



The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Newsletter



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The WI ARES/RACES 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 WI ARES/RACES leadership and members 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 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 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 ARES/RACES Newsletter, Bill Niemuth, Editor".*

ARES Leadership and Organizational Changes

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

I am happy to report we have found a replacement for **Greg Hammerel, W9GDH**, as Barron County EC! **Craig Nicholson, KW9R**, has been appointed to the position. Craig has systems engineering experience and has completed EmComm Levels I and II. Please welcome Craig when you hear him!

After 13 years without an EC and an ARES/RACES organization, I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Dennis Schmidt, KC9HMB**, as the Langlade County EC. Dennis has been in emergency response most of his career and is looking forward to the challenge of getting a dormant county moving again. He has even already made some contacts in Forest County, which is also EC-less. Hopefully, Dennis can start a groundswell of activity in some counties where we have not had active groups as of late. Welcome Dennis!

Tsunami Debrief Conference on Andaman Island

By Hank Kryger, WA9QJH, Douglas County ARES/RACES

I attended a conference on Andaman Island, located in the Bay of Bengal, which was organized by the NIAR (National Institute of Amateur Radio, (the Indian Amateur Radio organization) to talk about Amateur Radio support during the tsunami and for hams to get together, as well as a DX expedition. I was invited to attend the Hamfest/Conference/DX expedition since I attended GAREC (Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications) 2005 conference in Tampere, Finland.

In December 2004, a group of Indian Hams went to Andaman Island located in the Bay of Bengal, just south of Burma and north of the Indonesian Island of Sumatra. The Indian Hams had been working on the permission to operate on the island for more than a decade. The group had been operating on the Island for a couple of days before the tsunami hit on December 26, 2004. Needless to say they immediately suspended DX operations and offered their assistance to the local authorities. At first the answer was, "we do not need help, our own systems are adequate." As one of the Indian hams told me, it did not take an hour before they were requested to assist. The DX team-members were airlifted, by the military, to other islands to provide emergency communications. The team provided communications to the Indian mainland as well as to Sumatra in Indonesia. Traffic for the local authorities as well as health and welfare messages were handled, some passed to DX stations around the world.

What was learned:

- DX expedition experience was an excellent learning tool to be able to quickly shift location and be ready to operate.
- Conventional communications systems broke down quickly due to overload. Satellite cell phone systems failed due to overload, the same for landline phones. Disrupted power supplies also played a role in the breakdown of the landline system.
- Point-to-point communications were the only available reliable communication.

From conversations over coffee it was clear that prior coordination with emergency agency officials is important since the prior contact established a working relationship and trust between the official and the Ham operators.

It is clear to me we cannot depend on repeater operations during an emergency nor on satellite cell phones. I therefore urge every county EC to establish a plan for point to point communications using 2-meter equipment.



FREE COMPUTERS AVAILABLE!

By Dr. Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR, WI SEC Emeritus

Another few have come in, this time from Ozaukee County Government, and as of now, I have several for distribution. These machines are for ARES/RACES use, and they are packet, WinLink, and PSK-31-ready. They may be used for these or other digital modes, logging, administration in connection with emergency communications, or training for emergency communications, including Field Day. They are also available to upgrade older, slower machines you may have received from me in the past (but please pass those older machines on to a ham who can use them, or recycle them appropriately). They may be used in EOCs, in ham's homes, or anywhere else that would suit their intended purpose. I will distribute these units to ARES/RACES Leadership Officials (ECs and above), although recipients are perfectly welcome to request machines for subsequent distribution to members of their unit.

The CPUs are plenty fast for our ham programs. Hard drive sizes vary, but all have adequate free space. Each has a CD-ROM drive, 3½-inch floppy drive and sound capability, as well as the usual serial, parallel and USB ports. Each has been physically cleaned inside and out. The hard drives have been wiped, repartitioned and reformatted, and a fresh copy of Windows 2000 Professional has been installed (Win2K is better than XP, and there is no learning curve to deal with if you are familiar with either Win98 or XP). Every update available as of the day of rebuilding has been installed. Each has .NET Framework 1.1 and 2.0 (you may need both), including updates, and several general and ham programs that may be of use. For example, each

comes with WinZip, Foxit Reader (for .pdf files; much better than Acrobat), an MS-Word compatible word processor, etc. Each is defragmented after adding all software. They come with a keyboard, mouse and power cord. Normally, I do not stock monitors, but I sometimes have one or two spares – check with me if you need one. These units are workhorses; each has been tested and should give many years of additional service. Two on hand now are low profile desktops, which take very little space on a desk, and the others are towers. Brands vary – IBM, Compaq, Dell, etc.

