A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience

MABAS SHOWS SECONDS COUNT - NO LIVES LOST IN Motel FIRE

By Steve Beer, Assistant Chief of Operations, Fond du Lac Fire Department

Friday July 18, 2014, was a clear day in Fond du Lac with the temperature just reaching 70 degrees. US Highway 41 skirts the west side of Fond du Lac and a 72-room Comfort Inn borders the west side of the highway along the southbound on-ramp from County Road D. The building is U-shaped, with an adjoining pool building. At 9:11am, a fire was reported.

At the time of call, I was on the east side of Hwy 41 about 4 blocks away and could see heavy smoke rising. I called for a box alarm as I was pulling in the long driveway.

**Size-up.** On arrival, a manager stated that all rooms (72) were occupied. I noticed numerous vehicles in the parking lot with people still inside. I knew the fire extended into all three levels of the building. Heavy Fire was on the exterior of the south end of building from the ground floor to attic space. The fire was spreading to first and second floor interior rooms, attic space, and a separate building that contained a pool for guest. By the time I completed a size-up, I upgraded to a 3rd alarm.

**Target hazard box type.** In Fond du Lac, we structure our cards to be user friendly. We use the structure fire card only for 1 and 2 family residential fires. We believe that our target hazards include everything from a garden apartment, to a downtown fire, commercial, high-rise. It makes it real simple for our members to remember, plus we know that we need extra help. Our minimum daily staffing is 17. We are in the process of accreditation and established our effective response force to be at 21 for commercial and 24 for high-rise at the time of dispatch.

**Value/Impact of MABAS.** Without a doubt, MABAS was a key in saving this structure and getting this business back in service within a month. We are not considering any changes to the card as a result of this incident. Fond du Lac does not mess around when it comes to our MABAS cards. We bring in 3 engines, 3 chiefs, and 1 additional truck per alarm. We plan for the worst. Last year on our downtown fire, we had enough resources on a 5th alarm without going interdivisional.

**Positive or negative comments about this MABAS experience.** Only positive comments. Many resources were needed on an incident like this one. Primary search along with multiple crews on three floors were needed to bring this fire under control and have zero fatalities or injuries.

(Photos: Sharon Roznik Courtesy of Action Reporter Media Fldreporter.com)
This issue of MABAS-Wisconsin in Action takes a look back at the last 5 years. Gary Schmidt, our editor has done an incredible job of chronicling our activities so that we can reminisce some great achievements and gauge our progress as an organization.

This was the opening paragraph of my first contribution to MABAS-Wisconsin in Action in 2011. "In May of 2008 MABAS Wisconsin had just 16 divisions. As we close out 2011 - just 3 short years later - we are approaching 40 divisions. All of this in pursuit of just one goal, simply to seamlessly provide an adequate level of resources in an emergency to the communities we serve. At its face this seems like a daunting task, however the systems are now being put in place that will allow the movement of resources across counties, regions and the State and beyond if necessary to provide assistance in an emergency. The system and those are processes detailed in the Wisconsin Fire Service Emergency Response Plan".

Today, MABAS Wisconsin stands at 56 divisions with several more counties working towards division status. For our organization, the mission and vision remain the same, simply a mutual aid system that starts with neighbor helping neighbor having the capacity to provide resources from all corners of the State if necessary. What a truly remarkable insurance policy to have in these times of challenged resources and budgets.

Mission: MABAS Wisconsin is the organization that promotes the development, implementation, and sustainment of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) within the state of Wisconsin.

Vision: The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) is a nationally recognized mutual aid system that will be implemented throughout the state of Wisconsin to provide a seamless response plan of unlimited resources to ensure that every community is protected in case of an emergency.

Our 5th Annual MABAS Conference will be held July 30th, 2015, the date is fast approaching. Keith Tveit and our Education Committee have again put together an interesting and insightful agenda. New this year will be training offered by our corporate sponsors. Both Darley and Solberg Foam will be offering operational level training classes.

In this issue of MABAS-Wisconsin in Action, we present the value of MABAS as seen in the eyes of the incident commanders. We also have an opportunity to reflect on the value of all the efforts of Gary Schmidt and his team as he edits MABAS-Wisconsin in Action.
The owner of a flower shop with an adjoining residence had been gone for a short period of time and upon her return home found smoke in the structure.

This was reported to the Cascade Fire Department at 504 Madison Avenue about 9:40am on Monday January 5, 2015. Being the first work day back after a holiday our first out engine was a bit short staffed and also took a bit longer to get out the door because of the distance and traffic that some encountered as they came from their jobs.

