

# 2021 Annual Report

## Our Vision

A resilient and sustainable community

## Our Mission

Build, sustain, and improve Sedgwick County's capabilities in disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery through whole community collaboration, innovative planning, training, and exercise activities



February 1, 2022

SEDGWICK COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

**Emergency Management Staff**

**Julie Stimson**  
Director

**Jonathan Marr**  
Deputy Director

**Cody Charvat**  
Operations/Training

**Reagan Bender**  
Planning

**Kenji Brooks**  
Logistics

**Sedgwick Co. Emergency Management Volunteer Teams**

**Roger Teachman**  
Radio Officer, RACES

**Wayne Leach**  
K9 Team Lead

**John Crosby**  
Historical Consultant, Former Deputy Director

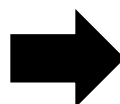


**Inside this Issue**

Staff/Table of Contents	2
Meet the Staff	3
Accomplishments and Highlights	4
EM Volunteers	5
Community Outreach/Education	6
Planning	7
Preparedness	8
Exercises	9
Logistics	10
Operations	11
Collaboration	12

**A sign of the times...**

Our Emergency Management Team felt it was time to rebrand and evolve from our former selves. Prior to modern day Emergency Management, our department used to provide a breadth of specialty volunteer teams for the community. These volunteer services included: heavy rescue, dive rescue, emergency support unit (power & light), fire reserves, radiological response team, K9 Search, RACES, and CERT. As our community has evolved, professional responders have taken over many of those roles. Our old logo was intended to highlight our capabilities as an active first response agency. Our new logo was a collaborative effort and designed with the Strategic Communications office. The logo symbolizes our all-hazard approach to the work we do every day.



“Alone we can do little; together we can do so much.” - Helen Keller

## Meet the Staff

### *Julie Stimson - Director*

Julie is a retired United States Air Force Veteran with a strong background in Public Health and Emergency Management. Prior to her new role as Director, she served as the Associate Director of Emergency Management, Safety and Security for the University Of Kansas School Of Medicine-Wichita campus. Julie has a master's degree in Emergency and Disaster Management and is currently working on her PhD also in Emergency Management. Julie has volunteered with several volunteer organizations to include the Sedgwick County Medical Reserve Corps, American Red Cross, and Team Rubicon. Just recently, in September of 2021, she was awarded **New Emergency Management Professional of the Year** by the Kansas Emergency Management Association.

### *Jonathan Marr - Deputy Director*

Jonathan brings nearly 25 years of experience in Fire and EMS with a couple of those years in Law Enforcement. Prior to his role as Deputy Director, he spent 2 years with Wichita PD and Sedgwick County EMS after serving as a Fire Department Battalion Chief at an Air Force Base in Southern Spain and a Missile Test Range in the Pacific. Additionally, he spent 9 years as a Fire Officer in Iraq & Kuwait. Jonathan has been working hard to revive our volunteer and public education programs, as well as managing our outdoor warning system. He is actively working towards his Graduate Degree in Public Administration at the Wichita State Hugo Wall School.

### *Cody Charvat, KCEM, Operations & Training Officer*

Cody has been a county employee for over 22 years serving previously an Emergency Communications Supervisor and has held nearly every role within Emergency Management. Cody holds a wealth of operational knowledge which is unmatched in the county. Cody manages the Emergency Operation Center, our in-house Emergency Management Training Programs, Teaches Storm Spotter training to our partners, and manages our IPAWS and mass communication programs.

### *Reagan Bender - EM Planner*

Reagan brings experience as a former Sedgwick County paramedic and a volunteer management coordinator with the Sedgwick County Health Department where he managed the Sedgwick County Medical Reserve Corps. Reagan spent the majority of the pandemic managing volunteers who serve at COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics across Sedgwick County. He also served as the Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 Primary coordinator assisting Emergency Management with our Local Emergency Response Plan (LEOP). Reagan was instrumental in helping to develop our volunteer management software. He transferred from his role at the Health Department and has been hard at work with all of our ESF partners drafting our 5-year update to the LEOP required by the State.

### *Kenji Brooks - Logistics Manager*

Kenji coordinates our logistics and administrative operations. He manages our preparedness supply warehouse by utilizing Fishbowl Inventory System and Lily Pad ecommerce programs. He is also a Veteran retired from the United States Air Force as an Aerospace Maintenance Craftsman with a strong background in Global Mobilization of people, equipment and hazardous material. He has traveled the world having lived in Turkey for two years and England for three years mastering his craft.

