



# The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Newsletter



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*The WI ARES/RACES Newsletter is published quarterly 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.*

**Submittals:** Articles and information should be submitted to Bill Niemuth, KC9ENO, at [bniemuth@new.rr.com](mailto:bniemuth@new.rr.com). 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

**Mark Wien, KC9GHQ**, has stepped down as Polk County EC to pursue other interests. Thanks to Mark for running the program for the past couple of years. We will still hear him on the WI ARES/RACES Net!

Replacing Mark is **Fred Anderson, AB9LV**. Fred has a long history of ham radio involvement in his family and we are fortunate to have him as a new EC. Please join me in welcoming Fred to our leadership team!

After 20 years of dedicated service, **Claude Held, WA9KCU**, has retired as the City of Watertown EC. Claude has been the only WI EC dedicated to a city. This position was created in 1988 because Watertown sits on the border of Jefferson and Dodge Counties and there was no EC in Jefferson at the time. As a result of Claude's retirement, we have dissolved the Watertown team and having those interested members join the ARES/RACES team in their county of residence. We thank Claude for his dedication and diligence over the years. Claude has some unique skills and after a time don't be surprised to see him pop up in another ARES/RACES capacity! Good luck, Claude!

## **Cross Plains Fire Department (CPFD) Adds a Ham Radio Station**

By Steve Geraths, KC9FKV, ARES/RACES Member Dane County

In 2005, the CPFD installed an Icom IC-2720 in their fire house. The antenna is mounted on top of the hose tower which is 35 feet high. The radio is positioned in the command center. It has enough coax to be moved into the hallway if space is a problem. If space or conditions worsen, the radio and power supply can be relocated to a separate conference room with a flip of an antenna switch. The FD has their own emergency backup generator.

Fire Chief Gary Itten approved the system, and the firemen bought the radio and power supply out of their own money. The final hook-up, labor, and feedline were all donated by **Allen Romeis, KB9DRZ**. CPFD now has three hams on the department. Since then, I purchased a new dual band antenna, with **Tim Pierce, KB9UAJ**, Dane County EC, and **Justin T Radtke, KC9IWG**, installing it.

The station can communicate on simplex with the EOC and WEM, as well as hit all the surrounding counties repeaters.



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## **Al Schmitz, WB9CAP, Upgrades to a Big Bus!**

By Al Schmitz, WB9CAP, ARES/RACES Member, Iron County

With great pleasure I'm writing this article about our new (1982) Mobile Communications Command Post (MCCP). Last March a good friend of our family spotted a Transit Bus for sale about 100 miles from our home. So after racking up about 1000 miles on the pickup, I purchased it. The Van/Bus is a 30,000-pound, 31-foot 1982 TMC (Thomas Motor Coach) and has air conditioning, air brakes, air ride, power steering, automatic Allison Transmission, a very good heater and V692 Detroit Diesel with 77,000 original miles. It gets about six miles per gallon!

I decided on this type of vehicle for a variety of reasons. First, the visibility is great with the huge windows that are handy when providing communications for the dog sled races, bike tours and races, snowmobile events and our Civil Air Patrol missions. Other CCPs I've seen always have either no windows or very small ones. (I have always believed weathermen should have a window in their weather studios.) The next important thing was to have good access and I love the large doors. It's much easier on my 340-pound frame. Don't want to be late for lunch! Comm. Van # 1 just ran out of room. Our new van is much easier to "move around in" and has ample room while working with non-hams (staff) without interfering with the dispatcher/hams. This was accomplished by arranging the radio benches to face forward instead of to the side. The HF gear is purposely placed in the rear where minimum traffic will be for security as well as logistics. No carpets on this floor, only the factory rubberized material found in most public busses, which makes cleaning a snap. Each station is powered by 12 volts DC through #1 cable having access to 6000 amps from the bus batteries (4000 amps) and the separate 12 volt system (2000 amps) with a battery switch in the middle. 120 volts are supplied to all radio benches and can be supplied by the onboard 2000-watt inverter, 1850-watt generator, 4200-watt generator,

engine alternator or commercial current. During normal operations the 10-amp battery charger maintains the entire van's DC system. The 14 main transmitters all have roof mounted antennas enabling us to be "on the air" while moving. When stationary, up goes the 30 ft. mast with the Diamond V2000 tri-bander for the VHF base and the Yagi Beam for the APRS digipeater. A 4-position antenna switch gives all four benches access to the "big gun" if needed.

Being in emergency services, i.e.,: US Navy Air for four years, fire department, police department, EMT, Civil Air Patrol and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary most of my adult life I have seen the need for a "central location" for emergency comms. Storms, flooding and other events seem to be getting more frequent and closer to home. It's comforting to know you are equipped to help out when people have no one else prepared to respond efficiently. I know lots of folks may disagree with my concept but I'm always open to new ideas, so let's discuss it. My wish is for this unit to be involved in as many communication events as possible and am extending a very large **WELCOME** for Hams wishing to enjoy this facility with me. "The porch light is on and the coffee pot plugged in".

