



# The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Newsletter

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Wisconsin ARRL/ARES Section Emergency Coordinator and A/R Newsletter Editor

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*The WI ARES/RACES 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 WI ARES/RACES leadership and members 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 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 ARES/RACES Newsletter, Bill Niemuth, Editor".*

## **2006 Newsletter Changes – Rescinded and Modified**

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

Upon second thought, and after a bout with pneumonia, I decided not to change the format of this newsletter, so unless someone invents a way to get 20 more hours out of each week, we will use this format throughout 2006! However, the title has changed to the *WI ARES/RACES Newsletter* to better reflect its audience.

## **ARES Leadership and Organizational Changes**

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

**Charles Buggs, WX9BUG**, has stepped down as LEC for the Red Cross. Charles' position became difficult when the Red Cross reorganized and Madison's Badger Chapter became a normal state chapter instead of the state chapter. Thanks to Charles for his work in this position. I am happy to report he will continue to be active with Dane County ARES/RACES.

With Charles' departure, all LEC positions are now vacant. Since we have not had success filling them, I am eliminating them at this time and will assume the responsibility through the ASECs.

As part of the WI ARES/RACES reorganization, I have eliminated the Electronic Communications Coordinator position held by **Rick Williams, KV9U**. Thanks to Rick for his contributions to the organization.

More organizational changes continue with the promotion of **Jim Darrow, KB9MMC**, to Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator for Digital Communications. In this position, Jim will be responsible for all digital communications decisions and deployments for WI ARES/RACES. This position will become extremely important as we concentrate on designing and rebuilding digital networks to service our clients.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of **David Catalano, N8KQS**, to Brown County EC. Dave is a native of the Green Bay area, but has lived in Michigan for many years. As a resident of Allegan County, Michigan, Dave was its county EC. Because the Michigan ARES/RACES organization and communication networks are some of the most respected in the nation, we are lucky to have Dave as an EC. He has a lot to learn about WI and reacquaint himself with Brown County, but I am confident he will build a strong team and be a great resource for East Central WI ARES/RACES.

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## **Pine Valley Repeater ARES/RACES Amateur Radio Club Receives**

### **Grant!**

By Dick Neumann, W9JR, Secretary and Treasurer for Pine Valley Repeater and AEC for Community Relations, Richland County ARES/RACES

The Pine Valley Repeater ARES/RACES Amateur Radio Club has recently been awarded funds from the Richland County Board to purchase HF equipment to supplement the inventory of VHF/UHF equipment we have.

This all came about due to the fact that the PVR amateur radio operators were involved in a Skywarn activity in June, and also because of our activation to perform emergency communications on August 19, the day after a tornado disrupted normal communication systems in Viola.

The annual Star Spangled Celebration concert is held annually in June in Richland Center's Krouskup Park. This 3-day concert attracts thousands of avid country/western fans to our community. Beginning on Thursday, the concert continues through Saturday evening. However, during two of the evening concerts, those of Thursday and Friday, severe storms were approaching Richland Center, and PVR storm watchers were dispersed to several areas west of the city to report on the approaching bad weather. The reports were not good. It was reported to Net Control in the Richland County Command Post that high winds and cloud-to-ground lightning accompanied the storms. This information was relayed to the police, Sheriff, and concert officials who were also in the Command Post observing the approaching weather that appeared on television weather station radar. It was known that the storms were severe, but officials did not know what was happening under the radar images.

Due to the reports from our storm watchers, the officials decided to evacuate the concert grounds, safety of the audience being a prime objective. The grounds were cleared by the time the storm arrived during the Friday evening concert with high winds and cloud-to-ground lightning, but the event officials elected to not evacuate on Saturday evening based upon the PVR Skywarn observations along with those of the National Weather Service.

Then, on August 18, a tornado ripped through the village of Viola, wiping out electric and telephone lines. Even the use of cell phones was nonexistent.

At 5:30 a.m. on the 19<sup>th</sup>, the PVR hams were activated to come to Viola and set up an emergency communications system. Seven hams traveled to Viola, and by 7:00 a.m., communications were established from the communications center in Viola to the Richland County Emergency Management office in the Richland County Courthouse.

Many messages were relayed from Viola to the EOC for action, and several messages were relayed to the State ARES/RACES and State Emergency Management officials. The PVR group was commended for their work.

The communicating that was done at both the SSC concert and from Viola did not go unnoticed. Members of the Richland County Board were on hand at Viola who originated some of the messages that were transmitted by the Net Control to the EOC, and they were very happy that we were on duty.