All staff members belong to the Kansas Emergency Management Association (KEMA). KEMA was formed in 1977 and is a network of leaders dedicated to providing excellence in emergency management and homeland security for Kansas. KEMA is committed to promoting excellence through professionalism, fostering communication and cooperation through teamwork, soliciting input and active participation through responsiveness, and advocating for progressive growth through leadership.



## Accomplishments and Highlights

### *KEMA's New Emergency Management Professional of the Year Award*

In Julie's first year as Director, she was awarded **New Emergency Management Professional of the Year** by the Kansas Emergency Management Association.

The nomination reads as follows: "Julie Stimson started her first day of her first job in county level emergency management in the middle of an unprecedented global pandemic with a population of 500,000 to serve, in a department that had recently had 75% turnover of its staff, and with a budget coming due.

Despite being thrown into the deep end Julie has thrived in her role and has enthusiastically embraced the challenges. The department has rebounded, turnover has stabilized, and she has worked to build relationships with other departments and agencies. She has made as many in-person visits as the pandemic would allow and has quickly built a level of confidence with County staff from the top down. She has worked tirelessly to fill the gaps in her knowledge regarding local threats and the intricacies involved with being a county emergency manager. Since taking her new role as Director of Sedgwick County Emergency Management, Julie has been fighting, and succeeding, in getting the department back on solid ground, and it is an honor to nominate her for this award."



R-L: Butch Post, KEMA President and Julie Stimson, Sedgwick County Emergency Management Director

### *Community Emergency Response Team Train-the-Trainer*

In an effort to rebuild our volunteer teams, last July, Jonathan attended the National CERT Conference in Springfield, MO where he attended 24 hours of training designed to prepare participants to deliver Federal Emergency Management Agency's CERT Basic Training course. This course will allow us to provide public education classes that build resiliency within our community. We're hoping to deliver our first CERT Basic Training Weekend in 2022.



Jonathan with the National CERT Association President Suu-va Tai

# Emergency Management Volunteers

When emergencies occur or disasters strike, volunteers are a vital resource for all of our agencies. Volunteers are a crucial part of Emergency Management's programs, as these individuals are willing to endure some of the worst conditions to help when needed. Volunteers give their time and effort without expecting anything in return. We learned a valuable lesson during our response to COVID-19 that Sedgwick County needs healthy volunteer teams who are trained and capable of performing versatile functions.



## SEDGWICK COUNTY RADIO AMATEUR CIVIL EMERGENCY SERVICE (RACES)

RACES volunteers logged over 1200 volunteer hours in 2021. Through the twenty members of our RACES Team, Sedgwick County Emergency Management maintains a backup radio communication system consisting of four repeaters and many radio operators. HAM Radio infrastructure nationwide has served as a reliable primary and secondary communication system in times of disaster and war. When activated, the RACES team provides radio communications for us in times of emergency. These volunteers and the infrastructure they maintain are a critical backup when our primary communication goes down. RACES meets

every Tuesday evening for training and they perform radio checks every Sunday. Our RACES Team also receives advanced storm spotter training; when storms approach, they deploy into the field to report on severe weather. Our RACES Team is a critical part of our resilience.



## SEDGWICK COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT K9 SEARCH TEAM

Thanks to Jonathan's work last year, Emergency Management has revived our K9 Search and Rescue Team. Our K9 Team consists of sixteen certified handlers who can perform searches in the areas of Live Find, Trailing, Air Scent, Water Searches, and Human Remains Detection. Our K9 Team logged around 3,400 volunteer training hours in 2021. The mission of this team is to serve as a search component during disaster situations; however, because disasters do not happen all the time, the team stays busy assisting our local law enforcement partners with searching for lost adults/children and working cold cases sniffing out the remains of

crime victims. The K9 team received four deployments last year providing searches for Wichita PD, Sedgwick County Sheriff, Butler County Sheriff, and Newton PD.

## VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE COORDINATES 700 USERS & 28,000 WORK HOURS

Utilizing CARES funding, in March of 2021 Sedgwick County Emergency Management procured a volunteer management software in partnership with the Sedgwick County Health Department (SCHD). Jonathan and Reagan were an instrumental part in developing this powerful volunteer management tool. This software provided a background check integration that completely streamlined the way we vet volunteers by providing them with an application journey and automated background checks at a fraction of the cost. The software was initially needed due to the overwhelming scheduling complexities of SCHD's Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers and their temporary staff who were providing COVID-19 mass vaccinations. We expanded usage of the program to include K9, RACES, EMS's citizen ride-along program and our adopt-a-siren program. Since its inception, the platform has registered nearly **700 users who logged about 28,000 hours of work in 7 months during 2021**. Jonathan and Reagan remain committed to improving and expanding the capabilities of this tool and we look forward to more growth in 2022.



