The Wisconsin ARES/RACES
Emergency Coordinator

Flash: Kaplan Steps Down, Niemuth Steps Up

Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR, will vacate the post of SEC on 31Dec03, and Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO (currently East Central DEC) will assume that position on 1Jan04.

From Stan: It has been an exciting and rewarding 5 years as SEC! Wisconsin ARES/RACES has grown considerably in that time, and I have been able to institute a number of positive changes, just as my predecessor (John Leekley, WB9SMM) was able to build the group after taking over from his predecessor. Now it is time for new blood, with new enthusiasm, to pick up the baton.

I originally agreed to take the post for two years, when tapped by the previous Section Manager, Roy Pederson, K9FHI. When Don Michalski, W9IXG, took over as SM, he convinced me to keep going.

But I told both Don and Al Wohlferd (KA9YTY) of Wisconsin Emergency Management, (our boss in RACES) that the absolute time limit was five years. Well, five years has come very quickly, indeed.

Late in 2002, I reminded Don and Al of the five-year deadline and began looking for my replacement. Bill Niemuth was my very first choice, and he said OK! So, Bill and I have been working together for the last 12 months to prepare for the changeover, and the transition from WB9RQR to KB9ENO as ARES Section Emergency Coordinator and RACES Chief Radio Officer will be smooth. Most important, I think he is a terrific replacement, and I fully believe that Bill will do a better job than I in the dual positions. He has my unqualified support, and I ask all DECs, ECs and other leadership folks to stand behind him in every way.

I will be around, and will continue as a regular member of Ozaukee County's unit. Bill knows he can call on me if he needs me, but he has hit the ground running already, and will do just fine independently as the head of Wisconsin ARES/RACES.

My parting message: First: Keep growing and training! Find new members for your units as you can, and above all, train, train, train. Training is the single most important activity an ARES/RACES unit can do, aside from responding to actual emergencies. Second: A sincere thanks to all of you for your wonderful cooperation, enthusiasm and dedication over the past five years. Whatever headway we have made in WI ARES/RACES is to your credit. You have been a marvelous group of individuals to work with!

From Bill: Stan is being much too humble, but most great leaders are. Stan has built off the fine ARES/RACES organization he inherited from John Leekley and has made it one of the best respected in the country. I have big shoes to follow and I am grateful of the trust Stan, Don Michalski and Al Wohlferd have placed in me. Under Stan's leadership we have become a more cohesive organization in many ways. Through the training he has stressed, we have become better able to handle situations we would not have thought about 15 years ago. ARES/RACES has more respect than it has had at anytime, and Stan is to thank for part of that. Every organization ebbs and flows with time. Wisconsin ARES/RACES is at a high point, and my goal is to build off the work of my predecessors and cre-

ate a stronger, more flexible and service oriented organization.

We have many opportunities going forward. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the incorporation of the Federal Emergency Management Administration and the development of the Citizens Corps are opportunities to push our service to the next level. This is the best time to be an ARES/RACES member. The key is for us to leverage this opportunity and enhance the value of the amateur service beyond anyone's dreams. In doing so, we can provide a great service to our families, friends, community, state and the nation.

Over the next several months you will learn more about our new agenda and me. Our agenda might be different from what you have been use to, but your voice will have an impact into the direction of Wisconsin ARES/RACES. In the future the District Emergency Coordinators (DECs) will play a larger role. We'll also have an Advisory Panel that will consider aspects of our service and help to make decisions about our future. One thing is for sure. You will be involved.

In closing, please understand how fortunate we are to have a Section Manager and Emergency Management leader as committed to ARES/RACES as Don and Al. If we have a problem, they will work day and night to get it resolved. They are committed to the roles each of you plays in keeping people safe. That is really what we are about. So long until next month.

Racine County Tabletop Exercise

By John Rusfeldt, KA9RZL, Racine County AEC

[Editor's Note: The first half of this article was published last month. It is concluded here.]

Lessons Learned

Agencies such as law enforcement, fire departments, public utilities, and public works may not request emergency communications assistance from ARES, initially. Organizations like the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other volunteer groups most likely will utilize ARES early in the incident. This is most likely because the public safety departments already have some type of communications in place and working. The volunteer organizations do not, and they need to find some way to obtain that resource for their use.

Therefore, I found that I should not become concerned that ARES was not providing communications directly for the Office of Emergency Management (EM). Did EM truly need ARES? I found that ARES is working under EM and for EM just by providing communications for those other agencies involved in the incident. Those agencies are also part of EM. Remember, ARES is part of a large network of many other agencies and organizations.

By providing communications support to volunteer disaster relief organizations used by public safety agencies, ARES builds a reputation that it is reliable and can be used. If and when a communications failure occurs with the public safety agencies, they will be more inclined to use ARES to supplement their communications.