As a result, the Richland County Board, recognizing the value of Amateur Radio, agreed to provide funds to purchase HF radio equipment to augment our inventory of radio gear. With the funding provided, we now have an HF transceiver, an antenna, and miscellaneous gear added to our inventory. Thank to the Richland County



Board for this \$1,401.93 grant.

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## **Winlink 2000 Update**

By Jim Darrow, KB9MMC, ASEC for Digital Communications

Happy Holidays Everyone,

For those who are interested, I'll be doing a PowerPoint presentation along with a Live WinLink Demo in Milwaukee at the Milwaukee/Waukesha ARES Meeting on February 7th, and at WEM on April 13th. If anyone would like a presentation done for their group please contact me.

We're currently up to ten Telpac Nodes across the state. They are:

N0XC-10, Osceola  
W9XM-10, Stevens Point  
N9EOW-10, Friendship  
KC9EZT-10, Neshkoro Note: Under Construction  
N9UDO-10, Baraboo  
W9YYZ-10, Lodi  
WC9AAG-10, WEM  
KB9MMA-10, Racine  
KC9EOW-10, Racine  
KB9MMC-10, Milwaukee

If anyone is interested in hosting a Telpac Node, please drop me a line. Also in an effort to cut down the amount of repeated e-mail that I was doing to the Telpac Sysops I've formed a Yahoo Group. The intent of the group is to coordinate the Telpac Nodes and to get everyone running them on the same page. Not for comparison of what system is better or worse than another. I check the PMBO and WinLink Website daily, and as soon as I see that Telpac Node is up and running that sysop is invited to the group.

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## **WECOMM, Ltd.**

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

By the time you are reading this newsletter, WECOMM, Ltd. should be reality. WECOMM is an acronym for Wisconsin Emergency Communications. It is a WI nonprofit, nonstock corporation with the following purposes:

1. To support and facilitate emergency, disaster, and public service related communication systems and services provided to government agencies, the general public and private disaster relief organizations by Amateur Radio Operators through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service and the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service. The primary purpose shall be the construction and maintenance of a statewide voice and digital wireless two-way communication network.

2. Such other activities as the directors may determine are necessary or desirable in furtherance of the forgoing paragraph.

The organization will serve as a fiduciary entity to WI ARES/RACES and be the owner of the statewide repeater and digital communications systems. The easy part is done and the next step is to apply to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for 501 (c)(3), or tax exempt status. This is not hard, it is just a great deal of work.

Organizational announcements will be made in upcoming communications, however, the following are the initial Board of Directors:

**William M. Niemuth, KB9ENO**  
**Donald E. Michalski, W9IXG**  
**Keith Lodahl, KB9NUM**  
**Sidney E. Sharpe, W9REL**  
**William G. Becks, WA8WG**

The By-Laws calls for additional board members as the needs of the organization evolve and change. In addition, officers and committee members will be named in early 2006.

***What does WECOMM, Ltd. mean for you?***

Having a fiduciary organization generally will change nothing WI ARES/RACES leadership and members do, however, it will provide the financial resources to build networks and systems never before possible. It will not take the place of similar local or regional organizations. If you have worked with the IRS in these areas, you know they are intent on ensuring organizations are consistent with their stated purposes, which can change and evolve over time. WECOMM has been designed with extremely specific purposes so the goal to building these systems can be realized. Who knows what the future brings, but there are no plans to sway from the stated purposes.

***What can you do to support WECOMM?***

Because the organization will be nonprofit, and hopefully declared tax-exempt, we will solicit funds and grants from government agencies and private organizations. WECOMM will also be looking for specific surplus repeater equipment, mostly from state and local governmental units. We do not anticipate soliciting funds or equipment from individuals, however, if an individual wants to make a donation to the organization, that is tremendously appreciated. You can help by telling us about grants, equipment or other sources of funding you are aware of, where WECOMM could apply. We will be publicizing the new organization and leveraging all resources to help us meet our goals. The entire object is to provide better communications networks for all of us, in normal times as well as times of disaster.

In subsequent newsletters, you will be learning more about the organization and its projects. Please stay tuned!

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## **First National Weather Service Meeting Held**

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

On Saturday, December 17, 2005, a meeting was held among the National Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologists for the WI offices, Tom Kucharski, ASEC for NWS, W9TJK, and the National Weather Service LECs. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the meeting because of illness. The goal of the meeting was to learn and share information, and to understand each office's best practices and how they can be applied across all of the offices to improve our service to the National Weather Service.

Tom will submit a full report in a subsequent newsletter and you will be hearing more about this initiative.

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***Happy New Year!***

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