

CITY OF OSAWATOMIE

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Nick Hampson, Mayor

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Statement of Clarification Regarding Reported Cyberattacks Against the City of Osawatomie


Osawatomie, Kansas - Recently an article in the Miami County Republic reported a significant number of cyberattacks against the City of Osawatomie and the City Council's approval to purchase two devices to help in mitigating the attacks.

After further investigation it was discerned that the actual number of direct attacks, originally thought to be near 47,000 for a 30-day period between January and February of this year, was off by two orders of magnitude due to an unfamiliarity with the new system and how it reported its numbers.

"As I reviewed the different categories, I didn't realize that the largest category by numbers was not an attack, but rather a test to probe our network to see how it would respond," said Bill Justesen, Director of Information Technology for the City. "The actual number of [direct] cyberattacks during that period is closer to 245. The onus was on me to get the numbers correct the first time, and I failed in that regard. I apologize."

Malicious actors, from lone individuals to nation states, scan and probe other devices on the internet to see which ones they can take over or compromise. "It's like a reconnaissance mission where an attacker attempts to locate weaknesses on devices they don't own," Justesen said. "Sometimes you just get caught in a scan where someone casts a wide net, and other times you are targeted specifically."

Even though the scans may not be malicious in nature at the time, the Sentinel Outpost security devices automatically block and ignore additional connection attempts from any source. The devices also communicate with other Sentinels deployed across the nation and anytime multiple Sentinels report the same networks being blocked, the rest of the Sentinels are instructed to block those networks preemptively. This joint effort network of devices nationwide works as "an early warning system," Justesen said.



The Osawatomie City Council approved Justesen's request to purchase two Sentinel Outpost security devices, one to protect City Hall networks and one to protect the Police Department networks, at the April 14th, 2022, city council meeting.

For more information on the City of Osawatomie's cybersecurity efforts, please contact Justesen directly via the information below.

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