

Disaster Committee
February 10, 2026

Members Present: Joe Miller, Robin Dean, Wayne Gerlock, Allan Kidd, Mark Bearth, Jill Pietrusinski, Jeff Thornton, Chris Clark

Chair Joe called the meeting at 7:32

Joe shared we participated in a tabletop exercise on Jan 20 at the EMA in Southern IL. He felt quite a few issues were brought to light.

There is a functional exercise in March (the 21st) and a full-scale exercise planned in June where much of Carbondale will be involved to include SIUC and nursing homes in a simulated tornado.

Wayne reported they are working on job descriptions with the SICOAD as we will need to have positions filled for supervisor and management positions at the VRC as we are breaking it into 2 functions:

- VRC
- Secondary on-site

We are adjusting due to lessons learned in May 2025. We will need a lot of volunteers for the June exercise and Wayne will report more at next month's meeting. He is concerned our volunteers are hesitant to step up as they're not "seeing" anything. We will have the opportunity to have observers as well and should promote within the district to get as many there as possible. We need to get the regional clubs as well as the metro east.

Jeff felt there wasn't a lot of cooperation with SIUC in the most recent exercise. He also noted that all of the teams are using a different radio channel so Wayne confirmed we have received a grant for 6 radios that will be on the same channel for use, and we have those available now. Jeff also reported the social media communication sends all volunteers to the VRC so we can get them registered.

May tornado lessons learned:

The EMA director needs to be present immediately, yet in May there were duplicated efforts with EMA, Salvation Army, Red Cross and others that caused inefficiencies with the homeowners. Wayne said we need a single system to use. Joe would like to get more of an after-action report from EMA about the final wrap up.

Robin suggested we have an all-district communication about the volunteer opportunity and Jill suggested a multi-media approach with video, email and print promotional messaging.

Joe will have a table at Land of Lincoln President Elect Learning Seminar. Wayne will have some DAUSA brochures sent.

The next meeting will be held on March 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

PDG Jill Pietrusinski