



The Wisconsin Emergency Coordinator



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WISCONSIN SECTION EMERGENCY COORDINATOR AND EDITOR:

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The WEC Newsletter is sent monthly to all American Radio Relay League Emergency Coordinators in the State of Wisconsin. 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 ARES activities in the state.

Comments, suggestions and articles (finished or in rough form) are solicited from the readers.

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Y2K Preparations

Below is the text of three messages which I received 18Mar1999 from Mack Brophy via the Internet. They are clearly important. I have put them in chronological order and shortened them by taking out some headers (addresses), but have not edited the text. Please carefully read these and take whatever steps you can to prepare your ARES groups for next December and January. Please heed Mack's request concerning release of the contents of these messages to the general public, but do share the content

with your ARES members so that all can prepare as necessary. I might also reflect that these herald the beginning of an unprecedented demand for ham services to cope with preparations for Y2K. Stan

[Original Message]

From: Pribek, John

Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 1999
12:06 PM

To: Al Wohlford

Subject: Y2K emergency
broadcasting

Al, thank you for forwarding to me the conference call notes. They were very helpful.

After examining the conference call notes and reviewing the notes from our conversations, I'd like to present one main issue to you. Al, you qualified your description of the plans involving a governor's broadcast through WHA by noting that the signal would go to whatever radio and TV stations had the ability to receive it, in the case of widespread power outages. It seems to me that ultimately this factor must be carefully accounted for, i.e., in the case of widespread power outages throughout the state during early January (a scenario that admittedly the Blue Ribbon Commission does not think is at all likely), do enough of the right radio and TV stations have backup power generation methods in place to facilitate an address by the governor? Is it fair to say that every citizen in the state, assuming they have access to a battery-operated radio, would be able to pick up the signal of the governor's

address, or any other emergency messages broadcast by state and local government officials? Maybe the answer is that as long as Wisconsin Public Radio stations are on the air, yes, all citizens sitting around with radios in their candle-lit homes are accounted for due to the distribution of WPR stations and the strength of their signals. But then I could use that reassurance from the appropriate official(s).

The Public Media Subcommittee worked with the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association to send out Y2K surveys to state broadcasters back in February. Out of 25 respondents on the radio side, 16 indicated that if the power is out, they're not broadcasting, end of story (and some of those respondents account for multiple stations). My understanding is that that also means they're out of the EAS system at that point as well. And presumably more citizens would be using radios during a power outage than TVs.

On the TV side, we received five responses that account for seven stations. Two of the stations report that if there's no power, they're not broadcasting, period. (Two of them also indicated that if there's no power, their towers won't be lit, which is another problem.) Granted, our response rate wasn't overwhelming, but what we do have suggests that the number of stations that aren't broadcasting in the case of power outages is not insignificant.

The bottom line for the Public Media Subcommittee report is this

basic question: Assume much of Wisconsin is without electricity on Jan. 1 (a scenario we DON'T think is likely, but one about which we still want to be able to offer reassurances). The governor wants to address the state's citizens at 4 p.m. to update them on the situation. State officials want to use the EAS system to alert broadcasters that this address will take place, and will use the WHA studio to send out the address. Based on what we know about stations' ability to generate emergency power, will enough stations get the EAS alert and be able to broadcast the governor's address so that it's accessible in every corner of the state, even if a person might have to work the dial a little bit?

I don't necessarily need a comprehensive inventory of exactly which radio and TV stations will be on the air during the first few days of next January even in the case of widespread power outages (although if such an inventory is out there, hey, great). I just need to know that individuals such as yourselves have confidence that enough of the right stations -- i.e., those with strong signals -- will be broadcasting that we can offer assurances that every citizen in the state would have access to an address by the governor or other emergency officials on Jan. 1. Ultimately the Public Media Subcommittee has to either offer such a reassurance in its April 9 report or say that we simply aren't sure if enough stations will be on the air to account for every region of the state, and that that is something that needs to be determined yet. So, please let me know what information has already been gathered that helps to answer this question, or what information is in the process of being gathered. And if we really want to push the analysis (and we do, right?), what happens if power were out for two

to three days over large portions of the state? A number of stations have indicated that they have backup power, but it wouldn't keep them going for more than half a day or a day. Would this kind of situation significantly change the ability of the governor to communicate an address? Or would the right stations be on the air indefinitely that an address after three days without power would be no less accessible than an address on Jan. 1?

I'm thankful for any information, insights, or suggestions you have regarding these scenarios. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated. Let me know if you have any questions about the issues I've raised or about the work of the Public Media Subcommittee. Thanks again. -- J.P.

