

Communities stockpile anti-terrorism tools

EQUIPMENT, From 1A

GRANT MONEY

THE HOME FRONT AGAINST TERRORISM

Counties can purchase equipment in four categories: **personal protection, detection, decontamination and communication.** Here are some examples of what counties are purchasing with federal grants approved this year.

COUNTY	GRANT	PERSONAL PROTECTION	DETECTION	DECONTAMINATION	COMMUNICATION
Milwaukee	\$309,200	900 escape hoods	23 electronic radiation detectors	2 mass-decontamination systems 250 decontamination patient kits	Radio interconnect system
Dane	165,600	24 mass-casualty response kits 500 blankets	2 air sampling pumps	225 body bags 100 odor eater masks 100 bars of Ivory soap	60 portable radios
Brown	83,200	50 chemical-resistant suits 14 air-purifying respirators	Chemical agent detection kit		6 multi-channel radios
Waukesha	48,000	236 escape hoods	2 radiation alert monitors		10 portable radios
Racine	47,200				14 portable radios 20 mobile repeaters
Kenosha	44,000	75 modesty garments 42 respirator masks	9 radiological gauges	18 decontamination patient kits	
Washington	36,800	108 chemical-resistant suits	2 rolls of chemical agent paper	3 decontamination shower waste collectors	
Ozaukee	36,000	74 escape breathing apparatuses	Hand-held chemical agent monitor	Chemical warfare decontamination kit Decontamination vacuum	
Dodge	12,000	50 biohazard bags 45 chemical-resistant suits			1 hand-held radio

* Note: For a complete list of federal grants throughout Wisconsin and the nation, go to the link available with this article at www.jsonline.com.

Source: Domestic Preparedness Equipment Grant Program

BOB VIERSTAMLER, Journal Sentinel

"I've got to depend on other people to give me the best advice," said Waukesha County Health & Human Services Director Peter Schuler, who visited a hospital decontamination zone to see what equipment his employees would need.

Special task forces have been formed in some communities to pore over the options presented in the authorized equipment listing for the federal government's initiative, formally known as the Domestic Preparedness Equipment Grant Program.

In the protective — and, some would say, secretive — atmosphere that has prevailed on the American landscape since Sept. 11, some local officials are not anxious to talk about what they are buying.

"We don't want to be advertising that we're a target," said Ozaukee County Emergency Management Director William Stolte.

State and federal officials also refused to release Wisconsin's official terrorism readiness assessment, which the federal government uses to determine how much should be allocated here compared with other states. In a letter to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, an attorney for Wisconsin Emergency Management wrote that releasing the state's self-assessment "would be useful information to terrorists plotting to harm the citizens of this state and nation."

This much is known: California next year will lead all grant recipients with \$24.8 million, followed by Texas at \$16.1 million, New York at \$14.9 million and Florida at \$12.9 million. Wisconsin will rank 18th at \$5.9 million.

The grant program was in place before the attacks, but the dollars being allocated have increased exponentially since Sept. 11. Spending next year will total \$315 million, up from \$145 million this year.

Wisconsin officials have not yet announced how they will distribute next year's \$5.9 million grant, which is likely to come with new equipment guidelines and a new catalog. This year, some money was given directly to bomb squads and other specialized units, although most was spread among the counties.

Grant applications submitted to the state by individual counties show a myriad of local strategies for safeguarding against chemical, biological or other attacks. Most counties are focused on insulating emergency crews against exposure. Some also are bracing to treat civilian casualties.

Smaller counties such as Washington and Dodge are spending their allocations mostly on portable oxygen masks, chemical-resistant boots and other protective equipment. Kenosha County is using its \$44,000 grant to develop a decontamination system. Racine County chose to spend its entire

\$47,200 on better communication hardware.

Larger counties such as Milwaukee and Dane also are stockpiling supplies that would be useful for civilians in the event of an attack.

With its \$309,200 grant, Milwaukee County has purchased two mass-decontamination systems, also known as "human car washes," which can be erected almost anywhere on an emergency basis to cleanse people exposed to harmful substances.