Upon arrival there was very little smoke coming from the building. First in crews could see clearly through the living quarters of the building and helped the owner remove some valuables from the building.

Our crews were first sent to the basement by the owner because they were thinking it was a heater that was plugged in the basement that was causing the smoke, our crews found nothing in the basement and proceeded to search the living quarters of the building and didn’t find anything till they got to the area where the flower shop and living quarters came together. That’s where they found a wall in the flower shop burning. Once the fire burned through the wall, it quickly spread into the first floor and upward into the second floor.

The weather that morning was about -5 to -10 with a wind chill of -25. Engines, tenders, trucks and ventilation saws were freezing up at various stages of the fire and it was important to keep water flowing through any lines that were deployed.

The pickup with the front mount pump is used to fill tenders or as a relay truck. It set up by a river just down the street from the fire scene and was used to relay water to our attack engine as a supplement to the water supply we had set up. It is a very handy truck to have in a rural area!!

A MABAS request was called immediately upon our departments’ page for a working still on box 5-1-1 and escalated from there. Our department made special requests from Campbellsport FD (Fond du Lac County) and Boltonville FD (Washington County) for manpower. I believe in all 18 fire departments and 100 firefighters were on scene that day that lasted for approximately 8 hours.

The building dates back some 125 years, and had been added on to several times. Some of the walls still had sawdust in them used as insulation.

MABAS has met our departments’ expectations and did on this call as well. It is nice knowing that you don’t have to guess where to draw your next piece of equipment from as it is all written down and listed for you and the dispatch center and it’s ok to make a few special requests.

I can’t stress enough to fill out MABAS cards through all 5 alarms. We have added some extras to our cards for our next card rewrites. If your department doesn’t do any “live” MABAS drills where you pull a card and have an actual movement of equipment and some water, I think you are missing out on a great opportunity to actually see if you have your cards built up correctly - you never know if your cards work till you use them. It’s also good experience for your dispatch center as well to keep them in practice. And don’t hesitate to activate a MABAS request, better to call early then to call too late!!

MABAS WISCONSIN IN ACTION STAFF

Content Editor…Gary Schmidt (Milwaukee Fire Bell Club)
Format Editor…..Terry Schmidt (Milwaukee Fire Bell Club)
Contributor …..Tim Stein (Racine Fire Bells)
Contributor …..Drew Spielman (Green Bay Fire Dept)
Contributor …..Chuck Liedtke (Milwaukee Fire Bell Club)
Contributor …..Tim Snopek (Waukesha County)
Contributor ……..Asher Heimermann (Sheboygan County)

(All photos by Asher Heimermann/Incident Response). For a video of the fire, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xm8RsZ0dUE8)
The quarterly newsletter began with Volume 1 Issue 1 in December, 2009 and covered the largest deployment of MABAS to date at that time from earlier in the year - the Patrick Cudahy meatpacking plant fire in Milwaukee County. It was the first taste of a multiple-day, large scale fire service effort in Wisconsin with all resources using common radio frequencies, common terminology, and following common standards.

The plan for the newsletter was to have Issue 1 of each year being the Winter issue, with Issue 2-Spring, Issue 3-Summer, and Issue 4-Fall to follow. Time constraints caused by the editor working full time in the private sector forced a series combined “double issues” - Fall 2010 (Vol 1 Issue 4) was combined with Winter 2010 (Vol 2 Issue 1), Spring and Summer of 2010 were combined, as well as Fall and Winter, 2010. Since then, we have been able to produce 4 issues each year (coincidentally, the editor retired from his full time job).

Here’s a look at the covers of all 17 prior issues. All issues can be accessed from the MABAS Wisconsin website. Note the diversity of events that MABAS is used for.
FIVE YEARS OF NEWSLETTERS - CONTINUED

2011-2012

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Fall/Winter 2011

MABAS REACTS WHEN WATER SUPPLY IS EXHAUSTED
By Gary Sundrum and Randy Winger, Chief-Deputy Camp sheriff

It was the "call of a lifetime" as Chief Wileczek described the fire that could have consumed a very valuable building. Prompt and quick action by the MABAS crew saved the day and, within minutes of the 11:13 a.m. call and upgraded to a full third alarm assignment (working still at 11:56 a.m.), the fire was extinguished, saving the day and property.

