

The Process of Change and a City's Outdoor Warning Siren Policy

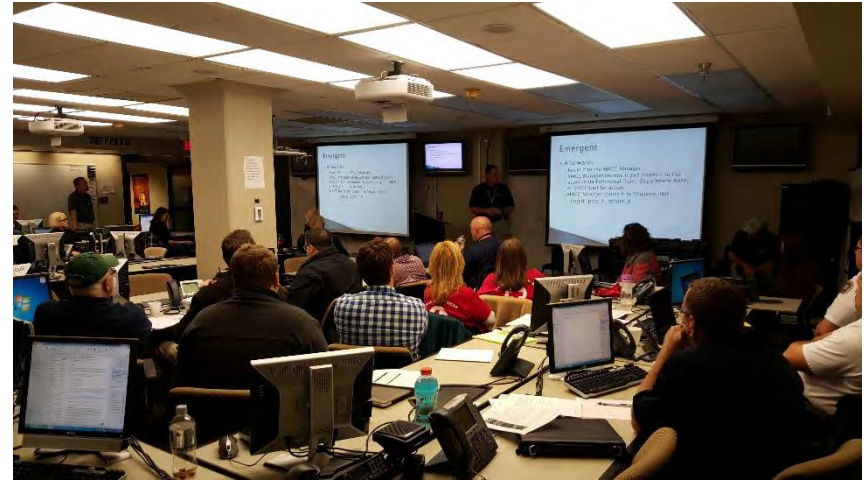
National Tornado Summit 2016

OKC Office of Emergency Management

Lt. Franklin N. Barnes

OKC Office of Emergency Management

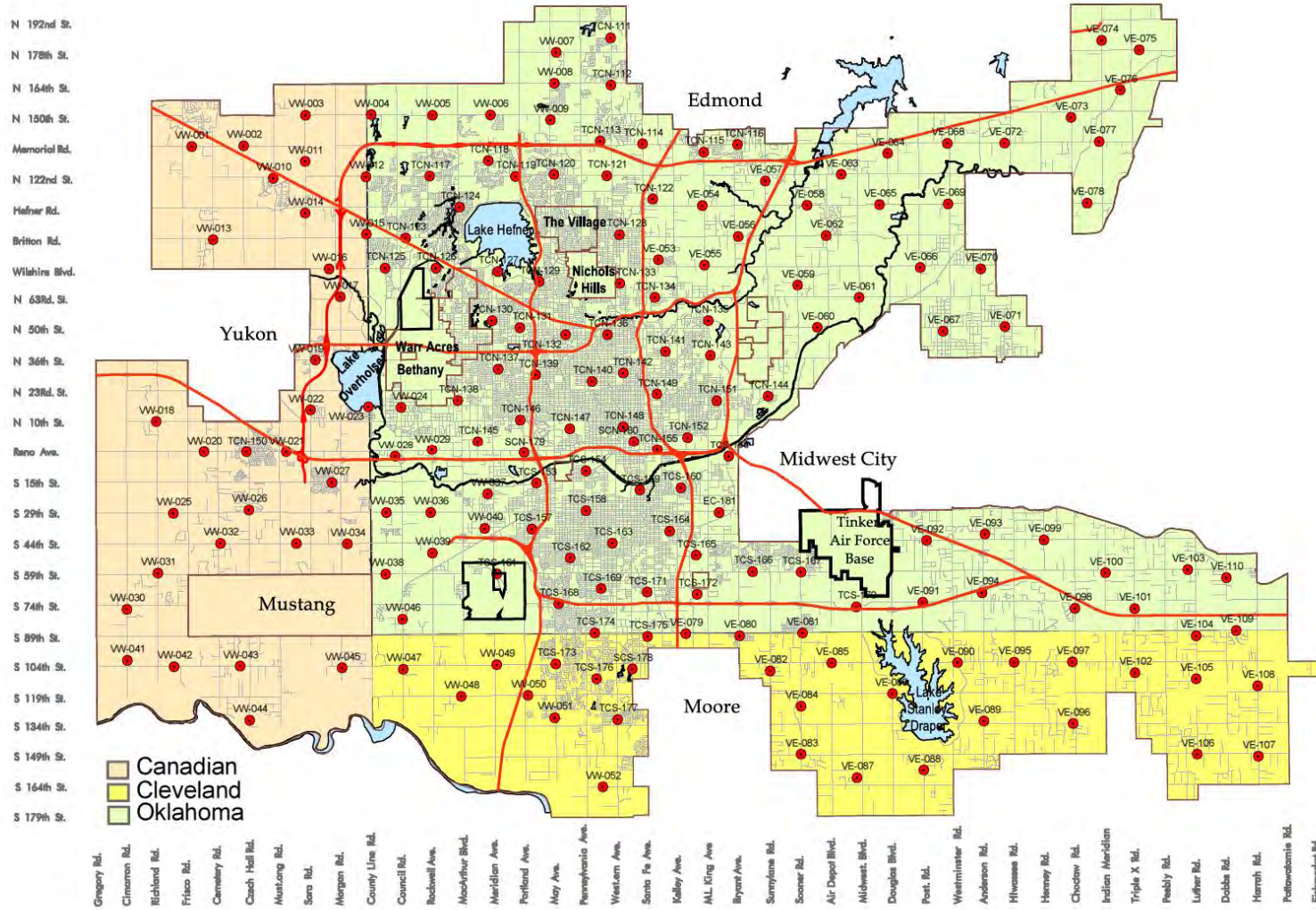
- Police Department
- Small staff
- Multiagency Coordination Center (MACC)