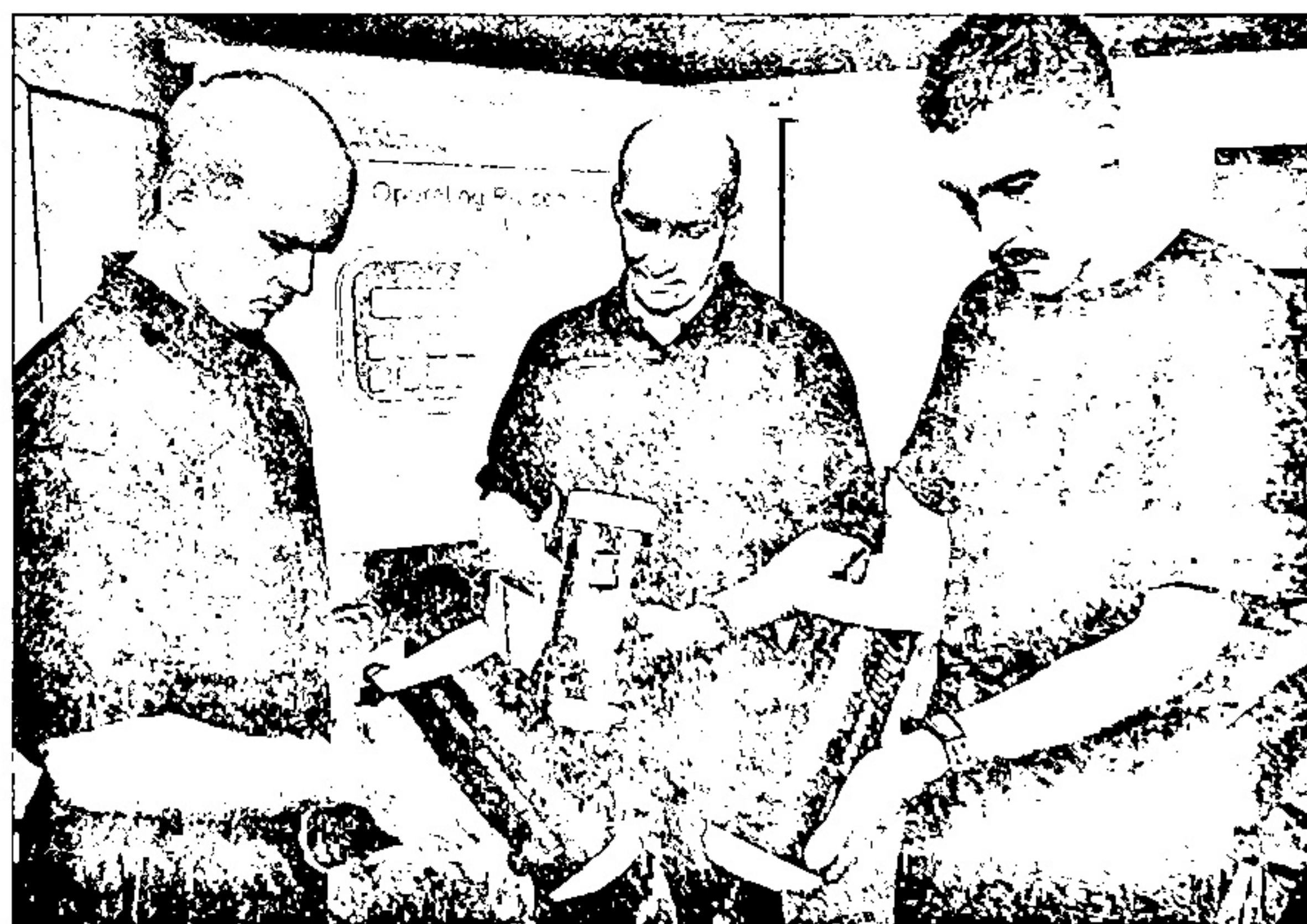
Carl Stenbol, assistant director of emergency management for Milwaukee County, said three such systems already stationed around the county — he would not say where — and officials wanted two more to ensure coverage for all 19 municipalities.

Stenbol said officials already have an existing supply of body bags and other materials.

"Our grant isn't buying everything," he said. "But it has helped to fulfill the basic defensive goal very nicely."

Dane County has spent part of its \$165,600 grant to acquire 500 blankets and 100 bars of Ivory soap — bare essentials for comforting casualties.

"It's not all high-tech," Dane County Emergency Management



MICHAEL SEARS

Milwaukee Fire Department Hazmat Team members (from left) Ench Roden, Mike Ball and Dan Rode compare notes during a break in a class on using the "advanced portable detector," which can detect some of the chemical agents terrorists might use.

Director Kathy Krusiec said.

Of all the counties whose grant applications the Journal Sentinel examined, only Dane County has ordered body bags: 225. Krusiec said the number seemed "appropriate" for a countywide population of 430,000.

Pointing to the deaths of about 3,000 people in the Sept. 11 attacks, she said: "All of us are now looking at our preparedness in a little different way than we ever have before."

The more counties stock up, the

more business booms for an industry whose customer base previously was dominated by fire departments and hazardous materials units.

Draeger Safety Inc., based in Pittsburgh, is another company riding the wave of terrorism readiness under the federal grant program.

Draeger President Wes Kenneweg said local communities are particularly keen on a few products: "escape hoods," hoods with attached breathing devices that

come in easy-to-carry canisters for police officers and firefighters (\$150 each); chemical-detection kits (\$2,800 each); and advanced respiratory systems that carry a four hour supply of oxygen (\$5,000 each).

Even some private citizens are starting to inquire about stocking their homes or offices for terrorism preparedness, Kenneweg said.

"It's an emerging market right now, but I think it's going to be with us for a long time," he said. "The world is still, unfortunately, a dangerous place. And we have to be prepared."

In Wisconsin, communities already are making plans for the next round of grants.

Dane County hopes to acquire and stock mobile decontamination systems costing

up to \$250,000 each. Milwaukee County has its eye on an infrared spectrometer, a \$47,000 apparatus that can be used in the field to identify hazardous materials more easily.

Some officials admit it can be a bit tricky knowing when enough is enough.

"Are we prepared for anything?" Milwaukee Deputy Fire Chief Don Doro said. "Since last September, all bets are off."