



# The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Newsletter

March 2006

Volume 08 Number 03

Wisconsin ARRL/ARES Section Emergency Coordinator and ARES/RACES Newsletter Editor

RACES Chief Radio Officer

Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO

W8088 Hillcrest Court

Hortonville, WI 54944

920-779-0611

920-475-4819 (Mobile)

[bniemuth@new.rr.com](mailto:bniemuth@new.rr.com)

---

*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".*

---

## **ARES Leadership and Organizational Changes**

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

I am pleased to announce **Benjamin Nikolai, KB9WDJ**, has assumed the role of Wood County EC. Ben has an excellent emergency response background and comes to us as a trained incident commander in the fire and rescue fields. Ben will be forming his organization over the next couple of months and delegating authority when he is tied up on public safety assignments. We look forward to working with and learning from Ben!

EC changes continue with La Crosse County. **Roger Reader, KA9BKK**, has stepped aside and **Mike Baker, KB9TWI**, has assumed the EC role. You may recognize Mike's name from a past ARES/RACES Newsletter. He assisted Jackson County last fall with the installation of a new repeater. Mike is a radio technician and has been active in ham radio in several areas of the state. Welcome Mike!

---

## **WI ARES/RACES Net**

By Wally Kruk, N9VAO, WI ARES/RACES Net Manager, and EC Sawyer County

Hello Everyone,

My first year as ARES/RACES HF net manager has passed and all went well. First, I want to thank all who have taken a turn or more as net control. Sometimes the band conditions have not been good and relays were needed, but all of you have done a great job.

Many times while on the net I have asked for more people to take a turn at net control. Some have asked me, "why should I do net control, I check into the net, isn't that enough?" While checking into the net is important, it's also important and good training to be net control. We never know when a statewide or a local emergency could occur and you will have to be net control or help assist the net control operator. I have read articles written by amateurs stating they wish they had some experience in net control activities when they had to take control of an emergency communications net when Hurricane Katrina hit. The experience you gain from being HF net control will also work for you on other nets conducted on other frequencies like a two-meter local net. Another item brought up to me is, "I don't have much of a station so I won't be much good as net control." That's not true. My station here in Hayward is only 100 watts and a dipole about 30 feet. Several net control stations are also 100 watts with just a simple basic dipole or long wire antenna. So why don't you give it a try?

No one will jump on you if you make a mistake, I've made a few, and the people who check into the net are always willing to help.

Now to help things run faster and smoother for the net control, here are a few items to remember when you check in.

- When you check in, say the call of the NCO first, pause a moment, and then come back with your call. This helps to hear if you are doubling with someone else.
- When you check in, if you have traffic for the net just say I have traffic. Net control will come back to you and ask who the traffic is for.
- If net control comes back to you with only part of your call and asks for you to repeat, give him your call phonetically. He may have trouble with noise or QRM and needs to get your call correct.
- When you check in, if you are short-time, mobile, QRP or in and out, say so. Net control will come back to you first before the net loses you.
- Remember, the Wisconsin ARES/RACES HF net is a controlled net and all communications goes through net control.

If we follow these simple guidelines, all will be better for the NCO and the people checking in.

A few times, I have heard people say they don't need to check into the ARES/RACES net because someone else from their group always checks in. We would like to hear from everyone. Many times some good information, comments or ideas have come from several different people in the same group. Another thing to remember and tell others is that you don't have to be a member of an ARES/RACES group to check into the net: All are welcome. We have even had check-ins from other states.

So keep checking in and tell others about the net. The net is on Sunday evenings at 6pm local time on 3977.5

If you would like information about being net control you can contact me by e-mail: [kruk1209@charter.net](mailto:kruk1209@charter.net) or give me a call at 715-634-4940. I'll be glad to help any way I can.

Thank you everyone and hope to hear you on the net.

---

# **New Door County Justice Center**

By Ken Meyer, K9KJM, EC Door County

Editor's Note: The following information and photos were provided by Ken. It is not an article, but more of a show and tell. More of this is welcome!



Front of the new \$14 million Door County Justice Center. This building houses court rooms, the Door County Sheriff's Department, new Door County jail, county 911 dispatch center and a new lower floor E.O.C. room that has coax runs from the outdoor antennas for ham radio equipment. The room is being set up with a Yaesu FT-8800 VHF/UHF dual band radio that was secured with grant money. The EOC will also have an Icom 751A HF radio that is being donated.



The new PiRod self-supporting communications tower near the Door County Justice Center, and concrete equipment building. Over 55 cubic yards of concrete at the tower base and a 200-foot deep drilled well filled with bentonite clay for lightning grounding. (Bedrock is close in Door County!). Ken, K9KJM, EC Door County, oversaw the construction of this tower last summer. The tower has a commercial VHF/UHF dual band antenna at the very top facing the city of Sturgeon Bay. Future plans for this antenna are for another remote receiver for the Door County 147.21 repeater system.

