



Jennifer Merrow
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Call to order

A meeting of **Local Emergency Planning Committee** was January 21, 2026.

Attendees included:

Jennifer Merrow, Pottawatomie County Emergency Manager
De- Bailey, Pottawatomie County Assistant Emergency Manager
Doug Adams, Pottawatomie County Sheriff
Tim Eisenbarth, Pottawatomie County Public Works Director
Joe Blenn, Wellsprings of Westmoreland Maintenance
Michael Bomberger, Community Health Care System Director of Business Development and Special Projects
Chad Kinsley, Pottawatomie County-County Administrator
Terry Force, Pottawatomie County Commissioner
Becky Ryan, Pottawatomie County Communications Manager
Jared Barnes, Pottawatomie County Consolidated Fire-Fire Supervisor
Scott Meitler, USD 320 Assistant Superintendent
Mike Kaus, Manhattan Fire Department Assistant Chief
Andrew Miller, Onaga Health and Rehab
Kevin Heptig, Bluestem Electric Cooperative Manager of Member Services
Andrew Couchman, Pottawatomie County EMS Director
Troy Armstrong, Pottawatomie County EMS Assistant Director
Carol Arnold, American Red Cross
JD Mersman, Kansas Division of Emergency Management
Mike Barnhart, Onaga Police Department Police Chief
Julie Sackrider, 3Rivers Inc. Operations Manager
Leslie Campbell, Pottawatomie County Health Department Director
Liz Parthemer, Pottawatomie County Health Department Assistant Director
Jenni Ebert, Pottawatomie County Health Department Community Health Educator
Brandon Will, Evergy
Cody Hill, Evergy
Mindy Osterhaus, Wamego Health Center

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the July meeting were approved as presented.

Reports

Michael Bomberger, Community Health Care System, reported there will be a regional health care coalition tabletop exercise at Community HealthCare System-Onaga on February 24 building to a full scale exercise in April.

Leslie Campbell, Pottawatomie County Health Department reported that state agencies are gearing up for disease investigations due to the World Cup events that will be bringing many foreign visitors to the Kansas City area. There will be a regional health department exercise March 24. The Health Department has purchased several PocketTalk devices, which are HIPAA compliant, to be utilized for language interpretation. There has been an Avian Influenza outbreak in the county, and she explained the response.

Brandon Will, Evergy-Jeffrey Energy Center introduced Cody Hill, who will be taking over the Environmental Analyst role at Jeffrey Energy Center. There was a small ammonia release at Jeffrey Energy Center in November that was reported to the EPA. There was an Avian Influenza outbreak through November and December, all cases in migrating snow geese.

Mindy Osterhaus, Wamego Health Center reported that there is a “no questions asked” free Narcan distribution box, Fentanyl test strips, and addiction resources located in the emergency room.

Andrew Miller, Onaga Health and Rehab, reported there is a new generator being installed at their facility. With the upcoming winter weather, they have an evacuation plan for their patients if there is a need for the generator prior to it being operational.

Joseph Blenn, Wellsprings of Westmoreland, reported Wellsprings is training new staff and installing new flooring.

Becky Ryan, Pottawatomie County Communications Manager reported she is working on preparing messaging templates.

Tim Eisenbarth, Pottawatomie County Public Works Director, reported on the numerous ongoing projects across the county.

Andrew Couchman, Pottawatomie County EMS Director, reported they have been working with Riley County EMS and Via Christi in regards to communication. They have a new ambulance in service. They are purchasing eight PocketTalk devices. Wamego Fourth of July planning is ongoing, including pre-identifying a landing zone for trauma flights.

Jared Barnes, Pottawatomie County Consolidated fire reported the Emmett Fire Station planning is ongoing. Blue Township is also exploring a new station and coordinating with the City of Manhattan. A new fire truck has been delivered, but it will not be in service immediately. At a structure fire in December, a sheriff's deputy saved a life by rescuing a person unable to get out of the house. A Wildland Fire Fighting refresher course will be offered in March.

Mike Barnhart, Onaga Police Department reported he has hired a part time officer, and looking to hire more.

Kevin Heptig, Bluestem Electric Cooperative, reported that Bluestem linemen are trimming trees. They have had a copper theft at their Clay Center facility. Preparations

are underway for the upcoming winter storm and prepared to deploy to assist other cooperatives. Bluestem is also working on a tabletop exercise for a cyber incident and an ice storm.

Carol Arnold, American Red Cross Community Disaster Program Manager, reported the Red Cross disaster response trailer was recently stolen, but has been recovered. She provided a map showing updated Disaster Response Areas.

Pottawatomie County Sheriff Doug Adams thanked Pottawatomie County Public Works for installing signs on Green Valley Road for pedestrian safety. They are also looking at PocketTalk devices to bolster translation services. They will be posting 2025 crime statistics in February.

De- Bailey, Pottawatomie County Emergency Management is half way through teaching Teen CERT at St. Marys High School and planning two exercises in March. Pottawatomie County Community Emergency Response Team is in the process of merging with Riley County and Geary County CERT volunteers.

Jennifer Merrow, Pottawatomie County Emergency Management, reported she will be coordinating a large outdoor warning system overhaul. Multiple sirens will be replaced, new sirens installed and all sirens upgraded to a cellular back up system for redundancy. Dispatch will be able to sound all sirens and Jennifer will also have a way to activate from her laptop. Jennifer attended the Wildland Fire Outlook symposium. If anyone would like to be added to the training notification email list, let Jennifer know. A radar interpretation class will be presented to county first responders on February 11 in Westmoreland.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

Next meeting is April 15, 2026.

DeAnn K. Bailey

Secretary

April 16, 2026

Date of approval