How can you get one? Send me an email request at skaplan@mcw.edu. I will send units to you via our fine ARES/RACES “Computer Courier” – **Keith Lodahl, KB9NUM**. Keith travels many parts of the state for his job, and he will deliver the computers to you or get them nearby. First come, first served, so fire off that email soon! Any orders not filled will be kept on a list for the next batch that comes in.

Once again, ECs, DEC’s or other WI ARES/RACES leadership officials must make the request and receive the computers, though they can subsequently distribute computers to member of their units.

WI ARES/RACES Senior Leadership Conference Recap

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

On Saturday, April 29, 2006, the annual WI ARES/RACES Senior Leadership Conference was held in Stevens Point. Thanks to **Rick Abbott, WX9M**, for arranging everything!

The following is a quick recap of what was discussed and the actions taken:

Hospital Bio-Terrorism Program

Presentation by **Skip Sharpe, W9REL**, ASEC for Training, and Program Director

Skip discussed tips for the DEC’s and EC’s to help complete the remainder of the Phase II surveys:

- Build the relationships with the hospital contacts (phone calls, meetings, e-mails)
- Set a district deadline to get plans completed
- Use mutual assistance from counties that have completed their plans or can share resources to help those struggling counties
- Eliminate the confusion of the myth this is a monumental task; it is really quite simple, gather the data and send to Skip
- Strive for organization and efficiency, concentrate on completion
- Nearly 50 percent of the plans were complete

WI ARES/RACES Emergency Communications Plan

The current VECS plan is more of an Organizational Program Manual and the WEM Hamshack Activation Plan is more of a frequency resource sheet than a true activation plan. A committee was established to rework these documents and focus on implementing the scope, flowcharts, and response plans into a new dynamic activation plan. The VECS plan will become the WI ARES/RACES communications plan and be a fairly static Program Manual. **Skip Sharpe, W9REL**, ASEC for Training, chairs the committee with **Joe Senulis, N9TWA**, and **Tom Kurcharski, W9TJK**, providing consulting and assistance.

NIMS Training

The certification deadline for federal workers is October 2006. WI ARES/RACES has committed to a date of December 31, 2006, for compliance with the NIMS training. All ARES/RACES members need at least IS-700 and IS-100 or equivalent. We discussed the “equivalent” part and feel EmComm I satisfies this for IS-100, but IS-700 must be taken from FEMA.

There is a training aid on the WI ARES/RACES website that can be used at a meeting and be equivalent to IS-100 also. You can find the PowerPoint presentation here http://www.wi-aresraces.org/Incident_Command_long.ppt#4.

WeComm Ltd update:

The annual Board of Directors meeting was held the morning of Saturday, April 29, in Stevens Point and board members were elected along with officers. WeComm, Ltd. is a non-profit organization created for three purposes:

1. Design, construct and maintain a statewide voice repeater system
2. Design, construct and maintain a statewide digital data network
3. Any other activity supporting points one and two

Recruiting new members:

Advertise, use the media (newspapers, flyers, websites, e-mail) stressing exciting NWS Weather Spotting service, rewarding Public Service, and much needed emergency response capabilities. With the ham population getting a year older every year, it is imperative to not just the survival of ARES/RACES, but the survival of ham radio all together to get new folks into the service. National Weather Service spotter training sessions provide a natural recruiting opportunity. All ARES/RACES leadership is encouraged to spend a few minutes in front of the spotter training audience telling them about the Amateur Radio Service and how they can become licensed.

WeComm, Ltd. Holds Its 2006 Annual Meeting

By Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, SEC WI

WeComm, Ltd. held its annual meeting on Saturday, April 29, 2006, in Stevens Point. Board members and officers were elected and two committees were authorized by the Board.

The following Board of Directors was elected. Their terms also appear.

Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO – 1 Dave Kaun, N9KMY – 2 Skip Sharpe, W9REL – 3
Don Michalski, W9IXG – 4 Keith Lodahl, KB9NUM – 5

The following officers were elected to a one-year term:

Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, President and Treasurer Don Michalski, W9IXG, Vice President
Keith Lodahl, KB9NUM, Secretary

The following committees were authorized by the Board of Directors:

- Statewide Voice Repeater System – Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO, Chairperson
- Statewide Digital Data Network – Jim Darrow, KB9MMC, Chairperson

Many items were discussed including; repeater and digital network site opportunities, 501 (c)(3) application status, fundraising, meeting schedules, web site and marketing materials. The 501 (c)(3) application will be submitted to the IRS as soon as possible and fundraising will begin toward the end of summer 2006. Construction on the first repeater will begin in September or October 2006.
