



FESTIVAL TURNED FLOOD: MANAGING THE UNEXPECTED

Fairfield County Emergency Management | Article by Laura Johnston



Festival concert area, after water began to recede

The first Lancaster Festival concert kicked off just as an epic 48-hour storm dumped nearly two months' worth of rain across Fairfield County. The festival, held annually for over 50 years, draws concerts

of up to 15,000 attendees. What is normally a well-oiled event quickly became a full-scale emergency response.

Fetters Run, the creek and watershed running through the grounds, surged, cutting off the stage and audience from the parking lot and road exit. Pedestrian bridges were overtopped and the only vehicle bridge became unusable. With 5,000 attendees on-site, early activation of the evacuation plan and tight communication got everyone safely to a shelter across the creek, prior to the flooding.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR LARGE EVENTS

- Plan early and know site-specific risks
- Ensure all agencies are familiar with your plan
- Maintain clear, continuous communication
- Always follow pre-determined action triggers
- Avoid reliance on a single entry or exit



Emergency responders conduct rescue on flooded road in Fairfield County



SBA inspect properties with flood damage alongside Fairfield EMA Staff

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

The flooding triggered a federal disaster declaration for Fairfield County. SBA disaster loans are now available for affected residents, businesses, and nonprofits.

We invite you to follow Fairfield County EMA on social media for updates on this event and other preparedness and response activities.

in THIS ISSUE

*Festival Turned Flood:
Managing the Unexpected*

*Davis-Besse Retiring
Outdoor Sirens: Embracing
Modern Alerting*

Committee Highlights

Running for Election



FREE

*Professional
HEADSHOTS*

Available at EMAO Winter Conference on December 4th (Salt Fork). See Garrett Blevins or Erin Konecki from the Publications Committee for more info.

**SAVE
-THE-
DATE-**

November 14 - 20, 2025

IAEM Annual Conference
(Louisville, KY)

December 4-5, 2025

EMA Winter Conference
(Salt Fork)



DAVIS-BESSE RETIRING OUTDOOR SIRENS:

LUCAS & OTTAWA COUNTIES EMBRACE IPAWS FOR MODERN EMERGENCY ALERTS

Ottawa and Lucas Counties, in partnership with the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, are transitioning away from outdoor warning sirens (OWS) as the primary alerting method within their shared Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) around the Davis-Besse Site. To enhance public safety, the counties are adopting the IPAWS and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) as their primary methods of public notification.

This transition has been formally approved by the FEMA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) as an effective alternative to traditional outdoor sirens.

A Joint Approach to Modern Alerting

Ottawa and Lucas Counties share alerting authority for IPAWS. This collaboration allows both counties to issue emergency alerts seamlessly across jurisdictional boundaries, ensuring fast, consistent, and coordinated messaging to all residents.

This shift reflects a growing national trend toward modern, digital emergency alerting — moving systems that offer broader reach, faster delivery, and greater accessibility.

Why Move Away from Sirens?

OWS have served communities well for decades, but they have significant limitations:

- They are only effective outdoors
- They cannot provide detailed instructions or context
- They do not reach people who are indoors, asleep, or in vehicles

In contrast, IPAWS sends alerts directly to mobile phones, reaching people wherever they are and delivering timely, actionable information in real time. It's like having a siren, and detailed emergency info, in your pocket.

Monthly Testing in Ottawa & Lucas Counties

To ensure the alert system is functioning properly, Ottawa and Lucas Counties will continue to conduct a monthly WEA test on the first Friday of each month at 12:00 PM. These tests coincide with the legacy outdoor siren tests, provide a seamless transition experience, and reinforce public awareness of the new system

What Emergency Managers Should Know

- This FEMA and NRC-approved transition to IPAWS ensures compliance with federal emergency preparedness standards.
- Shared alerting authority between Ottawa and Lucas Counties strengthens cross-county coordination.
- The new system significantly improves safety, speed, and accessibility during critical events such as:
 - Radiological emergencies
 - Severe weather (e.g., tornado warnings)
 - Hazardous material incidents
 - Local evacuations

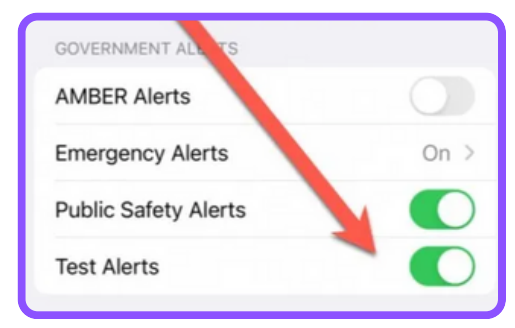
Monthly coordinated testing supports system reliability and provides opportunities for training, public engagement, and continuous improvement.

This transition represents a major advancement in regional emergency preparedness. Ottawa and Lucas Counties are setting a strong example for how jurisdictions across Ohio can modernize public warning systems - ensuring faster, smarter, and more inclusive emergency communication.

For more information, training, or support with IPAWS implementation, please contact Ottawa County EMA and/or Lucas County EMA.

Important Reminder:

To receive test alerts, individuals must enable test alerts on their phones (usually found in the "Emergency Alerts" section under notification settings).



COMMITTEE

HIGHLIGHTS

K-12 Education Preparedness Caucus



The K-12 Education Preparedness Caucus brings together EMA's and their school partners from across Ohio to share best practices in preparedness, planning, and response within the K-12 school setting.

This caucus is not a policy or decision-making group. Instead, it serves as a collaborative space for open discussion—where members can exchange ideas, learn from one another, and strengthen partnerships between EM and education professionals.

Our goal is to build a supportive network that enhances readiness and resilience in Ohio's K-12 schools through shared experiences and proven practices.

We're seeking input to help shape future meetings and topics of interest. Please take a moment to complete this brief survey and to sign up to be a part of this group: <https://forms.gle/mrDxDPE4Y8rgfb8W8>

If you have any questions about the caucus, please reach out to co-chairs, Amy Seward(aseward@knoxcountygema-oh.gov or 740-399-3991) or Jecy Weber (jecy@delcoema.org or 740-833-2183).

Thank you for helping us create a meaningful and engaging space for collaboration!

RUNNING

FOR ELECTION

Note: Individuals listed only include those nominated by Oct 31, 2025. Nominations can still be made from the floor on the day of the election.

Voting will take place at Winter Conference.

**The voted in Treasurer will be completing Director Cander's term due to her retirement.*



FOR VICE PRESIDENT (1-YEAR TERM)



Ethan Raby
Greene County



Keith Severns
Hardin County



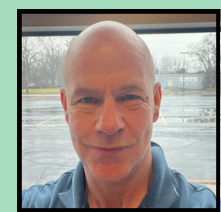
Ryan Shackelford
Portage County

FOR SECRETARY (2-YEAR TERM)



McKenzie Villatoro
Portage County

FOR TREASURER (1-YEAR TERM*)



Dave Freeman
Lorain County