Additional information can be found on [aprs.5050ranch.com](http://aprs.5050ranch.com) on **Jay Ferguson's, KC9GSK**, web site. He also has a GREAT B-B-Q!

### **Check Out the Equipment!**

Two 800,000 candle power search lights, 13 Motorola VHF HTs, 5 Motorola UHF HTs, 3 intercoms (matching the 3 on the dispatch benches), Midland NOAA weather radio, Model 6140 Ray Jefferson Direction Finder, 5 watt CB Base Station and 5 watt CB HT, Motorola Radius 45 watt 16 channel VHF, two Phoenix 50 watt mobile trackers w/ Tinytrac 3 and Tinytrac 3plus, Kenwood 5 watt D7 HT w/tnc and Garmin Etrax GPS Tracker, Deluo Microtrac 8000 portable w/Byonics GPS, extra mag-mount antennas, two VHF/Aircraft Scanners, two CW Keys and programming laptop computer.

Two 12-volt 1000 cranking amps batteries, two 2000 cranking amps batteries (under and outside van) total 6000 amps of 12 volts with battery switch on "both", two 100 ft. extension chords, 10 amp and 35-amp battery chargers, 2000 watt inverter for 120 volts AC, two portable generators 1850 watts and 4200 watts and a 25-foot 12-volt DC and 120-volt AC harness to hook to any 12 volt vehicle to power CCP. Normally the entire CCP runs mobile on the 10-amp battery charger if engine is off.

### **Station Alpha**

A-1: 120-watt GE Delta 32-Channel VHF, A-2: 50-watt GE Phoenix 16-channel UHF, A-3: 16-channel Motorola Radius 45-watt VHF, A-4: GE 32-channel 120-watt VHF Delta, A-5: Bendix King Aviation 5-watt HT w/outside antenna, two Radio Shack Intercoms (matching ones at equipment checkout bench) and telephones at all stations.

### **Station Bravo**

B-1: 120-watt GE Delta 32-channel VHF, B-2: 50-watt EF Johnson 260 channel digital VHF, B-3: Shakespeare 25-watt VHF Marine and Weather, B-4: Sporty's 20-channel Model 300 Aviation 5-watt HT w/outside antenna, Radio Shack #3 Intercom, Microsoft Deluxe Flight Simulator X w/Siatek X52 controls, Compaq Presario Computer and Compaq CRT flat screen, HP printer, copy, scanner and phone.

### **Station Charlie**

128-Channel 120-watt VHF Master control station, Kenwood Phone Patch Controller connected to VHF, 50-watt 10-meter Ranger RCI 6900F, Icom 735 full range HF 100 watts w/LDG tuner and Tram Automatic SWR meter, 145-watt Motorola Micom 2 HF w/MFJ-993 Intellituner, GE 100-watt Delta w/MFJ TNC-2 APRS running with Sony Vaio Laptop, (both computers contain 5 different mapping software programs), Lexmark 4200 Printer, copy, Scan, Fax., "Zulu" time clock and a boom box hooked to the laptop for enjoying my 50's and 60's music.



## **Grant County ARES/RACES Com Van**

By Dana Wilson, kc9koq, EC Grant County

Here it is, my soon to be com van. She is a diamond in the ruff. OK, it is still coal but the price is right. It has a generator mounted under one side that starts with what looks like a generator off a Cub Cadet so it should put out 12 volts. I will be looking for anything people may have to help with this project. I'm still trying to figure out where the \$1000, plus license and insurance, is coming from!

This van is for use in Grant County. It was found on eBay. and I bought it after no one bid on it. It is a 1979 Chevy 1-ton van. It has a generator built in and has plenty room. I paid \$1000 for the van out of my own pocket. I licensed it with collector plates so it will never have to have plates renewed. I will be covering the insurance myself. With all that coming out of my pocket I need help to set it up further. I have tapped myself out with having a new baby. If any one knows of grants or programs from manufacturers or dealers it would help. I have no problem using refurbished or used radios. I have set up my Icom v8000 in it for the time being. I need a power supply and would like to find a CB with PA, a GPS unit, a HT or two, a cross band repeatable radio, and antennas. Some day I would love to get a repeater. This would help out in SW Wisconsin. I am going to set it up so the power supply and radio from my house can be used in it for the time being.

My hope with this van is to show my county we are not just a club! We are trained radio operators who are here to help when called upon. It is important to light a fire with our group to get them more involved. The biggest thing is to get new blood into ham radio. This is the goal of the bus. I am also willing to list sponsors for the van if donors would like publicity.