John Pribek, Subcommittee Coordinator, Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Year 2000 Preparedness

[Reply to Original Message]

From: Wohlferd, Alan

Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 1999 1:32 PM

To: John Pribek

Subject: RE: Y2K emergency broadcasting

John: Thank you for your thoughts. I am sharing your e-mail with our staff that are involved with Y2K preparedness and ECB and WPR staff that will be needed as well.

On the issue of stations with stand-by generator sets. There are about 400 AM and FM stations and 50 TV stations serving Wisconsin. The only ones we truly have any control over are the public broadcast facilities. I will defer to Pete Kingslien of ECB as to how many public stations have emergency power and as to how long they could function in that mode. I do believe public radio and television

does have total coverage to the entire state assuming all stations can remain on the air.

If we do have widespread power outages that last more than several hours the outlook is not good. Even with National Guard generators I doubt they could make a great impact to get many broadcasters back on the air.

I feel major stations like WTMJ will have sufficient power to stay on the air for the duration. We may be able to make sure key stations will get generator fuels if needed.

Unfortunately there just are not many low cost alternatives in case of a major and prolonged state power outage. Gary Timm and our group should probably look into which stations have the power and in place generators for a long term effort.

Our state Emergency Operations Center at 2400 Wright St. will be functioning and many county EOC's will as well. Many PDs are delaying any vacation authorization for the time period. We will count heavily on amateur radio operators statewide to relay information if the worst happens.

I wish I COULD give the Public Media Subcommittee assurances that a statewide emergency broadcast would work but there are too many unknowns at this time.

I don't know how receptive the commercial broadcasters will be to spending money to be sure to remain on the air. Many broadcasters operate on a razor thin profit margin and buying a generator set may not be a priority for them.

Perhaps Pete or Gary can offer some more insight. Thanks Al Wohlferd

[Mack's Message Based on the Previous Two]

Subject: Y2K emergency broadcasting

Date: Wed, 17 Mar 1999 18:21:18 - 0600

From: Brophy, Mack

To: Many recipients

Fwded FYI. Note comment, "We will count heavily on amateur radio operators statewide to relay information if the worst happens."

Let's hope we're not needed but just in case we are needed, I encourage everyone to take an inventory of their local organization's capabilities to remain on the air for period of 4 or 5 days. Now is the time to organize our assets and make contingency plans for not only Y2K but any other type of emergency. Hams serving their communities has been a long standing tradition and I am sure it will continue. If you know of any ARES/RACES EC that you know has e-mail and their e-mail is not included in the address header would you please forward this msg to them and ask them to send me their e-mail address in order that I may include them on the ARES/RACES e-mail listserver. Please use discretion as to how much of this message is released to the general public in order that there is no false impressions given that might cause some people to unjustly become over-concerned or panic. Thanks. 73 de Mack N9NTB

A Couple of Good Ideas From Your Neighbors

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLANS AND PROCEDURES

This is the title of a terrific little manual compiled by Bob Fishelson, K9GEI, EC of Fond du Lac County for use by his ARES group. The 8½ X 5½ inch booklet is only 12 pages long, but it packs a lot of important information and is the best manual of its kind yet seen by your SEC. Included are General Principles of Emergency Communication, Alerting Procedures, Emergency Operations, Emergency On-Air Procedures, Net Control Station On-Air Format, Emergency Telephone Numbers and there is also space to record repeater speed dial numbers.

The booklet would serve admirably as a ready emergency reference for long-time members or as a training manual for new ARES hams. Although it was designed strictly for Bob's Fond du Lac group, it would serve as an excellent template for any county ARES organization. If you are considering a similar manual for your hams, be sure to contact Bob for a copy ... you have his data in the recent EC list mailed to you in March.

A REFERENCE CARD FOR YOUR GROUP'S SUN VISORS

Dave Barrow, N9UNR, Ozaukee EC has created a double-duty vehicular reference card. Basically, it is an 8½ X 11-inch sheet of light cardboard folded longitudinally. One exposed surface contains a large logo and "Ozaukee Amateur Radio Emergency Services". Inside are emergency phone numbers and the home and speed dial numbers of each of OZARES' 50 members. On the backside are local repeater frequencies, offsets, important local nets and a short "What to Report" section. The whole thing tucks nicely under the sun visor of your car.

BUT, when responding to an emergency, the partially folded card can be set on the dashboard when you park the car. In this way, a police officer or other official checking out your vehicle will know that you are "working the incident", not just a bystander out for the show. Indeed, on viewing a draft of the card, Ozaukee County Emergency Manager Bill Stolte (N9VBJ) suggested that an "OFFICIAL BUSINESS" statement might be added (don't do this until you check with your EM!).