**"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give." - Winston Churchill**

# Community Outreach and Education

## **Storm Fury on the Plains**

In a normal year, Cody gives 25 or more presentations on severe weather safety. This class, while open to the public, is also critical training for volunteer firefighters and others who assist Emergency Management with storm spotting during severe weather. Due to COVID, there were no public offerings of the class in 2021 by the NWS, or Emergency Management. Eight agencies agreed to host private classes for first responders; they saw a combined attendance of 136; in 2019, the last year before the pandemic, attendance was over 800. In addition to weather, Cody provided, or arranged for the teaching of eight other trainings in jurisdictional specific topics; these provided up to 39 hours of continuing education for 108 first responders.

## **Emergency Preparedness Education in Schools**

One of the more popular attractions at our community outreach events, especially with children, is our homemade tornado machine, which uses fans, dry ice and water to produce a "tornado" the kids can touch. In this photo from June 2021, Cody uses the machine to teach tornado safety to the grade-schoolers attending the Maize PD 911 Camp.



## **Business and Responder Trainings**

In January, Julie provided virtual disaster planning and response training to the International Facility Managers Association. As soon as restrictions started to ease around October, Emergency Management was able to start holding in-person training sessions again. Examples include Disaster Preparedness for the Bel Aire Chamber of Commerce and Advena Health in Wichita. We also sponsored two Sports & Special Events Incident Management training classes for first responders in preparation for hosting NCAA basketball regionals at Intrust Bank Arena.

## **Storm Shelter Surveys**

Every year, many businesses, churches and schools turn to Emergency Management for recommendations regarding where to shelter in their building during severe weather. Due to the pandemic, requests for this service dropped dramatically, however, staff was able to conduct a survey for the large Emmanuel Baptist Church campus on south Broadway.



## **Douglas County Emergency Management invites Jonathan as Guest Instructor**

In October, Douglas County Emergency Management offered Jonathan the opportunity to observe and assist in teaching their Community Emergency Response Team Basic Training Class. With a fresh Train-the-Trainer Certification in hand, this offered Jonathan the chance to stretch his instructor legs and gain valuable experience for developing our own program. Jonathan taught Introduction to Emergency Management and Fire Safety to 25 volunteers.

**"Preparation through education is less costly than learning through tragedy." - Max Mayfield**

# Planning

## Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP)

The State requires our LEOP to be updated every 5 years and last year was a revision year. This plan is a living document that outlines how we intend to respond to emergencies and disasters. The LEOP is designed off the National Response Framework and planning standards set forth by FEMA and KDEM respectively. There had been previous work completed on the LEOP prior to 2020. The plan contains fifteen Emergency Support Functions:

- ESF #1: Transportation
- ESF #2: Communications
- ESF #3: Public Works and Engineering
- ESF #4: Firefighting
- ESF #5: Information and Planning
- ESF #6: Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services
- ESF #7: Logistics
- ESF #8: Public Health and Medical Services
- ESF #9: Search and Rescue
- ESF #10: Oil and Hazardous Materials Response
- ESF #11: Agriculture and Natural Resources Annex
- ESF #12: Energy
- ESF #13: Public Safety and Security
- ESF #14: Long-Term Community Recovery
- ESF #15: External Affairs

To jumpstart the review and update process, Emergency Management held a LEOP workshop. The workshop was intended to re-engage key stakeholders, and provide education on the importance of the LEOP and discuss next steps. Once the workshop was complete, Reagan collaborated with over 50 agencies, to review and update their portion of the plan. For example, Reagan worked with close to 20 partner organizations on the ESF-6 update alone. These organizations ranged from volunteer groups, non-governmental organizations, and local government departments.

The coordination involved in facilitating updates to our Local Emergency Response Plan is a foundational role Emergency Management plays in preparing the County for emergencies and disasters.

## Hazard Mitigation Plan

Hazard mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. It begins with local governments identifying natural and man-made disaster risks and vulnerabilities that are common in their area. After identifying these risks, long-term strategies are developed for protecting people and property from similar events. Mitigation plans are key to breaking the cycle of reconstruction from repeat impacts of disasters.

