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'All Clear' Issued For Rolla Campus

MAY 12TH 2011 BY NEWS

'All Clear' Issued For Rolla Campus

*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

ROLLA, Mo. - Life and work on the campus of Missouri University of Science and Technology have started to return to normal after a frightening situation Thursday morning.

Police issued an "all clear" bulletin at 1 p.m. after apprehending a suspect in a into custody who is believed to have entered nearby Fort Leonard Wood military base with an assault rifle, fled to Rolla in a stolen car while shooting at pursuing officers, wrecked the car at the university campus, walked through a university campus building in Rolla with the rifle, and then broke into a home and stole a car from the person living there.

The suspect has been identified as Cody Willcoxson of Southwest City, in McDonald County.

Missouri S&T went on a lockdown just before 9 a.m. Thursday after a report of a man with a gun was on campus in McNutt Hall, a building in the mining department. A text alert was sent out and a message was posted on S&T's website.

Law enforcement officers later said no shots were fired on campus but some shots were fired near campus. One shot hit a sheriff's deputy's car.

According to the Rolla police, at approximately 8:36 a.m. a male identified as Cody Nathaniel Willcoxon was seen at the entrance gate at Fort Leonard Wood with an AK-47. After being questioned, he fled the scene and was pursued by members of the Pulaski County Sheriff's Department and St. Robert Police Department in a silver passenger car.

The suspect then began to shoot at the pursuing officers, and he headed east on I-44. Spike strips were set up on I-44 which resulted in the suspect exiting at the Rolla 184 Exit.

The suspect then began shooting at Rolla Police officers and members of the Phelps County Sheriff's Department as they pursued him.

The suspect then drove through several areas in Rolla where he continued shooting at officers.

The suspect vehicle stopped near McNutt Hall at Missouri S&T near University Drive and Highway 63. The suspect fled from his vehicle on foot with a long rifle. Law enforcement officers established a perimeter around McNutt Hall and cleared the building.

Several minutes later the suspect broke into an occupied residence in the 1000 block of Crinoidal Court and demanded the keys to the resident's car and stole it. He later fled the scene in the stolen car.

At approximately 1 p.m., law enforcement officials apprehended the suspect. He is now in custody.

Most students on the Rolla campus had already left for summer break when the incident occurred.

Photo Above: The Millennium Arch on the campus of the Missouri University of Science & Technology in Rolla, where earlier today the campus was on lock-down due a suspect with an AK-47 assault rifle. The Millennium Arch started out as several large slabs of red granite rock and precisely cut with a high tech water jet. The original design came from internationally acclaimed artist Edwina Sandy, the granddaughter of Sir Winston Churchill.

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Shooter On Rolla University Campus (Updated)

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Shooter On Rolla University Campus (Updated)

BREAKING MISSOURI NEWS!

10:37 a.m.

The campus of Missouri University of Science and Technology remains in lockdown mode after a man who fired shots near campus entered a Missouri S&T building around 8:45 a.m. CDT today.

No shots were fired on campus and no injuries to on-campus students, faculty and staff were reported.

As of 10:15 a.m. CDT today, the suspect, a white male, is still at large and was last seen near White Columns Drive, a residential area northwest of campus across Interstate 44.

The suspect was last seen wearing a blue-and-white t-shirt and may be bleeding from one

hand.

Missouri S&T issued a lockdown alert at around 8:40 a.m. today after the suspect had entered McNutt Hall, which houses classrooms, offices and laboratories. The suspect soon exited the building and traveled on foot north of campus.

Police recovered a firearm near McNutt Hall.

All university students, faculty and staff are to remain in their buildings until Missouri S&T Police issue an all-clear. Individuals off-campus are asked to remain away from campus until the all-clear has been issued.

10:20 a.m. ROLLA, Mo. – Missouri University of Science and Technology (formerly UMR) in Rolla went on a lockdown just before 9 a.m. Thursday morning with a report a shooter on the Rolla campus in McNutt Hall. McNutt Hall is a part of the university's Mining Department.

