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Wisconsin Dept. of Military Affairs: Annual SIMCOM exercise to take place in Dane County Feb. 6-8

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WI DEPT. OF MILITARY AFFAIRS ADVISORY: Annual SIMCOM exercise to take place in Dane County Feb. 6-8
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MADISON, Wis. — The annual Statewide Interoperable Mobile Communications Exercise, or SIMCOM, kicks off in Dane County Feb. 6.
The three-day exercise runs Feb. 6-8 in multiple Dane County locations including Fitchburg, Verona and Oregon, and it represents an annual opportunity to educate, coordinate and test mobile emergency communications platforms from federal, state, local, tribal and National Guard entities.
Local residents should not be alarmed by an increased law enforcement or military presence during the exercise. They can expect to see multiple aircraft from military and law enforcement agencies to include fixed-wing aircraft, rotary-wing aircraft and non-military unmanned aerial vehicles operating in the area as well as mobile radio repeaters and other vehicles or equipment.
To ensure safe flight operations, the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs respectfully requests that the public refrain from operating their own unmanned aerial systems in the city of Fitchburg Feb. 7 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
“Ensuring communications interoperability between state, federal, and municipal agencies and our first responder community is vital to effective emergency response,” said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin’s adjutant general. “There’s no room for error in a real-world scenario, and exercising now helps prepare Wisconsin for when we all need to communicate effectively across all levels of government to assist the people of this state.”
This year’s edition of SIMCOM focuses on strenuous testing of voice and data communication during field operations.
SIMCOM — facilitated by Dane County Emergency Management in conjunction with Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Wisconsin National Guard — is one of the premiere communications exercises in the Midwest, as evidenced by a growing number of out-of-state participants from year-to-year.
This year also marks the first time in the exercise’s 11-year history where it will occur during the winter. The exercise typically takes place in the spring in a different county or region of the state, but organizers wanted to provide a cold-weather training environment this year. Last year’s SIMCOM exercise took place in Sauk County in late April.
SIMCOM 2018 precedes an upcoming spring 2018 exercise called Dark Sky, which will simulate a long-term power outage in the state.