Sedgwick County participates in a regionally produced hazard mitigation plan. Creating this plan requires detailed conversations with each city and local jurisdiction in our county. Once all the identified hazards are listed, the plan is sent to FEMA for approval. After the plan is approved, it must be adopted by each participating jurisdiction. Hazard Mitigation Grant Funding cannot be applied for without a current adopted plan. All Emergency Management staff were on deck to meet with, communicate, schedule and ensure each city council and jurisdiction had a signed resolution adopting the plan.

The adoption of this plan facilitated the award of 15 Sunflower Safe Room grants to homeowners within Sedgwick County.



**“Plans are nothing; Planning is everything.” - Dwight D. Eisenhower**

# Preparedness

## Sedgwick County RENEWS Our StormReady® Designation

Sedgwick County is proud to be a StormReady® county for over 20 years. To remain StormReady®, Sedgwick County must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Communication: establish a 24-hour warning point (CCEC) and establish an EOC;
- NWS Information Reception: have 4 separate ways for the EOC/WP to received NWS alerts;
- Hydrometeorological Monitoring: have 3 separate ways to receive hydrometeorological data
- Community Preparedness: have a minimum of 3 weather safety talks annually, train spotters and dispatchers biannually, and host an annual NWS spotter training; and
- Administrative: have a formal hazardous weather operations plan, biennial visits by the Emergency Manager to the NWS, and an annual visit by NWS official to the community.



As of the end of 2021, Kansas had 52 StormReady® designations, with 36 of those being counties.

## Historical Preservation of Sedgwick County's Outdoor Warning System



Our Outdoor Warning System quietly transitions into its 70<sup>th</sup> year of operation. Our predecessors in the Wichita-Sedgwick County Civil Defense Agency installed the first test siren in April of 1952. A year later in 1953, thirteen additional sirens were installed around the Wichita area. Four of these original thirteen were still working in our system in 2021, and some in the exact location they were installed 70-years ago. The Federal Signal Corporation “Thunderbolt” siren is considered the workhorse of air raid & outdoor warning sirens. Around 15,000 Thunderbolts were produced from 1952 until 1990 with a few modifications along the way. The first Thunderbolts to roll off the line were stamped with a T1234 serial number. Sedgwick County has T75, T79, T104, and T116. These four serial numbers represent the first batch of Thunderbolts ever produced. Furthermore, we discovered they are the four oldest & continuously in-service Thunderbolts in existence and among the oldest outdoor warning sirens in the country. Not only do people travel to Wichita from out of state to view our Monday tests, but museums have also reached out hoping to get their hands on them.

Recognizing the historical significance of this equipment, we decided to have the sirens refurbished and restored to how they looked coming off the line in 1952. We will be reinstalling three of them to improve our county siren coverage and mounting one to a trailer for use as a public outreach tool. These sirens will be designated as historical sites of interest at Station 32, Station 38, and the Regional Fire Training Center. We will see how things progress but it is possible we will host an unveiling or dedication ceremony sometime in 2022.

**“Preparedness, when properly pursued, is a way of life, not a sudden, spectacular program” – Spencer W. Kimbal**

# Exercises

## Full Scale Hazardous Materials and Mass Casualty Exercise

On April 13, 2021, Sedgwick County Emergency Management and the Sedgwick County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) conducted a full-scale hazardous materials and mass casualty exercise. The full-scale was preceded by a functional exercise held on February 9<sup>th</sup> and a table top in December 2020. This exercise series was made possible by the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant and was the first exercise where we hired an outside consultant to plan, design, and provide professional third-party evaluation of our response, as it coincides with our Local Emergency Response Plan (LEOP). The simulated incident involved public transit buses colliding with a tank car being pulled by a train. The exercise required over 50 volunteers from the Derby High School drama club and over two dozen agencies. We were able to exercise our hazardous material response capability, our EMS transport capability, our evacuation communication procedures, emergency communications, fatality management, railroad response partners, fire, EOC operation, and more. We received valuable feedback from our evaluators and we continue the work of strengthening our operations.



## Integrated Preparedness and Planning Workshop (IPPW)

This year, Sedgwick County held an Integrated Preparedness and Planning Workshop (IPPW) which used to be called the Training and Exercise Planning Workshop. In addition to training and exercises, the IPPW is expected to integrate other aspects into the whole community concept including risk assessments, planning efforts, grant priorities and other preparedness activities. The goal is to document overall preparedness priorities and activities, to maximize efficiency of resources, time and funding and to work towards improving jurisdiction/organization capabilities. The primary product of this event is the creation of a three-year training and exercise plan for local agencies to build upon. We invited all of our ESF partners to participate in discussion and provide input regarding their training needs.