The university sent a text alert to all students and a message posted on the university's website – www.mst.edu.

The university reported at 9:50 that no shots were fired on campus and no injuries have been reported. However, the campus is still on lockdown and operating under emergency conditions. Students, faculty and staff are being advised to continue to secure buildings and stay indoors until the university gives the "all clear."

At 9:10 am, the university posted the suspect had left campus, but advised those on campus to continue to secure buildings and stay indoors. The message advised people not already on campus to avoid going on campus.

Authorities believe the suspect is no longer armed, because they found an AK-47 underneath a brown pickup on campus.

The university says finals are still going on and students on campus are being told to stay inside buildings.

Students and staff not on campus are being told to stay away.

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Emerson Concerned About MoDOT Budget Plan

MAY 11TH 2011 BY NEWS

Emerson Concerned About MoDOT Budget Plan

*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson is not a fan of the recent decision by the Missouri Department of Transportation to cut its budget, reduce its staff and consolidate offices.

The plan by MoDOT calls for reducing the size of the department by 1,200 employees and closing 135 facilities – including the district headquarters at Willow Springs in southern Missouri. MoDOT Director Kevin Keith made the announcement of the budget-cutting plan late last week, saying the department was facing a severe decline in funding and inability to match federal funds.

"We are facing a transportation funding crisis in Missouri," MoDOT Director Kevin Keith said. "Over the past year, we have worked hard to reduce the size of our workforce and cut costs, but it isn't enough. We must take further action to become the right size to serve our customers given the severe reduction in funding for transportation."

But Emerson says she is concerned that residents in rural southern Missouri will be shortchanged.

"I'm highly concerned about any plan to reduce the attention given to our rural state roads and highways, and I am dead set against the proposal on the table to do just that with MoDoT. Eliminating MoDoT District 9 means other regions must absorb nearly 10,000 square miles of our state containing 3,744 road miles," Emerson said Wednesday morning.

Emerson said that between Sikeston and Springfield, Jefferson City to the Arkansas state line would all be under the jurisdiction of one office. MoDOT's District 9 already covers an area that is larger than nine U.S. states.

"I think it is irresponsible to look the other way on our state's rural transportation priorities, and it is foolish to expect MoDoT to have good information about roads located some 200 miles from the nearest office," she commented.

For the past five years, Missouri's state highway construction program has averaged \$1.2 billion a year. MoDOT presented a new, five-year construction program last week that is only half that amount - about \$600 million a year.

"In Southern Missouri, we rely on our transportation infrastructure to travel significant distances every day to school, to work and on errands. We also require our roads and bridges to safely carry the commerce of our region, to connect tourism with our beautiful natural resources and recreational opportunities, and to provide speedy transit for law enforcement and first responders. When it comes to maintaining and improving this infrastructure, the job is never done. It is important for me and for the Missourians who use these roads every day that as many eyes as possible are on the transportation priorities of our region," Emerson said.

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Churches Join Hands To Help Flood Victims

MAY 10TH 2011 BY NEWS

Churches Join Hands To Help Flood Victims

*By Annabeth Miller
ShowMe Times Editor*

A drive in most any direction from Dexter today, and the devastation left the recent spring floods come into clear focus. Homes damaged and destroyed; families displaced and lives that have devastated.

Now area churches are beginning to break down walls and fences, join hands and be "God's gloves and boots" to mend lives and offer hope.

For at least the third time in less than a week, area pastors have gathered together and heard the message of working together as one body to help people in Southeast Missouri. On Tuesday they gathered around tables at the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Dexter to break bread and form a plan of action.

The initial focus of their combined efforts will be Morehouse – a community where more than half of the homes have been destroyed or damaged by flooding waters.

“We’ve been working in Morehouse to give those people some hope, because they’ve lost everything,” said Pastor Tim Russell. As of Tuesday morning, there have been 273 out of 400 homes in Morehouse that have suffered damage or were destroyed by floods, he reported.

