

Date: Thu, 4 Aug 2005 09:41:38 -0700 (PDT)
From: Mike Moses <ki7wh@yahoo.com>
Subject: RACES/ARES Information

Hello All:

Significant Happenings:

I met with Steve Connolly of CERT. CERT had a successful exercise last week, in which about 30 members showed up and were put through a drill that allowed demonstration of proficiency in first-responder-type tasks and decision making.

CERT and RACES will take possession of and share a retired ambulance in the fall. It will be outfitted with radio equipment from our old communications van and hopefully some additional equipment as well. Please let me know if you are available to assist us in the mechanics of the installation. We are also interested in mounting our generator in a more user-friendly way. Anyone with ideas and ability of how to do that best, please come forward. CERT and RACES/ARES are also interested in sharing training resources. CERT trainees, if interested, would be offered the ability to (train to) obtain HAM licenses. I will also be encouraging RACES/ARES members to be dual-certified (e.g., CERT, Red Cross, Skywarn, USCG, etc.). This is in keeping with the evolution of emergency communications as well as the sharing of a limited resource--active volunteers. Volunteers who are knowledgeable in the operation of other emergency providers are more functional and useful should an event occur.

September is Disaster Preparedness Month. I would like to have an on-the-ground emergency exercise, preferably along with other emergency providers like the Red Cross, USCG, Skywarn, CERT, and some tactical, shelter, and community locations. Charlotte County will probably also have an exercise, the detail of which I will find out about in the coming days and which we need to take into account in any planning.

We are now going to hold some regular hours as part of RACES. Here is the proposal: We will meet for breakfast at the Simply Cafe 2320 Tamiami Trail at 9 AM Monday mornings. This is a small cafe with inexpensive homemade food. For now, I do not expect more than 4 or 5 people, so it should be big enough. The cafe is centrally located on the East side of US Hiway 41, a few blocks north of Midway (strip mall north of Boomers). We can discuss and set goals for ourselves and can deploy to the EOC after breakfast to get some admin or technical work done. We definitely need to start on budget items and the rewriting of the emergency plan. We even need to decide what we need to work on first. Anyone with grant writing experience is also encouraged to contact me. The SERT conference talked about quite a few opportunities coming up for grant funding. As our county was hit so hard during the '04 season, I suspect we would be good candidates for a number of FEMA and Homeland Security grants.

We had our monthly tactical drill this week. We had 18 check-ins, which is not bad, but very few pool operators deployed, which was the objective of the exercise. This is disappointing and needs to be addressed: Many of our operators commit to showing up if called to an actual emergency. This is nice but insufficient. The purpose of these tactical drills is to find the problems before a real event ("testing to failure"). The usage and coordination of frequencies and the regional control of operators by alternate NCS is something we need to be able to do smoothly--and folks, we are not there yet. We also need to be familiar with the various locations, and eventually, the different types of equipment we would be called upon to set up. I am calling upon all members of RACES/ARES to demonstrate willingness to participate actively in support of emergency communications. This can be done by administrative assistance, leadership positions, technical assistance, computer assistance, even email guidance, and/or, by active participation in exercises--this means showing up (if you are a pool or tactical operator) at designated locations during exercises and drills. Operating a radio from your home or car for a tactical drill is for those willing to be relay operators only.

In the future, we are going to be holding drills involving deployment to various locations till we get it right, this now can include our Wednesday night ops/info drills. At some point, we will be shuffling positions by the indications of which operators are deployable and which are not and finally making a decision on continuing

RACES membership based on contributions (and yes, snowbirds can contribute--we have many projects in the works).

Regards,

mm

MIKE MOSES--KI7WH
RACES Officer/Emergency Communications Coordinator(ARES)
Charlotte County