## Eisenhower National Airport Table-top Exercise

In September 2021, Jonathan and Reagan were invited to participate in a table top exercise at the Eisenhower National Airport. The tabletop was organized by the Airport Police & Fire Dept. and involved a walked-through of response events to an aircraft crash. The airport expressed a desire to improve working collaboration with Emergency Management and asked us to review their Airport Emergency Operations Plan.

*“All honest effort produces lessons. We must embrace every type of learning, even failure.” – Kilroy J. Oldster*

# Logistics

## We Didn't Know What We Know Now

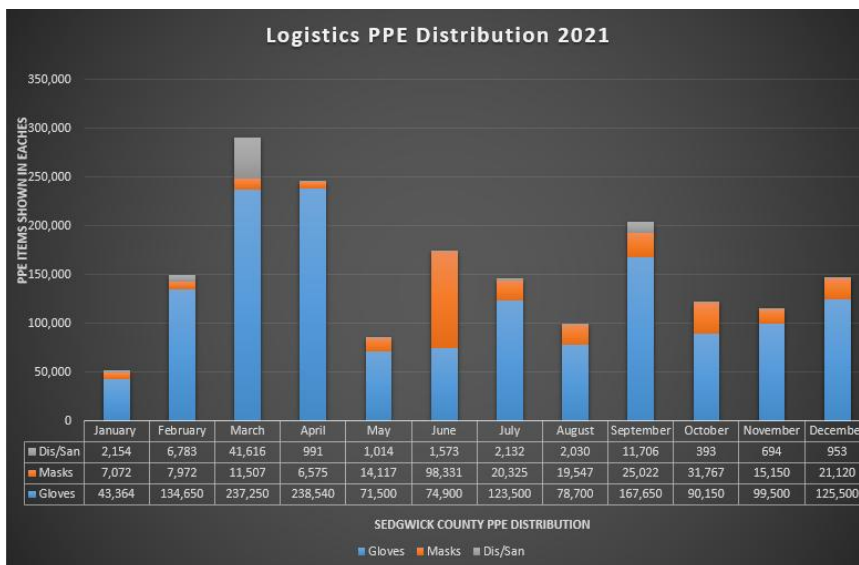
In 2020, our Logistical demand skyrocketed and Emergency Management learned a valuable lesson: we were not logistically prepared to handle a global health disaster. We immediately hired 7 temporary staff to jumpstart the creation of a supply chain and build a cache of personal protective equipment (PPE). Our diligent effort was met with strong resistance as the global supply chain collapsed. N95 masks became the gold standard in the medical field, as it was said to be the best protection against the virus. Emergency Management, along with Finance and Purchasing, rushed to find vendors who could supply our frontline workers with the PPE they desperately needed.



With \$3 million of CARES funding we were able to make a bulk PPE purchase at a discounted rate per unit. Intrust Bank Arena was used as a PPE warehouse until another solution could be found. The PPE warehouse is temporarily located in a Wichita city-owned building. In November 2020, Emergency Management provided Business PPE kits free of charge to any business within the county. This was an effort to keep the local economy going. Not only did this logistical PPE operation open our eyes to the challenges of managing a global pandemic, but it also provided insight to our lack of overall logistical preparedness. We are focused on shoring up future logistical challenges we may face.

## Working Smarter Not Harder, EM Logistics Delivered 1.8 Million PPE Items in 2021

Thinking outside of the box, local vendors in our community-developed plans and switched their operational tactics to start manufacturing their own PPE supplies such as hand sanitizer, gowns, and cloth masks. Other citizens and companies like Sam's Club, donated PPE items for the bigger cause. In recognizing our shortfalls with logistics, we knew the role was critical to fill. Kenji transitioned from temporary to full-time filling the role as our Logistics Chief. Kenji helped formulate PPE logistical strategies and implemented a brand-new inventory/ordering software called Fishbowl/Lily Pad in January 2021. The implementation of this system eliminated the need of having so many temporary staff members as we transition from response to recovery efforts. The software documents incoming supplies, inventory, and accurately tracks distribution. By the end of 2021, Kenji successfully managed and distributed 1,835,748 PPE valued at \$1.5 million dollars.

