



PRIORITY TRAFFIC

Newsletter of the DELAWARE COUNTY Amateur Radio Emergency Service



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“ Service - Commitment - Readiness “

2nd Quarter 2009

DELAWARE COUNTY ARES BUSY IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE

For the past 15 months DEC Bob Famiglio, K3RF, AEC Ray Jones, KB3NFE and Delaware County EC Bob Wilson, W3BIG have been busy planning and implementing improvements to the Amateur Radio emergency communications infrastructure in the county.

At the EOC, new HF antennas have been added including a 10-80 meter OCF dipole that has dramatically improved performance and a 6-40 meter Hygain vertical on the tower. A Davis digital weather station has also been added with plans to link the unit to the RMS packet station.

Following successful ARES presentations to a panel of hospital administrators in Delaware County, several medical facilities agreed to install VHF / UHF equipment for ARES use. Additionally, Delaware County Memorial Hospital has purchased and will install a complete D-STAR repeater system with voice and digital messaging on the 70 cm and 1.2 G bands. The Director of Safety and Security at DCMH, Armand Alessi, KC2UYT, recently received his Amateur Radio license and has been instrumental in making this happen. The D-STAR repeater system at DCMH will make the hospital a major emergency communications hub for Delaware County.

Delaware County Department of Emergency Services has also discussed purchasing and installing a new analog repeater for ARES use at the Fair Acres complex in addition to hosting another D-STAR stack with both voice and messaging capability.



Bob Famiglio and Ray Jones prep tower for new HF vertical.

Bob Famiglio has been instrumental in representing ARES and securing grant funding for the purchase of portable emcomm communications kits for the five counties in District One. Each county will receive three complete kits that will include an HF transceiver, D-STAR transceiver, TNC, laptop computer and batteries enclosed in Pelican cases. These kits will enable multiple ARES / RACES teams to deploy and provide the highest level of service to municipal, county, state and federal government.

RAPID DEPLOY EMCOMM KITS TO GREATLY ENHANCE CAPABILITY

Delaware County ARES will receive three Rapid Deployment Emergency Communications Kits as part of the Phase One grant from the Anti-Terrorism Strike Force. The kits will provide key emcomm communications capability including email via Winlink and MARS global networks, D-Star high-speed voice and data communications, HF voice and data communications and VHF and UHF voice (FM) and data communications.

Each Rapid Deployment kit will contain a Yaesu FT-857 HF/VHF/UHF transceiver, HP Windows-based laptop computer, SCS PTC-II HF/VHF radio modem, Icom ID-1 D-Star 1.2G transceiver, SG-237 automatic antenna tuner, HP H470 portable inkjet printer, 12 VDC rechargeable battery system, Super PWRgate backup power system and battery charger, Samlex SEC-1235 12VDC/35 amp power supply, Netgear WGR614L wireless router, Diamond NR2000A antenna with DPK-4NM-N mag-mount, Directive Systems 2314LYRM yagi antenna for 1.2G and all necessary RF, AC and DC power cables. Each Rapid Deployment Kit will be enclosed in two large Pelican waterproof cases for protection under all conditions. A D-STAR transceiver for use at the EOC will also be included to facilitate communication with sister ARES units in Bucks, Chester, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties.

The three Rapid Deployment Kits will greatly enhance emergency communications capability within the county. With all five counties in EPA District One using the same equipment, interoperability will also be significantly improved.

Are training and drills necessary ?

Why do we bother to train, participate in exercises and take certification courses? The answer is obvious. We need to be ready if we are called upon to assist with communications in emergencies and disasters. Sometimes it seems that possibility is remote, and that's a good thing. But, every month in some corner of our nation ARES units are activated to help in widespread emergencies. Hurricanes, wildfires, ice storms, floods and other natural disasters can wreak havoc on the communications infrastructure.

We are lucky in our region that natural disasters are rare. But, we can't let our guard down. Mother Nature proves time and again she is fickle and unpredictable. The ice storms that took out power lines in the South could just as easily have struck our area if wind patterns had been different. Coastal nor'easters can drop four feet of snow in the Delaware Valley. It has happened in the past and will certainly happen again.

Weather is not all we need to worry about. Refinery accidents, airline crashes and other man-made disasters are always possible in our heavily industrialized region. And chemical and biological threats from terrorism are also a potential. The November Airport Disaster Exercise demonstrated the importance of being ready.

