



The Wisconsin EC Newsletter



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The WEC Newsletter is published monthly in .pdf format to the Wisconsin ARES/RACES Web site <http://wi-aresraces.org>. It is intended to provide a forum for ECs to share ideas concerning the organization and training of their respective groups, and as a source of news concerning Wisconsin ARES and RACES. Comments, suggestions and articles (finished or in rough form) are solicited from the readers.

Deadlines: The newsletter is published between the 15th and the 31st of the month preceding the date shown on the issue. Thus, the February issue is published in late January. Articles and notices should reach the editor no later than January 1 to be considered for the February issue. Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter provided credit is given as follows: "Reprinted from The Wisconsin Emergency Coordinator Newsletter, KB9ENO, Editor".

ARES Leadership Changes

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC Wisconsin

After taking over as Southwest Wisconsin District Emergency Coordinator Pete Sweeney, WD9JIB, has stepped down as Richland County EC. Earlier this year, he stepped up to the role and built a program in the county. Pete will be concentrating on his DEC responsibilities and we are trying to find a replacement for him in Sauk County.

Taking over for Pete is Bob Naegele, WB9SCY. Bob has become involved in Richland County ARES and has assumed leadership responsibilities under Pete. Bob has a newly organized, enthusiastic group, which has become quite active in a short period of time. Welcome to ARES/RACES Leadership Bob!

Winnebago County ARES/RACES Exercise Evaluation

By Greg Ramlow, KB9SZP, ADEC East Central Wisconsin

Editors Note: Greg wrote this evaluation after Winnebago County ARES/RACES participated in a disaster exercise sponsored and run by Winnebago County Emergency Management. His evaluation is well done, concise and is a good example of what should be done after an exercise.

EVALUATION **Full Scale WMD Exercise** **Winnebago County ARES/RACES Amateur Radio**

The expectations and purposes of this exercise for the Winnebago County ARES/RACES Amateur Radio Operators were as follows.

- Test and evaluate our communication abilities for the Operation Room at the Comm Center and Hospitals.
- Test new communication equipment for the Operation Room at the Comm Center and Hospitals.
- Test Amateur Radio Communication with other regional Counties.

Test and evaluate our communication abilities for the Operation Room at the Comm Center and Hospitals.

We had two to three radio operators stationed at Mercy Medical Center, Aurora Hospital and Theda Clark Memorial Hospital in our county. We also had two radio operators at the Winnebago County Emergency Management (EM) Communications Center (Comm Center). Throughout the length of this exercise we successfully communicated to and from our operators at the hospitals and the Comm Center. We successfully communicated to and from our radio operator

from within each hospital to the radio operator located in their parking lot staging area or their hospital ER. We successfully communicated to and from our radio operators located at each hospital through our local repeater and also direct to each other point to point on simplex.

Test new communication equipment for the Operation Room at the Comm Center and Hospitals.

As stated above our radio personnel were able to make contact and pass traffic to each other. All equipment operated well and all tests were successful. Problems that we encountered were as follows.

- At Theda Clark when our Gold Cross operator was moved to the ambulance garage she could not make contact to EM at the Comm Center with her handheld radio (HT). She was able to make contact with our operator in Theda Clark's Communications Room on a simplex frequency and all message traffic was passed successfully.
- There was some slight interference with one telephone line at Theda Clark. A possible solution would be to move the Amateur Radio equipment further from the effected telephone. Another possibility would be to put a grounded steel plate between the radio and the telephone. More testing will be necessary in order to assure this is resolved.
- In many cases it was difficult to understand what was being said on the radios because of background noise at the hospitals and at the Comm Center. Having headsets with boom mic's and foot switches would resolve this issue.

Test Amateur Radio Communication with other regional Counties.

We easily made contact directly with the ARES/RACES Net Control Operators (NCO) from Outagamie and Calumet Counties. No contact was made with Waupaca County. We also made contact and passed all informational traffic between counties on a District Wide Net being run on another repeater. Beyond this we made contact to Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) in Madison on one of the designated HF Frequencies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we feel that we accomplished all our goals for this exercise by meeting and surpassing the requirements placed before us. Regretfully we were not tested more with the need to pass a greater volume of traffic. We feel we are ready to meet the communication needs of Emergency Management and area Hospitals and hope to be of greater service in the future.

More EmComm in Dodge County!

By Dale Marks, WB9ADB, EC Dodge County

We will be running EmComm Level 2 classes on Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM starting Oct 28. It will be held in the Computer Training room on the 2nd floor of the Dodge County Administration building. Like we did with Level 1, students will all be taking the course as a group on the Internet. Interaction with the mentor, lesson tests, final exam, etc. can be done at the class using our facilities or from home Internet connection.

Public Service Communications Opportunity

By Don Michalski, W9IXG, WI SM

Greetings! If you are receiving this message it is because I hope you can support this public service event in 2005.

I had a good first meeting with the organizers of the Great Midwest Relay event www.greatmidwestrelay.com.

I thought I would summarize some of the highlights from that meeting and their needs for communication support of this large event.

The event will contribute to the Special Olympics organization. <http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/default.htm>.

This unique race starts from Madison on June 10, heads east to Milwaukee, and finishes in Chicago on June 11. About 30 continuous hours of teams running in a relay fashion over a 190 mile course approximately 70% of which are bike trails. The route passes through 40 towns along some very beautiful terrain.

There will be a limit of 200 teams. A team can be comprised of just a few runners to as many as 12 per team. Each team will have, at least, one support van transporting runners up the trail (12 member teams will have 2 vans). To avoid crowding, teams will start the race in a staggered start - slowest teams first. See this link for the event details: <http://www.greatmidwestrelay.com/race%20handbook%20080204.pdf>.