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## **Free Computers for Leadership Officials**

By Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR, SEC Emeritus (skaplan@mcw.edu)

Did you know that if you are an EC or above, you can receive one or more free computers for use by your ARES/RACES group or in other ARES/RACES applications of your choosing? Moreover, these computers uniformly have a fresh copy of the operating system installed, along with other useful programs and even some ham software and utilities.

Over the past 15 years, a number of individuals and agencies have donated computers to me for ARES/RACES use. I typically receive computers from the Medical College of Wisconsin, the government of Ozaukee County and various other institutions and private individuals. Refurbishing starts with complete digital wiping of the hard drive, using a Department of Defense-approved method that first changes every byte on the hard drive platters to one, then zero, then starts over and does it again, and then does it a third time. This takes several hours, and when it is done, the hard drive is back in the digital state it was in when it left the hard drive factory, with no data of any kind remaining or recoverable. This wiping is routinely done with every computer, to protect both the donor and the recipient (no viruses, spyware or other malware remains). When finished, the drive is re-partitioned, re-formatted and a fresh copy of Windows 2000 Professional is added along with almost 70 updates, and ham and other programs that are essential or helpful in the computer's intended use. When the process is complete and the machine proves to be operating properly, it is released. All machines run at a speed that is fine for our digital modes. Donated machines slower than optimum for our use are recycled after removal of useful parts.

You might be curious about Windows 2000 Professional. It is essentially the same as XP, and you will not be able to tell that it is not XP when you see the desktop. It functions in essentially the same way - there will be no learning curve if you are familiar with XP. More important, it can run just about any program that works with XP, including all the digital modes we hams are interested in (Winlink, PSK31, etc.). The software I bundle with it includes .NET Framework, both Versions 1 and 2, so all ham programs will run properly.

Desktop computers come in fairly often, and requests can usually be filled in a month or two. However, there is a separate want list for laptops because these come in rarely. Nevertheless, I recently I received a batch of 25 laptops and was able to successfully rebuild 12. All subsequently left my QTH to fill a want list almost three years old.

Why do I do this? I have been working with computers since 1980, and even taught Computer Architecture at ITT for a couple of years after retiring from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Thus, I have the expertise to do all this (see also my Computer Corner articles in the Badger State Smoke Signals). I enjoy it and consider it part of my contribution to Wisconsin ARES/RACES and the public welfare.

What does it take to get one? If you are an EC or above, simply email a request directly to me at the address listed. If you are not an EC or above, have your EC send the request. If I have a completed machine in stock I will get back to you to make arrangements for pickup or delivery (**Keith Lodahl, KB9NUM**, can sometimes deliver for me and has done so with dozens of units). If I am out of stock, your name goes on a list to be filled when more come in and one is ready.

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## **Racine County ARES Level IV Communications Vehicle**

By Jim Markstrom, KB9MMA, EC Racine County

Racine County ARES/RACES presents the RCARES Level IV communications trailer! For a field trial, we operated the trailer 16 hours during the entire night June 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>. This was in support of severe weather, and a public service event known as the Milwaukee to Chicago 200 running relay. Two kinds of emergency power are utilized; generator, and battery back-up. This vehicle can operate this way for up to 4 days without a recharge. Local UHF and VHF communications are permanently installed, as well as high frequency or shortwave capabilities. Those along with up to four voice channels, APRS, GPS tracking and Winlink RMS (ham radio email) are onboard as well. The mobile operating platform comfortably sits up to three operators, and also has tactical command maps for the local area. Ongoing augments to the capabilities of this trailer are being implemented this year. Local donations, grants and elbow grease are making this project a reality!



## **WI ARES/RACES Responds to Disastrous Flooding**

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

The final numbers are still being tallied, but early June was historically busy for WI ARES/RACES. Anyone who lived in the state or watched the news is familiar with the massive amounts of rain (over a foot in some areas) during the first full weekend in June and the disastrous flooding which followed. This historical flooding event necessitated the activation of eight counties, the most in WI ARES/RACES history. Many types of traditional ham radio services and nontraditional ham radio services were provided, but it was all in the spirit of helping our communities respond to and recover from the floods.

One change we made after a lesson of the August 2007 floods was to begin preparing for mutual aid immediately after an incident. In 2007, we waited until mutual aid requests were made before putting out the call. As a result, we failed to fill two critical roles. This year as soon as it was apparent flooding and activations would occur we began the mutual aid process. This proactive response allowed us to fill every or most every request. Thank you to the 120 plus ARES/RACES members who deployed and helped manage this event. Your training and diligence helped our communities better respond and recover more quickly to this terrible flooding.

Here is a look at the preliminary numbers.