It's often a difficult challenge to motivate people to take training courses or participate in the drills we schedule. The responsibilities of family and job are certainly priorities. As volunteers we have indicated a willingness to also place the welfare of the general public in our priorities. That dedication requires sacrifices in personal time and even some monetary expenses. In the present climate of economic uncertainty, those sacrifices are not inconsequential.

Much of the training we require to attain certifications is available online from FEMA and the ARRL. These courses can be taken at your convenience and most have no cost. The four FEMA courses required for admission to federally managed disaster sites are free. The three ARECC courses available from the ARRL have fees associated with them, but the Level I course is the only one required.

The exercises we schedule are among the most beneficial activities in which members can participate. The drills usually involve real-world operating under field conditions. ARES / RACES personnel deploy to sites, erect antennas, set up field communications stations and power them from batteries or alternate means. It's always rewarding to watch Joe Ames, W3JY power his radios off batteries charged by solar panels. These drills not only yield experience and confidence but are a lot of fun.

Drills are the closest we come to the real thing. They are important because we test equipment and personnel under actual field conditions. Equipment problems can be discovered and operating protocols practiced. These exercises also provide excellent opportunities to operate as teams. Teamwork is crucial in emergency communications and is an acquired skill. Everything we learn in drills can be applied if we are activated.

Yes, training and drills are very necessary elements in our preparation as emergency communicators. They can be the difference between life and death.



Bob Wilson, W3BIG
Emergency Coordinator

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Is the official newsletter of the Delaware County ARES / RACES Organization. Please direct all inquiries, article submissions or other correspondence to:

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THE FOLLOWING DELCO ARES MEMBERS ALSO HOLD LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN EPA DISTRICT 1

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UPCOMING EVENTS / ACTIVITIES

JUN 3 ARES Meeting - 1800 at EOC

JUN 3 Advanced Skywarn - 1900 at EOC

JUN 13-15 ARRL VHF QSO Party

JUN 27/28 Field Day at Ridley Creek State Park

For more information, check our website:

www.delcoares.org

News articles and features published in this newsletter are from many sources, including QST and CQ magazines, and will be attributed where space permits. We apologize for any omission.

ARES / RACES NET

1930 Hours every Wednesday

446.925 Repeater PL 173.8

KA3TWG / R in Bethel Twp.

DELAWARE CO. SKYWARN

446.925 Repeater PL 173.8

224.220 Repeater PL 91.5



RAY JONES, KB3NFE APPOINTED AEC FOR DELAWARE CO. ARES / RACES

Ray Jones, KB3NFE, of Folsom was appointed Assistant Emergency Coordinator for Delaware County ARES/RACES in December of 2008. Ray has been one of the most active team members in the past year and has been instrumental in the success of exercises and events. His knowledge of and experience in field operations has been extremely valuable.

Ray's wife Lori, KB3PRF has also played a major role in recent exercises and charity walks. This husband-wife team is rather unique in the EMCOMM community and we are lucky to have them. Lori's hospitality in feeding hungry hams when deployed is something our volunteers appreciate immensely.

One of Ray's greatest contributions to Delaware County ARES has been his tireless efforts in deploying his 27 foot trailer which he has outfitted as our Mobile Command post. The trailer is fitted with antenna masts for VHF and UHF verticals as well as a gasoline generator for powering communications and lighting. This valuable asset has helped make many of our exercises and events successful.

JOE RZUCIDLO, K3CGA, FORMER EC USCG AUX AND MARS OPERATOR, SK

Joseph Rzucidlo - K3CGA, 59, of Trainer, died Tuesday, March 17 at Riddle Memorial Hospital following a lengthy illness. Joe served as Delaware County's ARES Emergency Coordinator from 2003 to 2006. Joe was also very active with U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary communications, Army MARS and was an official SHARES station. He was certified as an emergency communications instructor and was designated by the ARRL as an Official Emergency Station.

Joe enjoyed operating on the high frequencies, two meters, six meters and the 70 cm band. In addition to his service with ARES, Army MARS and the Coast Guard, Joe had also been previously active as a firefighter. He was retired from the Navy Department where he had worked as a human resource technician supervisor. Joe was a Vietnam veteran and dedicated his entire life to serving his nation and community.

Joe is survived by his wife of 24 years, Mary "Kay" Concannon Rzucidlo; daughters, Kimberly Weatherill of Oxford and Jennifer Swartz of College Station, Texas; son, Michael Rzucidlo of Media; parents, Joseph S. and Alice M. Rzucidlo of Ogden, Upper Chichester; four grandchildren.

Joe's service was an inspiration to all ARES / RACES team members. His words and voice will be missed on our nets and area repeaters. A memorial tribute to Joe's service is planned for the ARES radio room at the EOC honoring his many contributions and years of dedication.



