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State police and attorney general's office pleased with Back Mountain EMA

Group's equipment made available to meth lab investigators

SUSAN DENNEY
Dallas Post Correspondent

Back Mountain Regional Emergency Management Agency Coordinator Harry Vivian said state police officials and the Pennsylvania attorney general's office are well pleased with the response of the agency to a recent meth lab investigation.

The investigation of the meth lab took place in Dallas on the night of Nov. 7, 2013.

On the same day, a mobile meth lab had exploded on Carverton Road in Trucksville. It appears that the two incidents are unrelated.

According to Vivian, meth labs are very volatile and can explode. Vivian said state police brought in chemists to investigate the lab as these sites can be flammable.

A fire engine and tanker trucks with hoses



The Back Mountain EMA provided stand lights at the rear of a house in Dallas so that state police and the attorney general's office could investigate a meth lab.

deployed were requested so that a fire could be put out in case of explosion.

The EMA group provided stand lights at the

rear of the house so that the state police and the attorney general's office could do their work. The stand towers were recent-

ly acquired as part of a state gaming grant.

The EMA also used its road closure signs so that the streets around the

meth lab could be closed off.

"The attorney general's office was thrilled with the set up and the equip-

ment," Vivian said. He added that they were also very happy with how quickly everything was deployed to the site.

Mark Van Etten, president of Back Mountain Fire and EMS, said, "The PA Attorney General's office, PA State Police and Luzerne County Drug Task Force commented numerous times on how wonderful it was to have our equipment available. Both agencies indicated they have never conducted evening operations and had that type of equipment provided in any other community throughout the state."

Vivian wears several hats as deputy coordinator of the Back Mountain Emergency Management Agency, as the Back Mountain Regional EMA Chief Coordinator representing Dallas Borough and as Back Mountain Fire and EMS Fire Chief.

"The Back Mountain Regional EMA is still buying equipment," Vivian said. "We're buying duplicates of what we already have," he said.

According to Vivian, the gaming grant made it possible for the community to acquire a lot of emergency equipment.

"All the communities are going to benefit from

The EMA group provided stand lights at the rear of the house so that the state police and the attorney general's office could do their work. The stand towers were recently acquired as part of a state gaming grant.

the equipment (during times of emergency), especially those that are weather-related," Vivian said.

The group has also purchased gas meters, chainsaws, lighting, signage.

"Everything is available to the fire departments that need it," Vivian said.

The group has also purchased pumps as many of the local emergencies are water-related.

The group decides what to buy based on previous experiences.

"We try to buy equipment for things we've experienced in the past," Vivian said, citing high winds and water as possible emergencies they are prepared to deal with. The group is also prepared for a natural gas emergency.

The EMA includes Dallas Borough, Dallas Township, Kingston Township, Lake Lehman Township, Franklin Township and Jackson Township.

Striking up the band at Dallas High

SUSAN DENNEY
Dallas Post Correspondent

More students are making music in Dallas school these days.

Greg Riley, the new bandmaster for the Dallas School District, said that the high school band enrollment is up to 50, double that of last year. He attributes part of the growth to scheduling problems that have been resolved.

Riley also leads 300 seventh, eighth and ninth-grade music students.

Musical groups in the district include the high school concert band, the seventh, eighth and ninth-grade concert bands, a high school brass ensemble and a middle school jazz band.

Riley is busy as he is the only band teacher for the district. In the past, the Dallas School district has had two full-time band teachers.

His students will soon participate in a "burst of public performances," according to Riley. During 13 days in December, band students will present nine programs.

Riley said these programs will provide opportunities to show off the new facilities at Dallas High School which include a 1400-seat auditorium.

Riley is also excited about a new technology room. Although the room is now empty, a grant is being written to provide all Dallas students, not just those who take band classes, with an equipped music lab in which they can create and record music.

There are more concerts planned after the holidays, including a pops concert with a guest soloist. And, there will be activities to let the younger students experience music on the high school level.