---

## **Need FCC Part 97?**

By Don Michalski, W9IXG, SM Wisconsin

Editor's Note: This was sent to the ARRL Section Managers and may be of interest to you.

My name is **Kathy, AB2LF**. My father **Ed, W2ERC**, and I run a small family business. We are writing to the Section Managers because we wanted to do something for the many Amateur operators who have helped out in all the horrible disasters and have volunteered countless hours of their time.

We are also very close to the Amateurs in our area who do public service. So what we have decided to do for these dedicated volunteers, and all Hams, is offer, free for the asking, a 2006 copy of the FCC Part 97. If you would pass along our contact information to the fine Amateur operators in your areas, we will be more than happy to mail them a copy of the FCC rules and regulations, Part 97. Our email address is [CookTowersInc@aol.com](mailto:CookTowersInc@aol.com) . If they do not have email access, they may call our office number, 856-881-6777.

Very best of 73,  
**Kathy, AB2LF**  
**ED, W2ERC**

## **Getting Ready For Severe Weather**

By Skip Voros, WD9HAS, Executive Director, Milwaukee Area Skywarn Association

The 2006 severe weather season is rapidly approaching and the National Weather Service (NWS), one of ham radio's most served agencies, will again request help from our community for the SKYWARN program. Skywarn is a nationwide network of trained volunteer storm spotters who report their observations to the NWS. This program (which had its origins by Wisconsin hams) has over 240,000 volunteers with many being hams.

If you are a new licensee, ARES/RACES appointee, emergency manager, responder, or want to become more ham-active, make sure to attend an upcoming spotter training program. This is required for ARES/RACES members, but all hams should attend a "spring refresher."

Consider yourself at risk if you cannot identify what part of a storm will produce golf ball size hail and take out your windshield, or which cloud features will produce a tornado and maybe take out your house.

These free programs are conducted by NWS personnel and local Skywarn groups, but you do not have to be a spotter to attend. Training schedules are listed on NWS websites and a statewide list is on the Milwaukee Skywarn website.

Because nothing can take the place of a trained spotter offering real-time 'ground-truth' observations, ham radio reports are a critical part of the NWS severe weather programs. Let me repeat our most important aspect: providing real-time, ground-truth observations. The NWS has demonstrated its confidence in amateur radio by signing a "Memorandum of Understanding" that pledges mutual support and cooperation between the NWS and the ARRL. Today, ham radio equipment is present at every National Weather Service office.

Our ham community is ideal for reporting severe weather because we already have in place an extensive network of voice and digital repeater systems. Also, a history of volunteerism, established operating procedures, a reputation for communicating when all other systems are down, and no interoperability issues. During last year's Gulf Coast Hurricanes a lack of interoperability prevented many emergency response agencies from communicating with each other.

April 17th to April 21st is Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness week in Wisconsin. On April 20th at 1 PM a statewide drill (simulated Tornado Watch & Warning) will be issued. This drill is done to ensure all emergency responders are capable of receiving weather warnings, then activating their personnel and response systems. Skywarn/Weather net repeaters should also use the drill to test and evaluate their operational readiness and personnel. It also self-promotes clubs and educates the newest hams to our functions during the tornado season. The drill will be cancelled should there be a real severe weather threat.

What do hams report? The weather reporting criteria of tornadoes, funnel clouds, flooding, damaging winds, etc., are very similar statewide. However, all reports will include some form of TLC; Time, Location, and Condition. Always listen to the frequency for instructions and determine what the Net Control Station is requesting.

And speaking of reports, consider these guidelines: Never report 'hearsay' traffic from other frequencies, radio-TV, cable, scanners, or the internet. They are considered as second-hand sources (and were a problem for the eager TV news media covering Hurricane Katrina). If you did not see the weather event or are uncertain as to what you are seeing, don't make a report. No report is better than a false report!

When passing wind speed or hail size reports, always indicate if your report is an actual measurement or only an estimate. The NWS considers measured reports more credible.

When describing your location, keep in mind not everyone monitoring is familiar with your exact area. Consider the following descriptors: your county, its quadrant, distance and direction to the nearest city, major landmarks, or major highway crossings. Always be aware of your location; this is for your safety and accuracy in reporting.

On-air remarks like: "The sky is very dark here, it's really coming down, we just lost power or the lightning is getting bad," are not viable reports and should be discouraged. However, these remarks indicate a certain amount of Stress, Excitement, and Tension (SET) is developing. This 'SET' effect can alter judgment and reporting accuracy. During these times the Net control station should impart some words to calm the net. SET can also create some on-air ill will and harsh words. Remember we never criticize a station on the air; we politely correct them for obvious mistakes. This encourages newcomers to follow the correct procedures (not push people away), and creates essential teamwork. Emergency managers and the NWS are not interested in petty on-air politics or squabbles during a critical weather situation.

Although we are amateurs in name we must strive to be professional in our on-air presentations. Bear in mind who is listening as severe weather (Skywarn) nets can often attract huge audiences. This includes the media, fire & police, scanner buffs, radio stores, and emergency managers. Before pushing the mic button mentally compose and rehearse your report before passing it. This process insures correct on-air formatting and brevity. One bad sounding report can easily ruin the effort of 10 good sounding reports. Credibility is everything!!!