Ray Jones - KB3NFE, AEC for operations with the Mobile Command Trailer at Ridley Creek State Park June 3, 2009.

DELCO ARES KICKS OFF 2009 SEASON WITH MARCH FOR BABIES, MS WALK

Delaware County Amateur Radio Emergency Service fielded its largest communications crew ever Sunday, May 3rd in support of the MS Walk at Ridley Creek State Park. A robust team of 18 radio operators manned six checkpoints throughout the course as well as a large net control station.

Despite continual rain showers operators provided flawless communications for the event and handled several incidents requiring immediate response. Radio operators helped find a lost nine year-old boy, got assistance for a person in a disabled motorized wheelchair and even transported disoriented participants.

Instrumental to the success of communications was deployment of the unit's 27 foot Mobile Command Trailer. Ray Jones-KB3NFE and his wife Lori-KB3PRF spent hours setting up the net control station powered by a hefty gasoline generator. Two 30 foot-high masts topped with dual-band antennas helped direct VHF simplex signals into every corner of the park. Bob Famiglio-K3RF and Roger Jordan-W4RFJ handled NCS duties.

Hal Frantz-KA3TWG brought a crew of 10 radio operators from Penn-Del Amateur Radio Club including some newly licensed people who earned their tickets in his successful Ham-in-a-Day class held in April. The amateurs from Penn-Del ARC included Bob Palin-N3JIZ, Mike Baker-N3TI, Dan Vernot-N3FCX, Tom Robinson-KB3SUP, Art Sciocchetti-KB3SUR, Craig Skotnicki-KB3SUM, Vic Orlando-N3DIV, Bill Palin-N3NUL and Paul Iacopucci-N3NNL. The new operators got their feet wet both literally and figuratively in public service communications and did a great job.

Rounding out the communications team were Fred Field-N3OFR, Amy Talley-N3RLX, Sam Leidy-KF3G and Bob Wilson-W3BIG. Sunday's MS Walk followed the March for Babies held the previous week on April 26. Between the two events Delaware County ARES logged 120 man-hours of public service.

AIRPORT DISASTER DRILL MAJOR ARES SUCCESS

The Philadelphia Airport Emergency Preparedness Exercise held November 1, 2008 was a resounding success story for Delaware County ARES / RACES. The drill, a joint operations exercise between local, county and federal agencies as well as area hospitals, demonstrated the value of Amateur Radio to all involved.

Designated PHL EPEX 2008, the exercise simulated the crash of a commercial airliner at Philadelphia International Airport. Fire and Rescue companies from surrounding communities responded with units that battled the fire and provided triage and first-aid to victims. Over 120 patients were transported to hospitals in Delaware County and Philadelphia.

Delaware County ARES was tasked with communications responsibility for transporting simulated patients to area hospitals. Buses transported patients on four routes from the crash site. A Communications Command Base was established at the Tinicum Fire Station located a few miles west of the airport.

The communications team was also a joint operation comprised of Delaware County ARES / RACES personnel, members from Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club and an ARES member from Bucks County. Manning the Tinicum Communications Base were Joe Ames-W3JY, Ray Jones-KB3NFE, Lori Jones-KB3PRF, Todd Hevener-KB3LCT and Bob Wilson-W3BIG. Four members from Holmesburg ARC rode the buses, providing critical communications that made the drill successful. They were Charlye Johnson-K3CJ, Norman Simms-KB3QZP, Joe Wysochanski-KB3OYF and Solomon Volen-N3UBY. Bob Famiglio-K3RF served as liaison with



Bob Famiglio-K3RF relays requests from airport managers in ramp control tower to ARES Base at Tinicum Fire Dept.

airport managers in the ramp control tower.

Adding to the realism of the exercise was the lack of advance notification that Delaware County ARES / RACES would be tasked with responsibility for the drill. The unit was asked to undertake the exercise with less than two weeks in which to plan and execute a response. The success of the exercise was a direct reflection of the professionalism and dedication of all Amateur Radio personnel involved.

Amateur Radio proved its worth when managers from the bus company could not communicate with their drivers via cell phones or Nextels. Seamless contact was maintained with all buses, airport managers and the ARES Communications Base at Tinicum via Amateur Radio.

When all else fails, Amateur Radio



Ray Jones-KB3NFE uses VHF and UHF repeaters to route buses to hospitals in Delaware County and the city of Philadelphia.



Mobile Command Trailer used for ARES Base at Tinicum FD.