**WI ARES/RACES members activated – 120 plus**  
**Hours volunteered – 2184**  
**Total miles driven - 7300**

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# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Wisconsin ARES/RACES Conference

**Saturday, October 25, 2008, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sunday, October 26, 2008, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

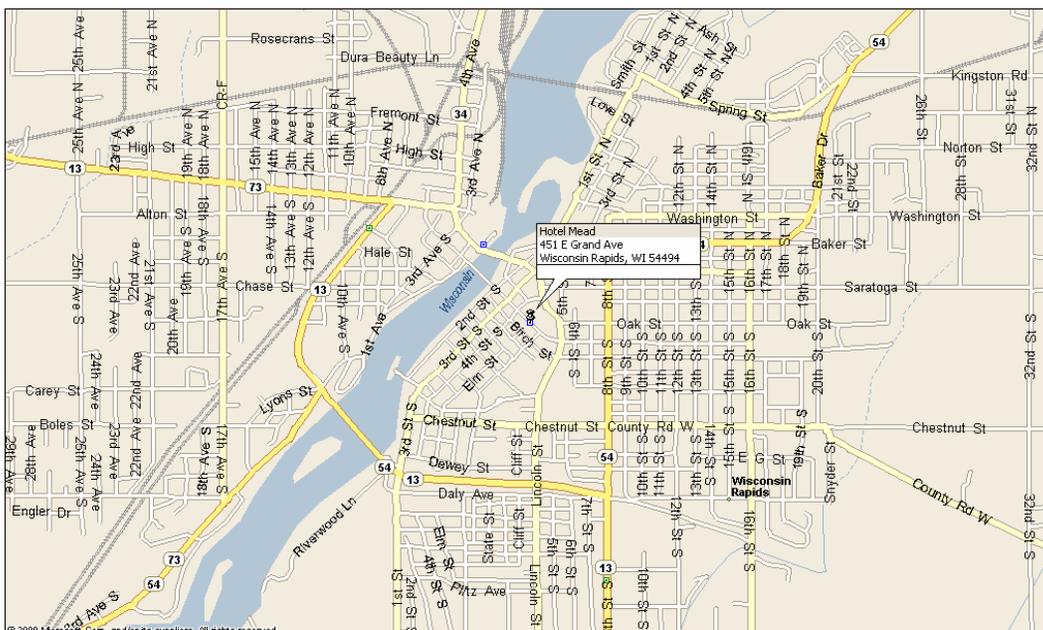
**Hotel Mead**  
**451 East Grand Avenue**  
**Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494**

**Talk-in – 146.790 – PL114.8**

Please join us for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual ARES/RACES Conference! This year's conference is intended for everyone interested in ARES/RACES, including EMS, NWS and other emergency/disaster response personnel. Lunch/brunch and refreshments will be provided both days. Registration fee is \$20.00 for Saturday. Sunday's registration fee is \$15.00 or both days, \$35.00. You may attend Saturday or Sunday or both days. Payment will be collected at the conference and preregistration is required. Your registration needs to be received by **October 16, 2008**. Please complete the registration form online at <http://www.wi-aresraces.org/2008confreg.htm> or on the attached. **A registration should be completed for each attendee, including nonARES/RACES personnel.**

The two-day format was a success in 2007, and in 2008, we will do it again and it will be better! On Sunday we will have a Bus O'Rama! We are asking folks from around the state to bring their mobile communications vehicles (motorized or not) and units to allow everyone to tour them, ask questions, share ideas and learn.

Please invite your County Emergency Management Director, Red Cross or Salvation Army's Director or your hospital contact! It will be time well spent and give you the opportunity to display the strength and professionalism of Wisconsin ARES/RACES! See you there!



Please complete the fields below and return to [bn Niemuth@new.rr.com](mailto:bn Niemuth@new.rr.com).

<b>Name:</b>			
<b>Call Sign:</b>			
<b>E-Mail Address:</b>			
<b>ARES Position:</b>			
<b>Other Position/Organization:</b>			
<b>County:</b>			
<b>Days</b>	<b>Saturday:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sunday:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Both Days:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Meal:</b>	<b>Meal:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Meal:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Meals:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

**Bus O’Rama Registration (Sunday, October 26, 10:00 AM to 12:15 PM)**

<b>Bus Name:</b>	
<b>Contact Name:</b>	
<b>Contact E-Mail Address:</b>	
<b>Bus Home County:</b>	

**Recommended Hotels**

**Hotel Mead (Conference Hotel)**

451 East Grand Avenue  
800-843-6323

Make reservations by October 3, 2008 to get the block of 50 rooms  
\$82 plus tax for single or double occupancy

Other Options

Econo Lodge  
3300 8th Street South  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494  
(715) 423-7000  
\$44.95 plus tax

Motel Six

911 Huntington Avenue  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI, 54494  
(715) 423-3211  
\$39 single and \$45 for double occupancy plus tax

\*Note: Bus O’Rama parking and exhibit will be held in the Wisconsin Rapids Library parking lot across the street from the Hotel Mead.