Two outstanding ideas! Never let it be said that we hams are not ingenious! The sharing of this kind of information among ECs is exactly the reason why this newsletter was started. Each EC has enough to do without "reinventing the wheel", and borrowing good ideas from another group is one way to make you more efficient and effective. Now then, do YOU have something that has worked particularly well in your group? How about sending it to Stan so that it can be shared across the state?

Clarification

Recent events have revealed that there may be some misunderstanding concerning ARES appointments in our Section, and the relationship of ECs to DEC's and the SEC. To clarify:

The Emergency Coordinator is key at the local level and assumes the authority and responsibility for emergency response and performance by ARES members under their jurisdiction during disasters. The EC is also responsible for interfacing with potential "served" agencies to establish working relationships and protocols. ECs are the appointing authority for Assistant ECs, and may appoint assistants from their groups as the need arises, or remove assistants as the need

wanes. They do not need to go through the DEC or SEC for these appointments, though of course it would be good practice to keep the DEC informed of everything going on with their group, including the addition of AECs or changes in AEC status.

District Emergency Coordinators recommend EC appointments to the SEC, and coordinate reporting, training, organization and emergency participation of ECs in their districts. DEC's also act as backup for areas without ECs, and generally promote and assist in contacts with governmental and non-governmental agencies in their areas.

Some larger states have more than one section, and therefore more than one SEC. Wisconsin has only one section, and therefore the Section Emergency Coordinator is effectively the State Emergency Coordinator. Roy Pederson (K9FHI), our Section Manager, has delegated appointing authority for all ARES emergency positions to the current SEC. The SEC therefore makes or removes the appointment of all DEC's and EC's in Wisconsin. No one else can do this job.

Just for your further information, when a DEC recommends appointment of an EC, your SEC sends the candidate a letter, an application for appointment and an EC job description. When the completed application is returned, your SEC prepares and mails a letter of appointment to the new EC, with copies to the DEC and SM. Also enclosed with my letter of appointment is a Certificate of Appointment suitable for framing. Finally, I prepare and email a form to the ARRL, which informs them of the new appointment.

The appointment letter by the SEC, the "wallpaper" and the form that goes to the ARRL makes it all official. The ARRL follows up by

sending the new EC a copy of the Emergency Coordinator's Manual along with other forms and publications that the EC needs to commence "business".

I think it would be useful and informative to publish the latest job descriptions here. Accordingly, the DEC job description follows, and I will publish the EC description next month, space permitting.

District Emergency Coordinator

[American Radio Relay League Official Field Organization Appointment Description, FSD-47 (2/97)]

The ARRL District Emergency Coordinator is appointed by the SEC to supervise the efforts of local Emergency Coordinators in the defined district. The DEC's duties involve the following:

1. Coordinate the training, organization and emergency participation of Emergency Coordinators in your district of jurisdiction.
2. Make local decisions in the absence of the SEC or through coordination with the SEC, concerning the allotment of available amateurs and equipment during an emergency.
3. Coordinate the interrelationship between local emergency plans and between communications networks within your area of jurisdiction.
4. Act as backup for local areas without an Emergency Coordinator and assist in maintaining contact with governmental and other agencies within your area of jurisdiction.

5. Provide direction in the routing and handling of emergency communications of either a formal or tactical nature, with specific emphasis being placed on Welfare traffic.
6. Recommend EC appointments to the SEC.
7. Coordinate the reporting and documenting of ARES activities in your district of jurisdiction.
8. Act as a model emergency communicator as evidenced by dedication to purpose, reliability and understanding of emergency communications.
9. Be fully conversant in National Traffic System routing and procedures as well as have a thorough understanding of the locale and role of all vital governmental and volunteer agencies that could be involved in an emergency.

Recruitment of new hams and League members is an integral part of the job of every League appointee. Appointees should take advantage of every opportunity to recruit a new ham or member to foster growth of Field Organization programs, and our abilities to serve the public.

Requirements: Technician or higher class; Full ARRL membership.

Do You Like It?

What do you think of this newsletter? Good idea? Meeting your needs? Missing some stuff you'd like to see? How can it be more helpful to you in building/training/recruiting activities for your group?

If you like what you see, it is not enough to just sit back and let it come at you each month! Surely there are topics you would like to see covered in one way or another. Send me a note, by snailmail or

email. Better yet, scribble out a rough copy of something you would like to contribute. I will be happy to polish it up, send it back to you for final approval, and then publish it right here. It can be on government/ ARES stuff, or it can be a radio project useful in ARES operations. I'll even do drawings for you, or circuit diagrams, if need be. Make yourself useful to your fellow ECs in other counties! Oh yeah, if you don't like what you see, tell me that, too! 73 for this month Stan