It's ironic that a government Doppler radar, with a 28 foot parabolic antenna and 750,000 watts of power cannot see what's happening near ground level. Yet a puny 50 watt base or mobile puts us in the perfect position to supply the meteorologists with critical 'ground-truth' information.

In closing, each severe weather episode we respond to allows us to test our operational readiness, emergency communication skills, and to justify our very existence on the sometimes shrinking ham bands. Our participation assists in providing community protection, all the way down to our friends, neighbors, and loved ones.

---

---

## **WI ARES/RACES Issues Telpac Node Standards**

By Jim Darrow, KB9MMC, ASEC for Digital Communications

February 28, 2006

In order to establish a unified WinLink 2000 network for Wisconsin ARES/RACES, the following standards have been developed for the operation of a WinLink 2000 Telpac Node with packet radio.

### **Registration**

All Telpac Nodes must be registered on the WinLink web site, and should have a SSID of -10. In the comments section of the registration form indicate your station's baud rate, city, and state. Do not refer the user to a third party website for station information! An example of the proper format is below:

1200 Baud – Milwaukee WI

### **Frequency**

Initially, all of the Telpac Nodes in your area should be on the WI ARES/RACES Packet Frequency of 145.610 MHz. After one or two Telpac Nodes have been established, secondary nodes should be setup on your local packet LAN Frequency.

### **Beacons**

Telpac Nodes should also beacon every 15 minutes. Beacons should also contain the node's position in longitude/latitude along with the RSGB APRS symbols for a WinLink Telpac Node, city, state, and frequency. An example of this beacon format is below:

=4304.35NW08800.50WaKB9MMC-10 Telpac Node, Milwaukee WI 145.610/144.930 MHz

The idea behind using the location in the beacon is, if your community ever needed help from the outside. Persons using the AGW Packet Engine with their PacLink setup could also monitor the Telpac Node beacons using an APRS program like UI-View or AGW Tracker (in the receive only mode) and find who's on the air and

where they're located relative to their own position. They can also look to see if any of the nodes operate on more than one frequency.

In your Telpac Node setup window, tick the boxes "Enable auto check-in to host," and "APRS reporting" in the Telpac Node setup screen with the auto reporting interval set to 15 minutes. Don't forget to fill in the APRS data. If you don't know your location, contact the ASEC of Digital Communications. He can give you the location coordinates of your station, and create a beacon file for you. It is assumed you're using the AGW Packet Engine; if not please specify which file you're using.

## PMBO

All of the Telpac Nodes in Wisconsin currently use the PMBO in Milwaukee as the primary PMBO. Its IP address is kb9mmc.no-ip.com or kb9mmc.ath.cx. We have found that some ISP's don't like the no-ip address and that is why there is the second address. With all of us using the same PMBO traffic can move faster throughout the state.

---

---

## **A FEW MORE COMPUTERS ARE AVAILABLE**

By Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR, SEC Emeritus, WI

Another few have come in, and as of now, I have four for distribution. These machines are for ARES/RACES use, which means packet, WinLink, PSK-31 or other digital modes, logging, administration in connection with emergency communications, or training for emergency communications, including Field Day. They are also available to upgrade older, slower machines you may have received from me in the past (but please pass those older machines on to a ham who can use them, or recycle them).

I will distribute these units to ECs and above only, although ECs and DECs are perfectly welcome to request machines for subsequent distribution to a member of their unit. They may be used in EOCs, in ham's homes, or anywhere else that would suit their intended purpose.

The CPUs are plenty fast for our ham programs. Hard drive sizes vary, but all have adequate free space. Each has a CD-ROM drive, 3½-inch floppy drive and a sound card, as well as the usual serial, parallel and USB ports. Each has been physically cleaned inside and out. The hard drives have been repartitioned and reformatted, and a fresh copy of Windows 2000 Professional (better than XP and there is no learning curve to deal with if you are familiar with either Win98 or XP) has been installed, along with every update available on the day of rebuilding. Each has .NET Framework 1.1 and 2.0 (you may need both), including updates, and several ham programs that may be of use. Each comes with a keyboard, mouse and power cord (you supply the monitor). These units are workhorses; each has been tested and should give many years of additional service. Two are low profile desktops, which take very little space on a desk, and the other two are towers.

How can you get one? Send me an email request at [skaplan@mcw.edu](mailto:skaplan@mcw.edu). I will send units to you via our fine ARES/RACES "Computer Courier" – Keith Lodahl, KB9NUM. Keith travels the state for his job, and will deliver the computers to you. First come, first served, so fire off that email soon! Any orders not filled will be kept on a list for the next batch that comes in.

Once again, ECs, DECs or other WI ARES/RACES leadership officials must make the request and receive the computers, though they can subsequently distribute computers to members of their units.

---

---