

PCSO joins first responders in PVCH 'active shooter' exercise

By Mike Gilmore
News Director,
Hi, Neighbor!
Newspapers

It was just a drill, but Pawnee County Sheriff Scott King was satisfied with the result.

After a brief meeting to discuss the scenario event list and execution plan, the PCSO then joined other local first responders and Pawnee Valley Community Hospital in an "active shooter" training exercise on the PVCH grounds Tuesday morning. While the date and time of the training exercise was unannounced, hospital patients, visitors and staff were notified that the exercise would be taking place.

The drill was planned in



response to an increase of active shooting incidents and was designed as an assessment tool to measure front-line responders' readiness in meeting challenges presented in a time-critical situation. Joining PVCH in the event were

the PCSO, Kansas Highway Patrol, Larned EMS, Larned Fire Department, Larned Police Department and 911 Dispatch and local Homeland Security and Emergency Management personnel.

The PCSO's role in the event was to determine and locate the shooter or shooters, neutralize the threat, locate possible victims and then process the crime scene as day-to-day activities were being conducted at the hospital, Sheriff King said.

The hypothetical exercise presumed a 911 dispatch received regarding a DOC inmate brought into PVCH that had overpowered two guards, obtained a gun and begun shooting, King said. "Our first test was communication," King explained. "We needed to establish immediate open communication with the hospital staff to learn as

much as possible. We received a description of the gunman, located where he was last seen, whether or not it was a hostage situation," King said.

The scenario was concluded within minutes. "We were able to neutralize the individual and process the scene as other participants executed their roles," King said.

"For us, it was a suc-

cessful training exercise," King noted. "It was absolutely a significant opportunity to conduct an exercise in a highly-intensive environment."

The exercise also allowed the PCSO to utilize newly-acquired body armor obtained through a grant share from the Bullet Proof Vest Partnership Program, administered

through the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Undersheriff Derek Slack wrote the grant application, which provided nearly half of the total cost of the vests. The remaining funds were provided through county diversion funds at the request of Pawnee County Attorney John Settle.

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