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Richardson County Emergency Management Undergoing Changes

(KLZA)-- Earlier this year Richardson County Commissioners approved changes in the positions within the Richardson County Emergency Management Agency.

Brian Dixon is the Richardson County Emergency Management Director, a job he has held since January of 2014. He explained the reasons the changes were made were in part because of the word "volunteer." The volunteers have been doing storm spotting and other duties for years.

When Cooper Nuclear started providing money to Emergency Management to help pay volunteers. With the funding available, the County is not able to bring on the part-time employees as needed. No local tax dollars are required to pay them. As employees, the people are covered under workman's comp insurance and also, it allows them to be able to help out with more county-owned equipment.

As with volunteer fire fighters and ambulance squad members, the time required to maintain training and certification is continually increasing. Richardson and Nemaha counties are in a rather unique positions with the Cooper Nuclear Station located very close by, the training required is greater, but it also means a large amount of funding comes to the County.

Dixon said that an attempt to hire an Assistant Director did not work out and that the Administrative Assistant was doing duties above and beyond the job description. That also led to the change in the organization of the Agency.

Severe weather, hazardous material spills and such things are what most people think of when they think about Emergency Management. Dixon has also taken on the duties of Floodplain Manager and Communications Director for Richardson County. He says Richardson Counties unique landscape has proved to be a challenge to county-wide radio communication. Another duty handled by the department is rural addressing.

This year Richardson County Emergency Management has received grant funds for new outdoor warning sirens. Dixon is currently working on locations for the new sirens.

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