OWS Roles & Responsibilities

- 911 Communications/Public Services Dispatch
- Office of Emergency Management
- Information Technology

182 Outdoor Warning Sirens



Old Policy

- County based activation
- Activated each time a new tornado warning is issued by the NWS WFO Norman, OK
- No all-clear is given
- Tested on Saturday at noon

125 Years of Tradition Unimpeded by Progress



Courtesy of Paul Combs Firefighter Cartoons

Identify the Need for Change and Create a Sense of Urgency

Step #1

Create a Guiding Coalition

Step #2

Develop the Vision

Step #3

Communicate the Vision

Step #4

Overcome Barriers and Resistance

Step #5

Create Short-Term Wins

Step #6

Institutionalize Change

Step #7

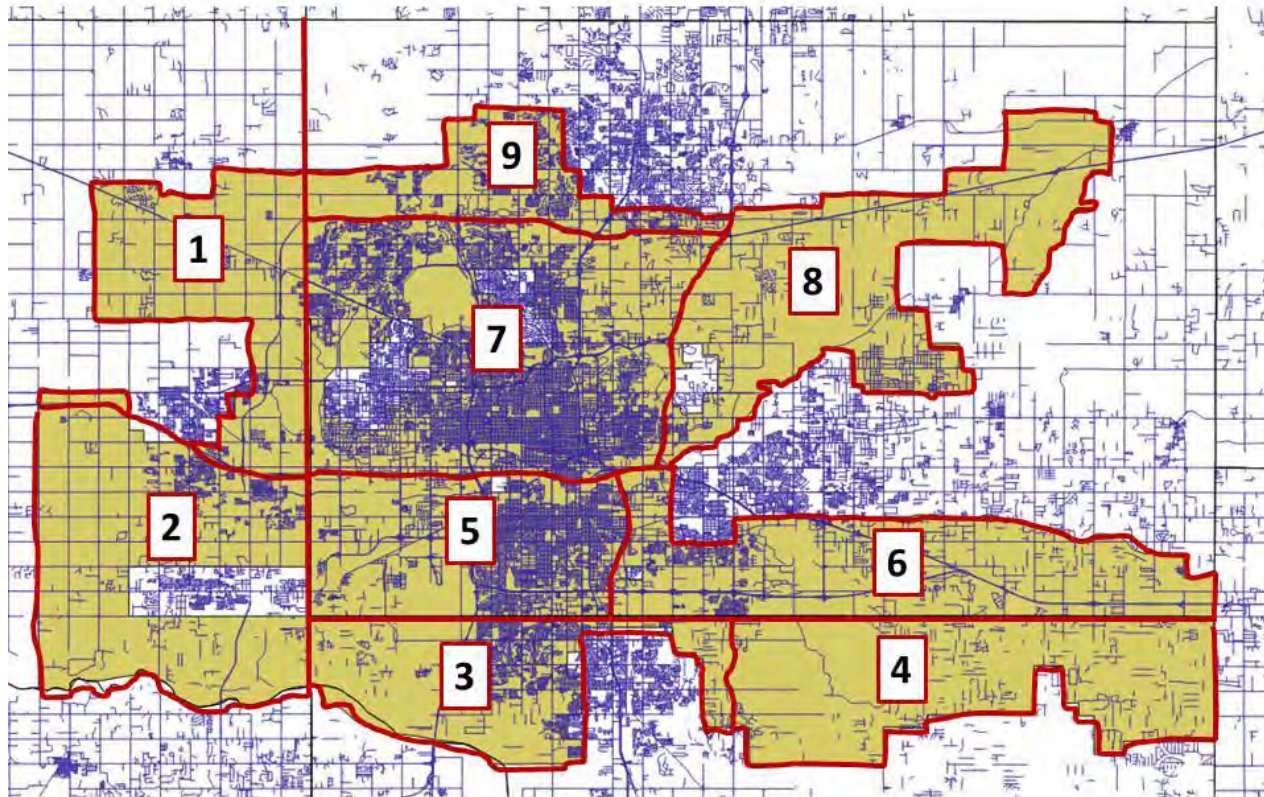
New – Activation Policy

- Threat based sector activation
- The OKC OWS sectors are activated when:
 - National Weather Service (NWS) Tornado Warning
 - Storm-Based Warning Polygon covers one or more OWS sectors in whole or in part.
 - Public safety personnel in the field
 - Credible evidence of a tornado
 - Recommendation from the Oklahoma City Office of Emergency Management

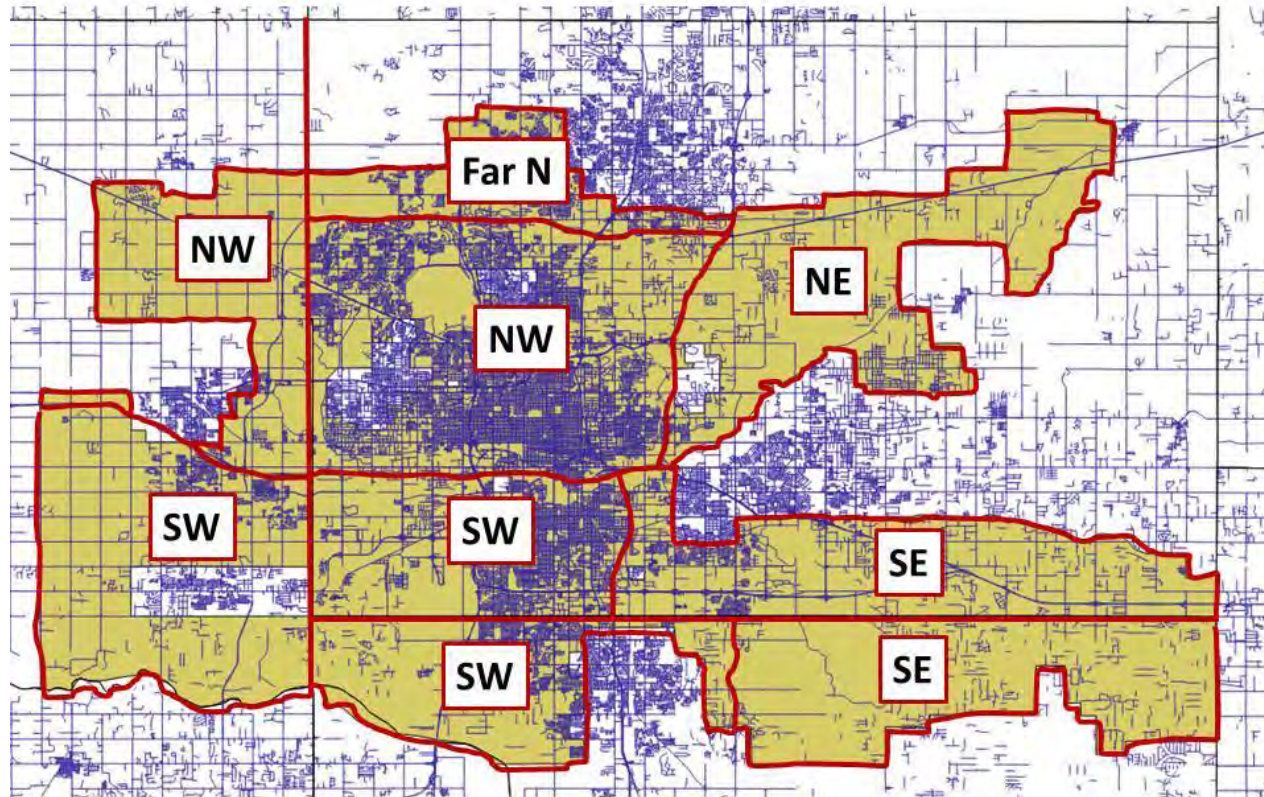
New – Area to be Warned

- Activate the OWS sectors in the portion of the city threatened by a tornado.
- The OWS is divided into nine sectors.
- Sectors labelled 1-9
- Also sectors labelled based on cardinal directions (North, South, East, and West)

