

Date: Mon, 20 Jun 2005 14:19:50 -0700 (PDT)  
From: Mike Moses <ki7wh@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Weekly RACES Update 6/20/05

Much has been happening within the Charlotte County RACES organization. Let me first note that I have been appointed officially as the RACES Officer as well as the ARES officer as of the 17th of June. I have been meeting with folks in and out of county and am pleased to report that our organization is solidifying and progressing.

--I observed Lee County's SET about a week ago. This was a desktop simulated disaster event with net participants reacting to the presented situation creatively. I would find the value for this type of exercise as procedural; i.e., having people check in as required and setting up the nets. An on-the-ground exercise would be preferred in my opinion but the logistics and costs can be prohibitive. Still, we are looking at ways to have some kind of field exercise when we are ready (at some future point).

--We met with Bob Sullenberger, who represents the emergency communication component of the Archdiocese of Venice, DARN as they are called. DARN had prepositioned tactical communication sites in Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, Collier and Desoto Counties and is looking at developing a mobile capability. We are in agreement that emergency comm should be looked at as a regional effort and cooperation across borders is the way to go. Bob is looking for Hams that would be willing to work his radios and is willing to foot training costs for those interested in becoming hams. We would like to have a meeting with all such groups (Red Cross, Salvation Army) in the near future to coordinate efforts.

--We had an ICS training session at the EOC taught by Gerard Mallet, who the RACES officer reports to. NIMS/ICS is the system under which emergencies are managed. In the future this system will be utilized here in the EOC and RACES/ARES members need to know how this system functions relative to emergency communications and emergency communicators. Following the ICS training, we had a discussion looking at how RACES/ARES could be organized to provide auxiliary communications to the county.

--It is clear that our operator's no longer need to shadow police, fire, and ambulance personnel as a matter of course. Mostly, their communications systems work just fine. However, it is also clear that there are occasional glitches where we may need to provide temporary support to "flashing light" groups if we are called upon.

--We can also supply backup to other county agencies as well as incoming groups and agencies as varied as utility crews, public works, medical, charity organizations, etc.

The key is "as needed" that means we need to have the ability to adapt and be flexible.

--RACES/ARES can be the communication provider of last resort for any kind of communications, to include CB (for incoming trucks), coordinator for subordinate nets (CERT, Skywarn, etc.). We should not be constraining our assistance to the utilization of amateur-only operations. For example, the provision and use of portable business class radios to parties who need and don't have them would be a useful capability. Our people could be called upon to assist other groups with technical difficulties (broken antennas, equipment repair and operation) as was done during Charly and other storms.

--We also had an honest discussion of the perception of the utility and performance capabilities of RACES/ARES relative to the EOC. I think there were two main points: (1) There was some misunderstanding on the expectations of when operators are expected to arrive at the EOC. The expectation is: take care of insuring that your property is as secure as you can make it, that your family is safe (evacuated, shelter, etc.) and then report in to your designated location (if you have one); (2) The EOC, to this day, is still not aware (but is becoming more and more so) of the contributions of hams, particularly those in West County. It turns out that there was much more that went wrong with all kinds of communications and much of that shortfall was ameliorated with the help of hams, both local and external. The problem is that we need to get a history of what occurred and we will be asking for all providers to help us with this in the near future.

--I attended the Florida Emergency Communication conference at the state EOC in Tallahassee on the 18th of June. There are many things happening that will affect future operations, to include an attempt to control requests of operators centrally. Included within this is a goal to insure that operators have received appropriate training for emergency communications. I will send a separate email with an attachment of the slides that were presented for your perusal. It is a 3 meg file and you will need a power point viewer.

Finally, I would like to have a yearly meeting for RACES and ARES on Wednesday the 20th of July at 7 PM-8:30 PM . We need to update the call down roster and set in place mechanisms to produce a new ECom plan and establish officers and helpers to develop our organization. I would like to discuss our vision for providing support to communicators during an emergency to include being called out as ARES only. I would open this meeting to Red Cross, DARN, county agency and other participants. What I need is a venue central to the county i.e., Murdock. The county admin building is under renovation and the library is booked. I would ask if anyone has some contacts to a conference room or hall or church in the Murdock/ town center area that would accommodate 20-30 people (just my guess--could be up to 60 I suppose), I would appreciate a call.

73's to all.

(please note attached power point chart on the possibilities of emergency comm deployment)

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