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Summer 2012

Mutual Aid Net to be implemented in Wisconsin
By John Sadow, Chair, Mutual Aid Net State Operations Committee - Homeland Security Council

Mutual Aid Net is a resource database and dispatch system used by local agencies to quickly and efficiently request and provide cost-effective movement of personnel, equipment, and resources across jurisdictional lines. The next pages provide examples of how Mutual Aid Net is being used to improve the effectiveness of mutual aid efforts.

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Fall 2012

MABAS Advantage evident in fighting marsh fire
By Gary Sundrum and Chief Bill Bipy, Race 2 Sustain Coordinator

Just after 5 p.m. on Saturday, November 10, 2012, a call came in from West Lake Road in a rural area south of Lake Mills. The fire was seen burning and spreading quickly. Fire Department personnel arrived on scene and assessed the situation. Lake Mills is 25 miles east of Madison Wisconsin, just south of I-94. Fighting a marsh fire is time consuming and often involves multiple fire departments from a wide area.

2012-2013

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Volume 4, Issue 1

COMMUNICATION: THE BACKBONE OF MABAS
By Gary Sundrum

One of the reasons for the success of MABAS is the ability to get a large amount of the correct type of resources to a scene. It requires an effective communications system. This occurs because the same communications are used for all departments.

This issue of the newsletter focuses on those behind the scenes - the MABAS Dispatchers. Throughout this issue, you will get a glimpse into the minds of our Dispatchers and what they do.

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Volume 4, Issue 2

ECHO FOODS - THE LARGEST MABAS DEPLOYMENT TO DATE
By John Sadow, Chair, Mutual Aid Net State Operations Committee - Homeland Security Council

It was 6:00 p.m. on a cold winter night on January 9, 2013 at the Echo Lake Foods processing plant when a fire was reported. The 70,000 square foot facility is located in the far north of Wisconsin. The plant began in 1941 with numerous expansions over the years, straddling the boundary of the Town and City of Burlington, which is located in the far north of Wisconsin.

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Volume 4, Issue 3

DIV 135 IN ACTION - RESPONSE TO A DAIRY FARM FIRE
By John Sadow, Chair, Mutual Aid Net State Operations Committee - Homeland Security Council

Columbus Fire Department

Tuesday July 23, 2013, started out as a very windy and dry day in South Central Wisconsin, with gusts over 20 miles per hour. The temperature was already in the upper 70s, and dry. The Columbus Fire Department was alerted to a fire at a dairy farm in the Town of Windsor. Columbus Fire Department and several other fire departments responded to the scene.

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Volume 4, Issue 4

2013-2014

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Volume 5, Issue 1

SE Region has five continuous life safety boxes
By Gary Sundrum

The forecast for Sunday December 8, 2013 was for snow to fall in the afternoon. It was a surprise to everyone when it started falling shortly after 10 a.m. in southeastern Wisconsin. Before it was all over, it inches would fall, but it was a welcome respite from the dry conditions and rapid control of their vehicles. Then other vehicles came upon completely stopped traffic and unmanageable collisions resulted and continued happening for 5-15 minutes at multiple locations.

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Volume 5, Issue 2

DIV 120 HIGH SCHOOL BLAZE NEEDS 5 MABAS ALARM ALERT
By Gary Sundrum, Chief, MABAS Campfire Fire Department

At approximately 5:32 a.m. on Saturday March 1, 2014, the MABAS Campfire Fire Department was notified of a fire at a high school in Mount Calvary, Wisconsin. The fire was fully involved when the fire department arrived on scene.

MABAS-WISCONSIN in ACTION
A quarterly report of MABAS WISCONSIN activities to underscore its value to the community and to foster growth and improvement through the sharing of actual experience.

Volume 5, Issue 3

DIV 109 in ACTION - WORKERS TAPFED 270 FEET DEEP
By Gary Sundrum

Night was falling, snow was falling, temperatures were falling. It was time for the winter sample collection team to call it a day and descend the 400 feet high smokestack. One by one, they were to use the one-person elevator that had the capacity of 400 pounds and the height of 400 feet.
Recent fires in Rock County trigger MABAS system

ROCK COUNTY (WKOW) -- A pair of fires in Rock County this week triggered the Mutual Aid Box Alarm, or MABAS, system.

Randall Pickering, an Edgerton firefighter who also serves as Vice President of MABAS Wisconsin, said the system utilizes pre-written protocols to make sure fire departments around the state can efficiently and effectively help out other first responders dealing with large scale emergencies.

Pickering said MABAS agreements cover 95 percent of Wisconsin's population.

"It's a pre-planned way of making sure you have all the resources necessary to respond to whatever Mother Nature throws your way," Pickering said.