Be a salesman! You do not have to be the annoying person that goes from door to door. All it takes is to introduce yourself to other volunteer groups and let them know what you can offer them. If you don't, no one will know you exist. Just by stopping in, saying hi, exchanging names and numbers, you open a door for future discussions and possible a Memorandum of Understanding. I have actually had this happen. I contacted the Communications Coordinator for the local American Red Cross. Two days later, a storm went through Walworth County with a loss of power and telephones. I received a call from the American Red Cross asking me to prepare ARES to activate. This certainly would not have happened if I did not take the effort to make personal contact with the Communications Coordinator and provide him with my phone number.

Check your equipment on a regular schedule. If this tabletop were an actual incident, ARES would look bad if we showed up with a generator that we assumed work, but did not. Running a generator once a month will keep you from surprises when you do not want them. In a disaster situation, you will have enough surprises to deal with.

Participate in meetings held by local volunteer groups and Emergency Management. One such group is VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active In Disasters), an organization that is recognized by FEMA. VOAD consists of local volunteer organizations that you may wish to build a relationship with. By participating in these meetings, they will get to know who you are, what your group does, and how they can utilize your group when needed. Again, relationship building is key to your success.

Have a tabletop with your ARES group. Here, you may possibly learn of an aspect of your group's preparations that needs to be addressed. What are the weaknesses within your system? How would you deal with a certain situation? Who could you call for assistance?

Encourage your ARES membership to enroll in the ARRL Emergency Communications Courses. A lot of information is provided that can help you communicate with those served agencies and develop a better understanding of each other.

Conclusion

Participating in this tabletop exercise certainly opened my eyes to ARES involvement in Racine

County. I learned how other agencies and organizations plan on utilizing ARES during their efforts. Most importantly I learned that ARES is just one tool in the Emergency Management Toolbox. Other organizations help fill that toolbox, too.

Wisconsin Nets: Frequently Asked Questions

By Dennis Rybicke, STM

FAQ #16 HOW DO I COUNT TRAFFIC HANDLED FOR MY STATION ACTIVITY REPORT?

Station Activity Reports are required of appointees such as the Official Relay Station (Want to become one? Contact your STM.), but anyone can submit one. They help us to keep track of how the system is working. These reports are a summary of formal messages handled within a month. You'll hear them sent in this format.

The preamble: Message Number, Station of Origin, Check, Place of Origin, Date. The text of the report is next, and is often sent like this: "ORSDT 0/23/35/4/62." This means the number of messages originated, received, sent, delivered, and the total.

So how do you determine these numbers? A message is "originated" if it comes from a third party and is formatted by the operator. It might be a reply to a delivered message or a message sent by a friend. It is not a message the operator composes. When that message is transmitted to another station, it also counts as a message "sent." A message received from another station is one "received." When that message is delivered to a third party, it also counts as one "delivered."

If your tally reaches 500 or more, you qualify for the BPL Award. The Brass Pounder's League recognizes those who have gone to extraordinary lengths to handle many messages. You don't have to win the BPL to be a good traffic handler, to train yourself to do it well when needed. You don't have to handle hundreds of messages to support the National Traffic System. Just do your part, check into nets, take traffic destined for your location, and send some messages when you have the chance. It helps, and it's fun.

FAQ #17 HOW IS OUT-OF-STATE TRAFFIC ROUTED?

During the day, you will note that out-of-state traffic on the BEN is given to a station going to the Daytime Ninth Region Net - D9RN at 12:30. The traffic is then passed to someone going to the Central Area Net and later exchanged with other area nets by the Transcontinental Corps, TCC operators. Traffic coming into Wisconsin will be routed through the late session of D9RN at 4:00 p.m. to the Wisconsin Sideband Net.

The night cycles of the NTS work the same - but on CW. Out-of-state traffic on the WSBN will be given to a WIN rep who will take it to WIN and pass it to a station going to 9RN at 7:45 p.m. Traffic for Wisconsin will be picked up on the late session of 9RN and brought to Late WIN and then to the other section nets. For a good explanation of the Nation Traffic System, see the ARRL website or go directly to http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/pscm/sec2-ch1.html.

WEM Email Distribution List

By Mack Brophy, N9NTB, State Hamshack Manager

Recently, quite a number of messages that have been sent out from WEM have been returned as undeliverable. The address of all bounced messages have been and will continue to be removed from the WEM email list. If you are not receiving messages and would like to, please send a message to me at: races@dma.state.wi.us to update or add your address. Thanks!

More Leadership Changes

Jackson County Emergency Manager John Elliott, KB9SHK, who also held the EC position in Jackson, has stepped down as EC in favor of Roger Turner, N9PPB, effective 22 October. We thank John for his excellent service as EC, and fully understand his wishing to step down. The full time position of Emergency Manager in this day and age is more than enough for anyone! And, we wish Roger a hearty welcome. All his data is already posted in the new EC Roster.

