Date: Sun, 7 Aug 2005 07:56:26 -0700 (PDT)
From: Mike Moses <ki7wh@yahoo.com>
Subject: RACES--Weekly Working Breakfast, Training Offered, and Some Ideas

We are going to establish some time each week where we will be able to convene at the EOC to meet with folks, get some admin or technical work done and otherwise be available on a regular basis. For the time being, I"d like to start a routine Monday morning breakfast at the (centrally located) Simply Cafe at 9 AM (2320 Tamiami Trail--North of Midway Blvd-- map is at:
http://maps.yahoo.com/maps_result?addr=2320+Tamiami+Trail&csz=port+charlotte.+fl&country=us&new=1&name=&qty=.

Some coordination and discussion could be accomplished there for those whose schedules or inclinations are limited to breakfast only. For the rest, we would then deploy to EOC until lunchtime or later. All interested parties-in and out of RACES are welcome.

The following free training is being offered for Saturday August 20:

The TPALAN amateur radio club will host the second Florida Amateur Digital Communication Association (FADCA) technical conference to be held this year.

A free full-day conference on packet, other digital modes, digital networking in Florida and ARES E-mail Over Ham Radio in Support of EMCOMMs will be held at the Hillsborough County EOC in Tampa.

I encourage anyone interested to contact me for further details and coordination. I believe we need to establish (reestablish?) a digital capability for RACES to support government operations if and when the internet capability at the EOC fails, as it has at times during the '04 hurricane season. The above training involves email connectivity which would be helpful. Hopefully, there will eventually be an enhanced capability to connect to the web in real time.

As some of you may know, Sarasota County has dismantled RACES as part of their EOC operations. ID cards will no longer be valid there. A workmen's comp claim is said to be the reason for the decision. Technology also allows the replacement of RACES operators for the functions they were accomplishing. Hopefully, Charlotte County RACES can evolve to demonstrate that we are needed in providing services during various kinds of emergencies. I am going to start drafting ideas for changes to the RACES operations manual and publishing them as strawmen for comment and revisions. What follows is the first of these:

Starting with the expiration of the current RACES ID, I propose the following for reissuance...

RACES members must demonstrate a contribution beyond the licensed ability to operate as an amateur. Involvement in any of the following would qualify:

Assignment to a tactical station (with active participation at least 3 times within a calendar year) AND completion of ICS 100 or emcomm 1.

Holding a leadership position in RACES (with active participation and demonstrated ability to accomplish duties of the position) AND completion of ICS 100 or emcomm 1.

Providing technical or administrative support in maintaining, building, training, planning, managing, public relation, and controlling nets, or other support deemed useful by the RACES Officer. The expectation is some kind of involvement within each calendar quarter.

Holding a dual-position; that is, being qualified in CERT, MARS, Skywarn, Red Cross, DARN, Salvation Army, Public Safety or other such position, and, demonstrating active involvement in either position.

Pool operators would need to demonstrate deployability for monthly exercises at least 50% of the time they are called upon, completion of ICS 100 or emcomm 1, or, have been utilized within the '05 or subsequent calendar year(s) in support of an emergency operation in or out of county.

Amateur operators may continue to be members of RACES without qualifying in any of the above capacities; however, they will not be issued a county ID badge.

Decision for the next year's issuance of badges will be retroactively based on participation during the '05 calendar year.

The foregoing is a proposal only. I welcome comments and assistance in re-writing this and other considerations for the new manual.

One last comment: When we have exercises and drills, until we can demonstrate a high level of proficiency in all aspects of emergency communication operations, we should be "training to failure"; that is, we need to know what we are not doing well. Some operations are not going to go all that smoothly, especially if there are new procedures or activities. That is how we learn and get better. Some of those problems may be at my end or whoever runs the show or net may be responsible for inadequate preparation or skills. So long as we try to correct problems for the future we are doing what we are supposed to.

      Over and Out,

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