According to Riley, the increased numbers have created needs and the district is currently seeking used instruments.

One of every five students in the district is



Freshman James Vitale plays the trumpet during band practice at Dallas High School.

on the free and reduced lunch program, Riley said. Finding used instruments will help more of those students participate.

Also, gently-used instruments will help build up the school's inventory. Riley gave the example of a student who had a screw fall out of her saxophone, resulting in a missing key. Since the district had no backup saxophone to lend, the student will be without her instrument for two weeks while it is repaired.

"You'd be shocked to know how many people have an instrument in their closet that no one is using," Riley said.

The time to donate used instruments has been extended to the end of the year.

Instrument donors can drop off an instrument with their name, address and telephone number inside the case and they will be provided with a valued tax credit receipt.

A Dallas native, Reilly brings 13 years experience to the district. A graduate of Dallas High School, he feels that returning to the district is coming full circle.

He studied at Wilkes University and the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He first taught at Wyoming Area and was at Lake-Lehman for the past 10 years.

For now, his biggest challenge is working on balancing ensembles and increasing the number of high school band students.

He is excited about the future of the band program



Dallas band director Greg Riley conducts during band practice at the high school.



Dallas High School sophomore Joseph Latzko practices on the saxophone.



Dallas High School sophomore Maria Ansilio, left, junior Allie Bruch, and sophomore Julia Zochowski practice in the woodwind section.

in Dallas. "There is no reason why this program shouldn't be one of the premier pro-

grams in this half of the state," he said. "We have the facilities. We have the academic tradition."



Michele Gill, left, and Victoria Vespico from Girl Scout Troop 32613 were recently awarded the Girl Scout Silver Award. The girls earned the prestigious award by creating a sustainable certified natural habitat at North Penn Manor, a personal care facility in Wilkes-Barre.

Two receive Scout Silver Awards

Girl Scouts in the Heart of PA awarded the Girl Scout Silver Award to Michele Gill, Dallas, and Victoria Vespico, of Trucksville, from Troop 32613 of the Back Mountain.

Gill, daughter of Cynthia and Dennis Gill, is a freshman at West Side Career and Technical Center. Vespico is the daughter of Kelly and Vince Vespico and is a freshman at Dallas High School.

The girls earned the prestigious award by creating a sustainable certified natural habitat at North Penn Manor, a personal care facility in Wilkes-Barre.

The Silver Award is recognized as the second highest award in Girl Scouting. It is a national award with national standards, including the development of leadership skills via the completion of five badges, the "Amaze Journey," and over 40 hours of community service meeting a specific need in their community.

Both girls discovered their own strengths and

values, connected with the people in their local community and took action to make the world around them a better place.

Together, they identified a need for residents of North Penn Manor to become more connected to their outdoor environment in a downtown area where nature is fast dwindling. They created an action plan to provide resources of food, water, shelter and nesting areas to various forms of wildlife.

Their action plan via online research incorporated native plants for pollen, nectar, berries and shrubs in addition to supplemental food sources of hummingbird and bird feeders, providing for an ongoing constant source of clean water via a pond and a bird bath providing cover for wildlife to feel safe from people, predators and inclement weather, as well as reproduce, bear and raise their young supporting the full life cycle of numerous local species.

Through teamwork and local community support

via donations from various local businesses, the girls were able to change the world around them and to make a difference in the many lives of local wildlife as well as the lives of local residents who reside at North Penn Manor.

Special thanks to the following businesses who contributed supplies and resources to the girls' project: North Penn Manor for allowing the use of their facility and grounds, Edward's Landscaping, Lehman Nursery, Home Depot, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, Dallas Hardware, Wild Birds Unlimited and Donna Norton.

Special thanks also goes to Gary Kostrobala, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited who acted as advisor to the girls by providing helpful suggestions and guidance especially in the planning phase.