But Russell said there needs to be a broad approach, because families have been uprooted throughout Southeast Missouri and are in need of a helping hand. Communities like Kinder, Puxico, Caruthersville, New Madrid, East Prairie, Marston and more will need to recover and recuperate from the floodwaters.

Russell and a corps of pastors are trying to mobilize churches to help neighbors.

“I really feel like it’s time and very important to come together as one to try and make a difference,” Russell said.

The approach is holistic – not just helping families in moving back into homes or relocating, but helping with food, clothing, furniture – all the things that are necessary to help get started on solid footing. To do this, they say, will take a cooperative effort.

The work this last weekend was just the beginning. Russell and Rev. Mike Kohlbaker described how crews went into Morehouse starting Friday, May 6, and began work – starting at the First General Baptist Church. Crews – including teens from First Assembly of God – returned to Morehouse on Saturday. By Sunday morning the church had been cleaned of mud, sheet rock pulled, wet carpet removed, and air conditioners running.

“We brought the volunteers to that church,” Russell said. And on Sunday morning, the community had worship where there had been more than 16 inches of water and mud.

“We’re in this for the long haul,” he said. “That means with food, shelter, clothing, sheet rock, plywood – to put these people back together.” Our priority is to get them dry so that they have something they can go back to, so these towns don’t become ghost towns. I believe it’s a time of opportunity - that people all across the region can come together as one to make a huge difference.”

Russell and the other pastors are encouraging churches to join in the effort to help put Southeast Missouri back together. Pastors and church groups that would like to get involved are invited to call 573.624.2500 to become involved.

“Our priority is to get them dry so that they have something they can go back to - that that

they can have hope,” Russell said. “I believe it’s a time of opportunity that people all across the region can come together as one to make a huge difference.”

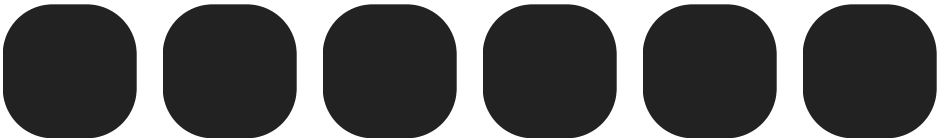
For additional information or to volunteer, contact Project Hope at 573.624.2500.

Photo Above: Tim Russell discusses the efforts of area churches to join together to help victims of area floods. A dozen pastors and church representatives gathered for a lunch at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to discuss the work ahead.

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Five Counties Declared Major Disaster

MAY 10TH 2011 BY NEWS

Five Counties Declared Major Disaster

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. - President Barack Obama has ordered federal aid for Missouri to help the recovery from this spring’s severe storms, tornadoes and flooding.

. Obama on Monday declared a major disaster in Missouri. The declaration allows federal funding for individuals in just five counties - Butler, Mississippi, New Madrid, St. Louis and Taney. The federal assistance includes grants for temporary housing, home repairs and loans for uninsured property losses. Federal funding also can be used by some government agencies and nonprofit groups for emergency work and repairs or replacements to damaged facilities.

Gov. Jay Nixon said more counties in the state may be designated as disaster areas as additional damage assessments are completed.

“I appreciate the President taking swift action on the request that I made just four days ago, so that Missouri families can more quickly recover from the severe storms, tornadoes, and record flooding that have affected parts of our state,” Nixon said. “As the flood waters recede and more damage assessments can be done, we will ask the federal government to expand this disaster declaration to provide similar vital assistance to other impacted communities and families.”

Gov. Nixon declared a state of emergency in Missouri on April 22. That order activated the State Emergency Operations Center and enabled the state to mobilize its resources - including the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the National Guard and Highway Patrol - to assist local authorities.

Since that time, almost 800 members of the National Guard have been mobilized to provide assistance where needed; 150 Highway Patrol troopers were assigned to help with the flooding response in southern and southeast Missouri.

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