The MABAS system is based on index cards, officially dubbed "box cards," which are filled out by fire chiefs and EMS directors around the state. The cards detail which fire departments or EMS agencies dispatchers should call in certain, pre-planned scenarios.

For instance, Edgerton's MABAS cards call for Evansville, Stoughton and Footville to send engines to assist the Edgerton Fire Department in the event of a box alarm, structure fire in a rural area with no fire hydrants. The same card also instructs dispatchers to call for Stoughton, Fort Atkinson and Whitewater to send tender trucks.

Edgerton's box card detailing scenarios for structure fires in the city, where there are fire hydrants in all areas, calls for the City of Beloit, Fort Atkinson and Footville to send fire engines in the event of a box alarm. If the fire is more severe, officially dubbed a level two box alarm, Edgerton would also request engines from Cambridge, Brooklyn and Orfordville.

Pickering said the cards enable dispatchers to all at once contact the first responders needed at an emergency scene. He said such calls can take roughly 30 seconds. Pickering said a fire department trying to improvise on the fly and determine which agencies to summon while on scene would be wasting precious time.

"With MABAS... you're not standing out there not only trying to deal with the emergency itself, but also trying to figure out 'who do I call for help?'" Pickering said.

Pickering said the Edgerton Fire Department relied on MABAS for assistance in battling the fire at the Anchor Inn Monday morning. He said the mutual aid allowed firefighters to salvage the structure of the building and some of the owner's belongings inside, although damage was still estimated at $500-thousand to $1-million.

A MABAS call was also issued for a fatal house fire in Beloit Tuesday.

"We (fire departments) can assist each other when the worst possible scenario happens," said Beloit Fire Chief Brad Liggett.

Liggett said equally important to the extra firefighters and equipment MABAS provides at emergency scenes is the manpower summoned to back fill fire stations. The box cards provide instructions for which, neighboring agencies should staff empty fire stations when a municipality's full department is out on a major call.

"It's important to have those resources coming in so we can respond to other emergencies," Liggett said.

"Life is going to go on," Pickering said. "The world doesn't just stop because we have one, major fire."

Pickering said the MABAS system also relies on what he called an "80/20 system" to make sure it doesn't drain any one fire department's resources. He said no more than 20 percent of any one fire department is allowed to provide mutual aid at once.

"You don't want to strip your neighbor," he said. "You want to take a little bit from each neighbor instead of taking all those extra resources from one municipality."

"You don't want to strip any community in case they have another event to respond to," Pickering said.

Reprinted with permission of WKOW Television, Inc.

If you see MABAS described in your local community news, please let us know at: garyschmidt@wi.rr.com
A workshop outbuilding at Ron’s Custom Built Cabinets at 8312 Gittings Road in Caledonia (just west of Racine) caught fire just before 8pm on December 2, 2014. The MABAS response, requested by the South Shore Fire Department, helped save other buildings.

For more information about becoming a member of MABAS Wisconsin or to view all issues of this newsletter, visit: www.mabaswisconsin.org (scroll down for newsletter links)

(All photos by Timothy J. Stein. These photos are located at www.fyrpix.com in the “Featured Galleries Area”)

THE GROWTH OF MABAS WISCONSIN DURING THE 5 YEARS OF THE NEWSLETTER

Here are the MABAS Wisconsin Division Maps from the first issue of each year of the newsletter.

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014
MABAS Illinois Fire Chief Reflects on Regional Growth of MABAS

By Chief Paul Maplethorpe, Greater Round Lake Fire Protection District (MABAS-IL Division 4)

Chief Maplethorpe is a subject matter expert regarding communications as a 35 year fire service veteran, has extensive experience working with MABAS, serves on the MABAS IL Executive Board as Comptroller, and serves on the Communications Committee. - Patrick Gallagher, Training Officer, Western Springs Department of Fire/EMS, MABAS IL Liaison to MABAS WI. Editor’s note: MABAS-IL Div 4 shares a common border with MABAS-WI Div 101.

Having been involved with the organization of Division 101 in 1986-87, watching MABAS-WI grow has been fantastic. The positive impacts have been numerous, including cross-border (daily) mutual aid, interdivisional responses (Badger Cork x2, Burlington’s Egg Factory, the meat packing plant south of Milwaukee), common communications plans, recognition of MABAS as the mutual aid system in the region. Chicago, Milwaukee, Green Bay, Madison, Peoria, Rockford, Springfield and even St. Louis all belong to the same mutual aid pact as Round Lake or Western Springs or even Taylorville. If I thought more, I’m sure that the benefits far exceed what is mentioned.

