



The Wisconsin EC Newsletter



Volume 06 Number 04

April 2004

Wisconsin ARRL/ARES Section Emergency Coordinator, RACES Chief Radio Officer and Editor

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The WEC Newsletter is published monthly in .pdf format to the Wisconsin ARES/RACES Web site <http://wi-aresraces.org>. 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 Wisconsin ARES and RACES. Comments, suggestions and articles (finished or in rough form) are solicited from the readers.

Deadlines: *The newsletter is published between the 15th and the 31st of the month preceding the date shown on the issue. Thus, the February issue is published in late January. Articles and notices should reach the editor no later than the January 1 to be considered for the February issue. Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter provided credit is given as follows: "Reprinted from The Wisconsin Emergency Coordinator Newsletter, KB9ENO, Editor".*

2004 Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC Wisconsin

Mark your calendars!

April 19-23, 2004 - Wisconsin Tornado & Severe Weather Awareness Week

The statewide tornado drill is on Thursday, April 22 from 1 to 2 PM

Public Service Training Opportunity

By Don Michalski, W9IXG, SM Wisconsin

The Horribly Hilly Hundred bicycle challenge is scheduled this year for June 12. It will, again, start from Mt. Horeb and finish at Blue Mounds State Park. This extremely popular event is quickly becoming a Midwest classic and benefits the Mt. Horeb Chamber of Commerce and the Friends of Blue Mounds State Park. The goal is to climb a total of 10,000 feet. To accomplish this feat, it takes 117 miles of grunting up the hills of western Dane and Iowa counties! (I've cycled up all those hills- just not all in one day!!) It is a severe test of endurance and one that will attract 600 skilled cyclists from all over the Midwest. 600 is the maximum permitted and double the number from last year. Word has quickly spread around the Midwest, and beyond, and a full house is anticipated!

The organizers appreciated what the amateurs did last year and are, again, requesting a lot of communication support. 20 amateurs, minimum, are needed to staff all the stations along the route and staff sag vehicles. This year, we will have two net control stations on Blue Mounds to handle the traffic, each monitoring separate repeaters and simplex. There will be more hams needed at critical intersections to keep the riders safe and from getting lost.

Volunteers will receive a free T-shirt and post-ride dinner. This event will be a challenge for the communication team and will hone your operating skills and, so, provides good training for supporting emergencies. Sam Rowe, KG9NG, is going to make this a training exercise for ARES personnel. We invite you to participate no matter what level of experience you have working public service events. As usual, not having any equipment is not an excuse. Equipment can be provided!

If you participated last year in HHH, you know how our services were warmly received and how much fun we had. It certainly was a memorable "keeper"! I hope you can do it again. And, I invite new amateurs to experience the excitement of supporting public service events!!

Please contact Don Michalski, W9IXG, at 608-274-1886; email: w9ixg@arrl.org ASAP!! The event starts early and ends late in the afternoon. If you have any time constraints, let me know. Not every position needs to be staffed for the entire event. For more information, please see this Web site <http://www.horriblyhilly.com/>.

Getting to Know Your County Emergency Management Coordinator

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC Wisconsin

Over the past several months we have had a few instances where various ARES/RACES representatives have talked with county emergency managers who did not know their county ARES Emergency Coordinator. Since Emergency Management is our second most-served client, it is critical these individuals know their Emergency Coordinator. If you have not met with your county Emergency Management Coordinator within the past six months, schedule a 45-minute meeting with him/her and ensure he/she knows who you are. Business cards are a great way to professionally introduce yourself. They don't have to be really fancy and can be made and printed using most home computers. A 45-minute meeting can help open doors and when the EM hears your name at least he/she will recognize it.

Leadership Changes

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC Wisconsin

Mark Smick, N9UNW, decided to step down as Pepin County EC and recommended Stephen Fisher, WB9NTO, for the position. I am happy to say Stephen accepted and has been appointed Pepin County EC. Welcome Steve! I am sure Mark is glad to be down to only one county, and will continue as Buffalo County EC.

ARES Senior Leadership Meeting Update

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC Wisconsin

On February 28, 2004, we held our first ARES Senior Leadership Meeting in Wausau. Rich Maier, KC9NW, was our host and found a great place. Don Michalski, W9IXG, ARRL Wisconsin Section Manager, my assistants, the district emergency coordinators (DEC) and I attended this meeting. Everyone except for two of the DEC's was able to attend. This group will act as the decision makers for ARES issues in Wisconsin. I generally will make the final decision on matters after consulting with Don. I think this configuration will work very well and gives us a better sense of the state before we make significant decisions.

