

By Russ Pankonin

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The Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) will be coordinating a disaster preparedness exercise for first responders next Thursday, March 7.

Heidi Wheeler, emergency response coordinator for SWNPHD, said first responders will deal with a scenario where Chase County Schools has been hit by a tornado. This will require mutual aid assistance from across the county.

The exercise will use props and visual aids to depict the scene.

The props and aids will be used to carry the scenario through four different stages.

The experiences gained from the exercise will aid in future planning should such a disaster like this occur.

The planning team will include SWNPHD, Chase County Community Hospital, Chase County Schools, Chase County Emergency Management, Imperial Volunteer Fire Department, Imperial EMS and Imperial Ministerial Association.

Wheeler said first responders from Wauneta and Lamar have also been invited to participate.

The event will be held at the St. Patrick Parish Hall, beginning at 5:45 p.m. and ending at 9 p.m.