As for challenges, other than increased radio frequency congestion (which isn’t as bad as some may perceive), I can’t think of any. This has been a common problem for years. The easiest solution is to mitigate unnecessary radio traffic on IFERN – however this has a huge learning curve. Like any dispatch frequency, when call volume increases, personnel need to use discretion in their radio traffic.

Dispatching on different frequencies will have many drawbacks, as responders routinely cross state lines on incidents. In addition, when divisions get busy, it affects subsequent alarms by reducing available units (departments).

A good example of this was the January 9, 2009 tornado event that affected Boone and McHenry counties in IL and Walworth and Kenosha counties in WI. Divisions 5, 8 and 101 all had box alarms. Division 4 was responding with Haz-Mat to Harvard and Tech Rescue to two locations in Kenosha County.

It worked, because it allowed good coordination of all resources from the Divisional dispatch. In addition, Division 5’s dispatch was overwhelmed during this event, and Division 4 assumed dispatch responsibility for the Division 5 haz-mat incident.

Div 108 to IL Train Wreck

By Steve Tranel, Fire Chief, Cuba City Fire Department

On Thursday March 5, 2015, a train consisting of over 100 Bakken crude oil cars derailed near Galena IL, causing more than a dozen to erupt in fire. The event lasted multiple days. MABAS Div 108, Grant County borders the affected area. Five tenders from Div 108 responded, although it was not a MABAS event.
MABAS – Wisconsin

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System
Organized 2004

MABAS Wisconsin Regional Coordinators

Northwest Region
Phil Bochler
Ph. (715) 492-7235 (C)
assessor@cityofparkfalls.com

Northeast Region
Tim Magnin
Ph. (920) 373-4607 (C)
Ph. (920) 834-6850 (O)
tim.magnin@co.oconto.wi.us

West Central Region
Rick Merryfield
Ph. (715) 577-7110 (C)
rickmerryfield@chipvalley.com

East Central Region
Ben Schoenborn (C)
Ph. (920) 418-3215
sben@charter.net

Red Center
Ph. 608-757-4000

WEM Duty Officer
Ph. 800-943-0003

Fire Service Coordinator
Keith Tveit
Ph. (608) 220-6049 (C)
Ph. (715) 209-6360 (C)
keith.tveit@wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin Homeland Security Council
Brad Liggett
Ph. (608) 364-2902
Ph. (608) 751-6201 (C)

MABAS OPERATING FREQUENCIES

IFERN
MABAS Alerting / intra-Divisional responses

IFERN2
Alternate intra-Divisional responses

MABAS1 (WISCOM)
Inter-Divisional Responses
Contact with Wisconsin Red Center

MABAS2 (WISCOM)
Regional Coordinators - WEM Coordination*
*Future use

Divisions
101 – Kenosha County
102 – Racine County
103 – Walworth County
104 – Rock County
105 – Green County
106 – Waukesha County
107 – Milwaukee County
108 – Grant County
110 – Portage County
111 – Washington County
112 – Brown County
113 – Sheboygan County
114 – Oneida County
115 – Dane County
116 – Wood County
117 – Dunn/Pepin County
118 – Jefferson County
119 – Ozaukee County
120 – Fond du Lac County
121 – Vilas County
122 – Calumet County
123 – Winnebago County
124 – Iowa County
125 – Lafayette County
126 – Eau Claire County
127 – Outagamie County
128 – Manitowoc County
129 – Dodge County
130 – Marathon County
131 – Sauk County
132 – Chippewa County
133 – Shawano/Menominee Cnty
134 – La Crosse County
135 – Columbia County
136 – Juneau County
137 – Oconto County
138 – Kewaunee County
139 – Jackson County
140 – Trempealeau County
141 – Green Lake County
142 – Waupaca County
143 – St. Croix County
144 – Marinette County
145 – Monroe County
146 – Florence County
147 – Langlade County
148 – Buffalo County
149 – Price County
150 – Richland County
151 – Waushara County
152 – Clark County
153 – Forest County
154 – Door County
155 – Lincoln County
156 – Pierce County
157 – Vernon County

Bruce Hedringon
Ph. (608) 751-6203 (C)
Ph. (815) 289-1092
hedrington@ci.beloit.wi.us
brucehedrington@gmail.com

Bill Rice
Ph. (414) 333-3626 (C)
Ph. (262) 375-5314
wrice@grafton.village.wi.us