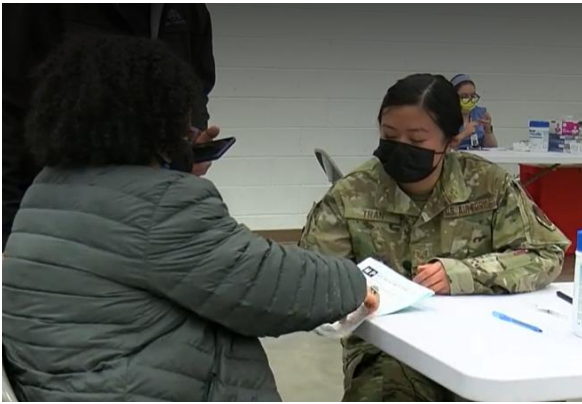


**"When you need it, but don't have it... you sing a different tune." - Burt Gummer**

# Operations/Response

## Sedgwick County Emergency Management Requests National Guard Troops to assist with Vaccinations

In the first week of April 2021, Julie contacted the Kansas Division of Emergency Management to request fifteen National Guardsman to assist with the health department's COVID-19 mass vaccination efforts. In coordination with the Health Department, Julie requested the Kansas National Guard which deployed fifteen medically trained soldiers to staff a temporary vaccination clinic located at the K-State Research & Extension Center. The National Guard along with other volunteers worked to vaccinate around 25,000 people at this point in the pandemic. This request highlights the variety of resources Emergency Management is able to bring to the table.



## Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activities

Our response to COVID-19 dominated the year for Cody working our operations section. In 2021, Cody alone spent nearly **650 hours** working on COVID-related issues, in addition to more hours invested by other member of the department. By the end of the year, the EOC had been activated one or more days per week for 93 straight weeks, going back to March, 2020. The main function of the EOC during this time was support of our partner organizations on the front line with PPE orders through logistics, coordination of requests for state support, and information sharing through regular conference calls and sitreps. In 2021, 126 daily or weekly COVID sitreps were disseminated to our partners, bringing the total to 338 since the start of the pandemic.

Additional EOC activations occurred for monitoring such things as the major water main break and loss of water pressure, severe weather threats, catastrophic fire danger days and being on standby during the funeral, downtown procession for Fr. Kapaun.

## Disaster Declarations

At the request of Emergency Management, Sedgwick County operated under two Disaster Declarations in 2021. The COVID-19 Disaster Declaration has been on-going since March of 2020 and the other declaration was in response to the deep freeze in February.

*"If we did all the things we were capable of, we would literally astound ourselves."- Thomas Edison*

## COLLABORATION

### Emergency Management invited to attend Sedgwick County Police Chief's Meeting

In September, Jonathan and Julie were invited to attend the Sedgwick County Police Association meeting. Julie was able to communicate our mission and areas where we can provide assistance and emergency operations center support. Jonathan provided a presentation on the Community Emergency Response Team training that will be offered in their communities starting in 2022. He was also able to reintroduce our K9 Team as a resource available to them.



### Julie elected to serve as Secretary of the Sedgwick County Fire Chief's Association

At the end of 2021 Julie was elected to serve as the secretary of the Sedgwick County Fire Chief's Association. Since their arrival, Julie and/or Jonathan both have attended the quarterly Saturday morning meetings routinely, to stay abreast of the changing needs and concerns of our ESF 4 partners. Julie has already identified ways we can support them better in the future. Emergency Management has been able to engage our fire partners with updating our LEOP as well as securing training classes and grant funding.



### Emergency Management coordinates with McConnell AFB

Sedgwick County Emergency Management spent Sept 9 meeting with McConnell Air Force Base Readiness Emergency Management to discuss resources, partnerships, and collaborations. It is important to recognize their base population is comprised of our community members. They are us and we are them. It is vital for us to have strong ties when planning for and responding to large disasters or civil emergencies. We discussed the possibilities of partnering to create joint public educational materials for military members station at McConnell.

### Sedgwick County Hosts first in-person KEMA Conference since the Pandemic started

In September, the annual Kansas Emergency Management Conference was held at the Kansas Star Casino. While technically located in Sumner County, Sedgwick County was considered the host of the conference. Cody was deeply involved in arranging after-hours enrichment events such as a tour of the Regional Forensics Science center, round of golf, and clay shooting. Our Emergency Management staff was able to attend classes and earn continuing education credits required to maintain their Emergency Management certifications.



“The future depends on what we do in the present” - Mahatma Gandhi