Art Evans, KB9RYI, has left the post of DEC for SW Wisconsin. Art held this slot since March 1994. He is a bluegrass aficionado and performer, and as such is gone from the state during much of the year's severe WX season and so wanted to turn the position over. In his place as the new DEC is John Kuntz, KB9RYI, currently EC for Grant County (which position he will continue along with the DEC slot). All effective 23 Oct. Thank you to Art, for your service, and to John for your willingness to take on this important leadership position.

Peter Stenske, AB9DZ, has left the post of EC for St. Croix County, owing to time constraints, and Dave Kaun, N9KMY, has stepped up to the plate for that position, all effective 31 October. Welcome Dave! As usual, his data is available on our website in the new EC Roster posted there. Thanks to Peter for organizing 12 hams in that county into a cohesive ARES/RACES group.

Ray Meyer, N9PBY, made an excellent suggestion, which is now in effect. The title EC for ARES Packet is now known as EC for ARES Digital Modes. That expansion in title removes constraints that develop as new modes are developed in favor or older ones, and just improves flexibility. Thanks, Ray.

Jason Humboldt, KC9BWT, has left the post of EC for Columbia County, to become a regular member of the group. Thomas Luetscher, N9MXW, has picked up the reins, effective 1 Nov. Thanks to you both! Jason, for your leadership after the untimely death of the previous EC, your father, and Tom for your willingness to take over this important job.

Homeland Security Grant

By Jim Staatz, KG9RA, EC Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties.

[*Editor's Note: This wonderful announcement shows how close cooperation between ARES/RACES and Emergency Management can lead to excellent improvements in our ability to provide emergency communications in the public interest. Congratulations to Jim Staatz for his initiative and follow-through efforts in winning this important grant!*]

In June 2003, Gale Sorum (WD9HFT) and I made application for a Homeland Security Grant through Hal Swanstrom (KB9UHP), Eau Claire County Emergency Manager. The Grant was approved in the amount of $10,700.

The funds will be used to improve the 146.910 MHz repeater system by adding a new central repeater and five remote receive sites. This new system will enhance the ability of ARES members in the Chippewa Valley to provide public service communications.

How Training Helps

By Rosie Maybee, KB9PZK, Adams EC

One of my ops was recently the first to respond to an incident that involved a propane tank and fire.

John was taking the back roads through our county and came upon a house that had just started on fire. He stopped and checked to see if anyone was inside the building. Luckily, those who had been inside had already run out the back door. John heard a hissing noise on the side of the house (not a good thing!) and investigated. The propane tank next to the house was leaking, had just caught fire, and had even set nearby pine trees on fire.

He acted quickly. First, he called the fire department. Next, he had the owners move their cars well away from the building. Then, he moved the people at least 1000 feet away from the incident, and had them be sure to stay out of alignment with the ends of the propane tank, in case of a blevy. He then sta-

tioned himself on the road and kept vehicles moving along.

As he was directing traffic on the road, he heard popping noises. Live ammunition was going off inside the burning house!

When the fire department (and DNR) arrived, John handed control to them and briefed them on the situation. He then jumped in his vehicle, and was on his way.

John's actions were dictated by training he had undergone over the years as an ARES/RACES member. That training helped!

EC Conference a Success

The Coughlin Municipal Building in Oshkosh was the site for this year's gathering of 66 persons, for the 5th annual Emergency Coordinator's Conference. After round-robin introductions, WB9RQR introduced his replacement as SEC – Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO – effective 1Jan04 – and Bill presented a short preview of things to come. Next, Howard Huntington, K9KM, ARRL Central Division Vice Director, made positive remarks on the ARES/RACES program in our state and presented Stan with a Certificate of Appreciation for his work as SEC. Lawyer John Leekley (WB9SMM, SE WI DEC) talked about liability and Workers Compensation issues pertaining to our ARES/RACES activities. The main message: make sure you are registered in writing with your Emergency Management office during any training or actual incidents. Jack Morrison, N9SFG, Asst SEC for Training, reported on the statewide SET (Columbia was the winner, and received a beautiful, dark blue 450 MHz computer as a prize), followed closely by Calumet County (who also received a 400 MHz computer). Jack then talked about the EmComm courses, and gave a breakdown on the number of WI ARES/RACES members who have participated (well over 100). Dan Williams, KB9VLG, presented a unit profile of his Waupaca County ARES/RACES group. Box lunches were then enjoyed by all, followed by an excellent presentation by Bill Stolte (N9VBJ, EM for Ozaukee County) on ARES/RACES unit interaction with Emergency Management – what is needed and what to expect. Richard Polivka, N6NKO, our HF Net Manager, then presented a hardware topic – Working HF Mobile in Emergencies. Richard did a fine job of explaining pitfalls and things to consider when installing an HF rig in a vehicle. Sam Rowe, KG9NG (Asst SEC/Deputy RO, DEC for SC WI and EC for Dane) reported on the State of the Hamshack at WEM in Madison. He summarized the equipment available, the mission, and staffing of our central node in times of emergencies. It was a great conference!