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Testing Wisconsin's Emergency Communications "SIMCOM 2017" in Sauk County

(Lake Delton) – Communications are critical during a disaster. Getting information and data to the right people at the right time can save lives. That's why Sauk County is hosting a multi-agency communications exercise called "SIMCOM 2017".

The State Interoperable Mobile Communications Exercise or "SIMCOM" will be held April 25-27, 2017 in Lake Delton. The exercise is designed to display, educate and test mobile emergency communications from federal, state, tribal, local governments and volunteer agencies. The goal is to develop relationships and understand the capabilities of other agencies before they are needed in a real emergency. Specific operations being tested this year include data sharing, radio frequency bridging and patching, and network failures.

"Testing communication interoperability capabilities with outside resources before an actual disaster event occurs is critical to ensure the highest level of response," said Jeff Jelinek, Sauk County Emergency Management Director.

More than 30 federal, state, tribal, local governments and volunteer agencies are participating in the exercise. "The wide variety of agencies expected to attend SIMCOM will bring expanded capabilities and diversity to the exercise," says Major General Don Dunbar, Adjutant General and Wisconsin's Homeland Security Advisor. "It's important for the Wisconsin National Guard and Wisconsin Emergency Management to be part of this exercise and test our interoperability to ensure we can communicate with local and state first responders when an emergency occurs."

For the first time since SIMCOM began in 2007, aircraft and public safety unmanned aircraft systems, or drones, will also be part of the exercise. Private drone operators are asked not to fly in exercise locations to ensure safety.

The main command post will be located at the Lake Delton Fire Department, 45 Miller Drive in Lake Delton, with military and emergency vehicles spread out around the area. Resident and visitors to the Lake Delton area should expect to see increased traffic in the area during the event. Activities are scheduled to take place between 7:00AM and 4:00PM.

Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Wisconsin National Guard are helping Sauk County facilitate the event. Funding for the exercise is provided by the Department of Homeland Security Grant Program.

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