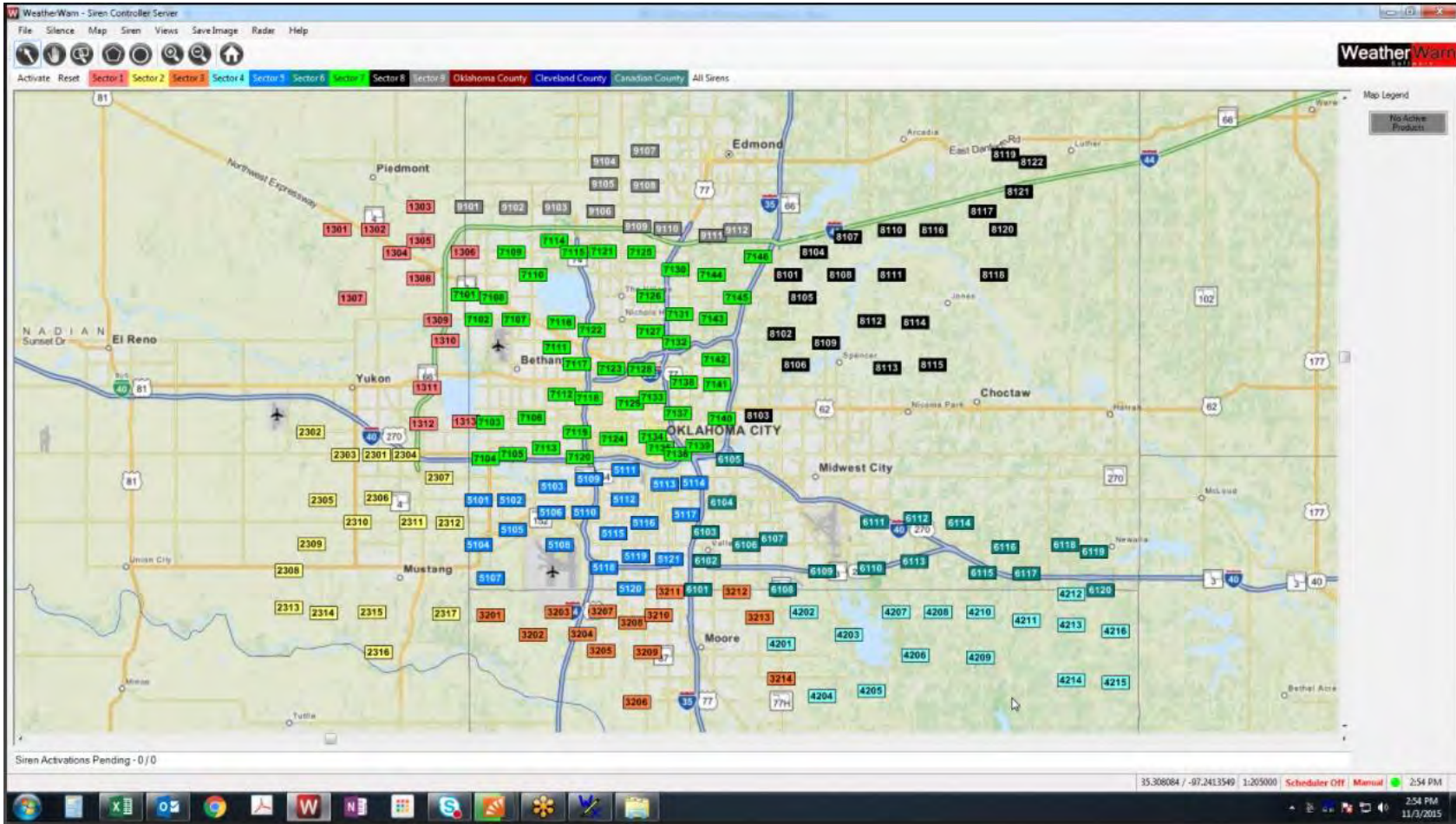
Sectors - Numbers



Sectors – Cardinal Directions



WeatherWarn



Decision Making

- OKC OEM provides support to the decision making process
- 911 Communications still makes the decision to activate the sirens
- 911 Communications still activates the sirens

What Didn't Change

- May activate OKC OWS sector(s) more than once
- No all clear given
- Tested on Saturday at noon

Desired Public Action (What the Sirens Mean)

- Take shelter
- Seek more information

Benefits

- Reduce over warned population by 68%
 - Warning area larger than necessary
- Eliminate false warnings
 - When no threat to City of OKC
- Increased coordination and collaboration between 911 Communications and OKC OEM
- Slight over warning still occurs – Motorists
- Reduces wear and tear on the sirens

Questions?