There will be 36 exchange stations along the route. Each "leg" is about 5 miles in length. At each station there will be one Ham, an EMT, and 2-4 support personnel. The Ham is responsible for communicating the status of that station and runner information (particularly, last runners) between adjacent exchange stations. Looks like simplex communications will work with a modest power radio station. Repeaters might be used, also.

I will plan on taking the lead as overall communications coordinator. But, I will obviously need a LOT of help from others, (e.g., ECs in counties along the route both in Wisconsin and Illinois) to help me round up the Hams and assist in coordinating this event at the county level. I consider this an excellent training exercise for ARES folks and hope you can spread the word around to your ARES members to participate. (All Wisconsin ECs along the route are copied to this message).

Please contact me for maps of the route and reply to me what level of support you can provide from your county ARES organization.

This is going to be a fun and exciting event for the participants and volunteers! As always, every volunteer will receive a free T-shirt and invitation to celebrate at the Feast in Chicago!

My next meeting with the organization is November 9 and I wish to report the status of each county.

Remember that communications are vital and we are the folks to give them this support!

Thanks!

2004 ARES/RACES Simulated Emergency Test (SET) Recap

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC Wisconsin

Saturday, October 16, 2004, marked the 2004 Wisconsin ARES/RACES SET. This year's scenario was a total communications and electrical power failure caused by a computer virus, which is not farfetched. ARES/RACES teams from all over the state developed their own scenarios and participated in the SET.

2004 also marked the first truly statewide SET, an attribute we'll continue. We opened the WI ARES/RACES HF Net at 10:00 a.m. Shortly after, we opened the Badger Emergency Net, and the two nets handled both tactical traffic (WI ARES/RACES Net) and NTS traffic (Badger Emergency Net). Both nets reported records for check-ins and traffic handled. The BEN had 44 check-ins and passed 24 pieces of traffic, and the WI ARES/RACES net had 43 check-ins and handled 14 pieces of formal traffic and numerous pieces of tactical traffic. Because this was an exercise, traffic volumes were not as great as if a real disaster would have occurred. For the most part both nets were able to distribute the traffic with few problems, but more traffic would have been a challenge. We have already discussed ways to make the net operations smoother.

VHF and UHF repeaters at the local and district level were also very active. I was tied up on HF for the entire SET, but listened to several county ARES/RACES repeaters and they were all lit up.

Jeff Ramlow, N9WBR, ASEC for Training, will provide an overview of the SET at the Leadership Conference and will also have an article in this newsletter, but I have a few comments.

Overall, the SET was a great success. Although participation was very good, some counties chose not to participate. This is unacceptable. When we have a statewide SET, it means statewide. If an EC is not available, then the AECs should step up, just like the real thing. If there are no AECs then that is a learning and an organizational issue, which should be corrected.

Another area that proved to be a liability was the lack of district emergency communications plans. By the 2005 SET, all districts should have an emergency communications plan. The counties that have one or have the structure of one are much better prepared for a large-scale disaster or emergency than those which do not. This does not need to be an elaborate plan, but it does need to identify communications channels and protocol to be used during activations.

Even though the ARES/RACES HF Net and the BEN functioned well, there are still improvement opportunities. Assigned liaison stations would have been invaluable. Liaison stations from each district, which could pass traffic from the district nets to the HF nets in a hierarchical method, would create efficiencies. When you think about it, it seems elementary we have never deployed this process, but that is why we continue to mature.

We found out a net control station is extremely important. Sometimes during exercises we do not employ the methodology we should. There were a number of exercises this year when the ARES/RACES HF Net was activated and there was no net control station. We are now required to be familiar with and use the incident command system, so each net should have a net control station.

The WEM HF station, WC9AAG, may have noise challenges. It seemed like, for this exercise and from others, the WEM station operators have a difficult time hearing other stations, even with good band conditions. We are going to discuss it and if there is a problem try to come up with resolutions.

Finally, Denny Rybicke, K9LGU, our Section Traffic Manager, told me he was struggling trying to figure out what counties were in which districts. He did not have a map handy, but did have a leadership roster. That did not help him much. He suggested we include the district on the Leadership. I thought it was such a good idea, I made the change by Sunday night following the SET and published it to the Web site. The district designation is in the margin in front of the EC's name and contact information.

We had bits of information and suggestions from many folks. I am excited to see Jeff Ramlow's report. I asked everyone to list at least three things they could do to improve their operating ability as a result of this SET. Here is my list:

Add an easy way to get the generator extension cord into the ham shack from the outside (Spring project)

- Adjust grounding system (Done)
- Add a second Optima battery (Done)
- Add a second power supply and switchover unit for a dual band, second HF radio and a VHF radio (December 2004)
- Add a new power inverter (December 2004)

EC Resources, Ltd. Learnings

- Add new batteries for the repeater's Greenville remote receive site and Mobile Communications Center

Below is Bill Becks, WA8WG, Marinette County EC and NEW interim DEC, at the mic during the SET. I am glad most of you had a great time!



Wisconsin ARES/RACES HF Net

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC Wisconsin

We have found a home! The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Net has permanently moved to 3977.5 KHz. Check-ins have been well over 30, but we can still do better. The net is enjoyable, we have a good staff of net control stations, training is valuable and information exchange is great! If you have not yet joined us and your license class allows it, please do so. If your license class does not allow it, hopefully the FCC will rectify that by year-end! The net meets every Sunday at 6:00 p.m. Central time. Everyone enjoy Thanksgiving!
