo: Specialist Matt Brown teaches Sturgeon Elementary School students about different types of disasters and how they and their families can be better prepared for them.



Photo: First responders prepare to welcome elementary students for a familiarization tour, helping young community members get acquainted with the people and equipment that keep them safe.

At its core, the program encourages students to think critically about what they already know about safety and how to apply it in an emergency. Topics include the four steps of emergency preparedness, local hazards, family communication planning, and how to build an emergency supply kit. First responder familiarization activities give students a hands-on look at the people and equipment that serve their community.

Students also get a free preparedness kit with a disaster-themed coloring book, a copy of *No Dragons For Tea*, and other preparedness information for parents to read.

PREPAREDNESS MONTH

The Boone County Commission declared September as Preparedness Month, aligning with the national observance. This year's theme, "Preparedness Starts at Home," focusing on essential, foundational actions individuals and families can take, like knowing their risks, making a plan, building a kit, and getting involved in their community.

Combined with our Boone County Ready campaign, Preparedness Month serves as a vital platform for educating residents about disaster readiness and strengthening our county's emergency response capabilities.



Photo: (L to R) Janet Thompson, District II Commissioner; Matt Brown, Training & Exercise Specialist; Chris Kelley, Director of BCOEM; Kip Kendrick, Presiding Commissioner; Jake Waller, Deputy Director of BCOEM; Justin Aldred, District I Commissioner.

2025 EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN UPDATE

In 2025, the Boone County Office of Emergency Management updated its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), transitioning to a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) format. The revision incorporated stakeholder feedback, was promulgated by Boone County government and its municipalities, and received approval from the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA).

The updated plan strengthens multi-agency coordination by clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and operational procedures across all four phases of emergency management, and provides guidance for EOC activation and resource coordination.

2025 BOONE COUNTY READY FESTIVAL

The 2025 Ready Festival, hosted by our office at Cosmo Park in Columbia, Missouri, was a standout event of the year. This family-friendly gathering brought together residents, first responders, and community partners to promote practical, approachable emergency preparedness.

Attendees enjoyed local food vendors, live music, and interactive exhibits from a wide range of public safety and community organizations, creating an engaging environment that blended education with community connection.

The event also included the presentation of the 2025 Tom S. Hurley Public Service Safety Award to Helping Hands Southern Boone in recognition of their contributions to community safety.



Photo: Participants enjoyed diverse preparedness resources at the 2025 Boone County Ready Festival.



EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER ACTIVATIONS

OEM's primary responsibility is to activate and manage the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during events, incidents, emergencies, and disasters, providing vital information to first responders, local departments, and external agencies.

Given the large crowds at Faurot Field during University of Missouri home football games, we activated our EOC for each game, as well as supplying a liaison to the University of Missouri Police Department's command post to assist with communications to the Emergency Operations Center and potential resource requests.

These activations underscore our commitment to proactive planning and interagency coordination, ensuring the safety and success of community events.

Easter Sunday Tornado

On April 20, 2025, an EF-1 tornado impacted northern and northeastern portions of Columbia as part of a broader severe weather system affecting central Missouri.

Due to the forecasted threat of severe weather, the Boone County Office of Emergency Management had proactively activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) prior to the tornado's touchdown, allowing staff to closely monitor conditions and prepare for rapid response.



Photo: City of Columbia Engagement and Public Communications Manager Sydney Olsen speaks on national news about the impacts the EF-1 tornado had on our community.

The tornado touched down at approximately 5:18 PM, about one mile north of Columbia along Rangeline Road, and moved east, causing tree damage as it passed just north of Albert-Oakland Park. It then turned northeast, crossed Highway 63, and continued producing tree damage toward Paris Road.

As the tornado crossed Hinkson Creek, it caused significant damage to the Columbia Recycling Facility, destroying the primary building and heavily damaging machinery inside. The tornado continued northeast, causing additional tree damage, before dissipating around 5:25 PM, just north of E Highway HH.



Photo: Aerial footage of the damage to the City of Columbia Materials Recovery Facility, located at 5700 Peabody Road (Photo attributed to KOMU 8).

Because the EOC was already activated, Boone County OEM was immediately able to begin disseminating verified information, coordinating with response partners, and collecting and tracking damage reports as impacts were identified.

Public safety agencies and public works crews responded quickly to assess damage, clear debris, address utility disruptions, and mitigate hazards.

This incident demonstrated the value of proactive EOC activation and coordinated severe weather monitoring. Lessons learned from the response have been incorporated into ongoing preparedness efforts, including refined damage assessment procedures, enhanced information-sharing protocols, and continued public education focused on severe weather safety and resilience.

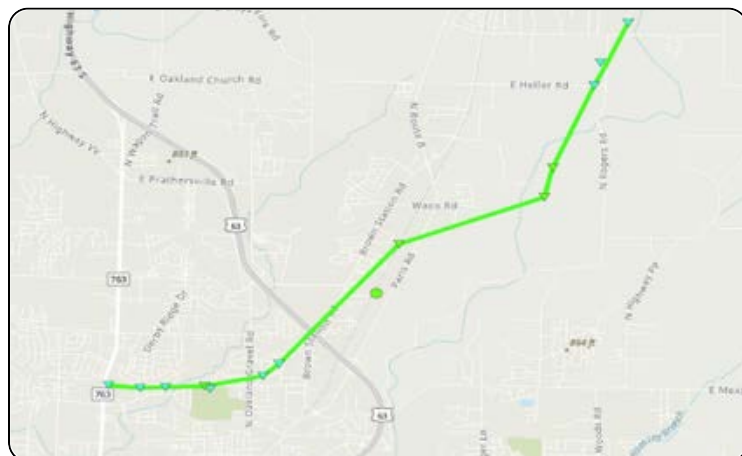


Photo: National Weather Service track of the EF-1 tornado that touched down in Columbia on Easter Sunday 2025.

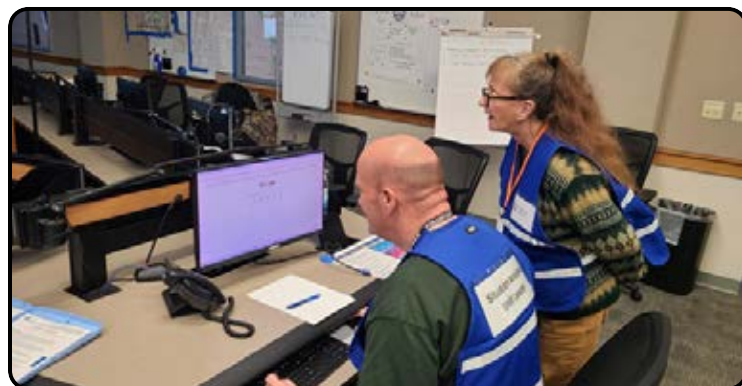


Photo: Boone County Community Emergency Response Team members work in the emergency operations center during the storm activation.

STAY CONNECTED



Come join almost 7,000 of your friends and neighbors and follow our socials. We are:
@BooneCountyOEM

Sign up for Free Boone County Ready Alerts!
Get weather, emergency, and special-event text and email alerts.

Emergency Alerts:

Text BCALERT to 67283 to opt-in to receive emergency notifications.

Preparedness Notifications:

Text READY to 67283 to opt-in to non-emergency preparedness messaging.

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