At this meeting, we discussed and made decisions about several items. You can read a summary from the meeting here http://www.wi-aresraces.org/wi-aresraces/New_News%20and%20information.htm. In this article, we concentrate on the following:

- ARRL District Reconfiguration
- DEC Responsibilities
- EmComm Requirements

ARRL District Reconfiguration

This item did not take long to discuss. Since we want to work closer with Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), we want to be better aligned with them. WEM has the state split into six regions, while the ARRL/ARES has the state split into nine districts. There is a lot of overlap between the regions and districts, but the bottom line is they are different and it is difficult to be really aligned when our regions and districts are

so different. My recommendation was to reconfigure our districts to match the WEM regions. One of the attendees said, "this is a no-brainer, lets do it." So we have. Don Michalski, W9IXG, contacted ARRL HQ and they gave permission to reconfigure the districts. They will still be called districts and will match the WEM regions. As a result, we'll consolidate two of the DEC positions. This change means the DECs will have more territory than in the past. I recommended they appoint assistants in various areas to help with the coordination of a larger area. At the time of the meeting, only one DEC had an assistant. This change will be effective May 1, 2004.

DEC Responsibilities

For the most part, the DEC has been a figurehead position with vague responsibilities and duties. As a result, DECs have traditionally been not extremely active. This has begun to change in the last couple of years. The following is intended to facilitate that change even more to make our organization and service level stronger.

- DEC must be the first point of contact for the County EC's.
- The DECs will make filling county EC vacancies a priority.
- The DECs will work with ARES/RACES groups to resolve small issues in an effort to keep them from becoming large.
- The DECs will continue to lead simulated emergency tests within their districts.
- DECs should make periodic reports (at least two a year) to the SEC.
- DECs should create a one-page list of frequencies and other contact information for the counties within their region. These could be published on the ARES/RACES Web site for easy retrieval as needed. These can serve as a mini communications plan.
- Periodic district nets are also recommended

I'll be modifying the DEC position description in the near future. For ECs and AECs, the biggest change you will notice is your DEC should be your first point of contact before contacting me or SM Don Michalski, W9IXG. This does not mean you cannot contact us, but if it is ARES/RACES related, you should run it by your DEC first. This will tighten up our chain-of-command and provide the ECs with better support because your DEC will only have 10 or 12 counties to deal with instead of 72! These changes are also intended to create more interaction among the counties and encourage mutual aid, which is something we need to get better at, especially with the smaller, more rural counties. This change also become effective May 1, 2004.

EmComm Requirements

In 2003, Wisconsin became the first state to begin requiring ARES leadership to complete the ARRL sponsored Emergency Communications courses. The effective date for completion was June 30, 2004, for Level I and June 30, 2005, for Levels II and III. All ARES leadership was to complete all courses or be replaced. This decision was made for the good of the organization and the clients we provide service to. What was not foreseen at the time was the difficulty getting registered for these courses. Since Wisconsin decided to require EmComm courses for its ARES leadership, several other states have begun requiring EmComm course completion of its ARES leadership, thus the influx of registrants has continued to make registering the course challenging.

We discussed this situation at length and took a lot into consideration. We think we have an equitable program that will work for most everyone and continue to enhance our knowledge base and capabilities. Below are the revised EmComm requirements:

Effective immediately, the new EmComm requirements are:

- Level 1 is required for all ARES Leadership positions – ECs, DECs, ASECs and SEC (graduation date extended to 12/31/2004).

- Level 2 is required for ARES Senior Leadership positions – DEC, ASEC and SEC (graduation date extended to 12/31/2005).
- Level 3 is required for ARES Executive Leadership positions – ASECs and SEC (graduation date extended to 12/31/2005).

All ARES/RACES members are highly encouraged to take as many of the EmComm courses as they can. General ARES/RACES members **WILL NOT** be required to take these courses. We will do a better job marketing these courses in the future and the hybrid courses are starting to become popular, so graduation should be easier to attain.

It is important to also note, no existing EC will be terminated based upon his/her decision to not complete EmComm Level I; this does not apply to senior and executive leadership staff, however. If an EC decides not to complete EmComm Level I, he/she will not be eligible for a senior leadership position. All new ECs will either need to have completed EmComm Level I prior to appointment, or within six months after appointment.

I believe these new requirements are in the best interest of Wisconsin ARES/RACES. However, there is not a person in our 1400 ARES/RACES members who would not benefit by completing the courses. Please check it out. <http://www.arri.org/cce/>

Weather Spotter Training in Western Central Wisconsin

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

About 43 People attended the Basic Weather Spotter Training presented by the National Weather Service held on March 25, 2004, at Black River Falls, Wisconsin.

