

Section Emergency Coordinator's Midmonth Report

Greetings once again. I hope this finds you doing well and getting some time to yourself and the opportunity once in a while to do some Amateur radio. A number of things are going on in the background attempting to prepare for events coming up later this year.

**NORTHWEST DISTRICT DIGITAL WORKSHOP:** This last March 28th Northwest DEC Frank Dean (K4SJR) and Northwest ADEC Jim Hadder (KE4ZX) held a workshop for basic D-STAR and basic D-RATS followed by advanced D-RATS. Participants only had to bring their computers and were assisted in installing and configuring D-RATS software. Over a roughly 3 and a half hour period John Davis (WB4QDX), DEC for Georgia Public Broadcasting, conducted the training session. I am working with Todd Hargrave (NT4TH) DEC for Southeast to see if we can duplicate the same kind of digital workshop in Southeast in the near future.

**CALHOUN HAMFEST:** Takes place April 25th at Sugar Valley just North of Calhoun on highway 136. They will be demonstrating working configurations of all three of the standard Georgia ARES digital applications - Winlink, FLDIGI, and D-RATS from 8am to 10am. At 10am there will be an ARES digital forum. This will be more than just a tailgate party. Vendors Tower Electronics from Green Bay Wisconsin, JMR sales out of Alabama, and CT Morgan out of Chattanooga are slated to be present. Here's the Google maps link for the location:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Sugar+Valley,+GA+30746/@34.5615722,-85.01769,237m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x8860066d96978abb:0xcaf5a1299c718574> . Here's their web site for the hamfest: <http://k4woc.com/calhoun-hamfest-saturday-april-25-2015-8-am-2-pm/>

**SNIPPET FROM THE EMAG CONFERENCE:** Barry Kanne (W4TGA) DEC for Public Health reported from the Emergency Management Association of Georgia (EMAG) at Savannah that (quoting) The keynote speaker for this year was Bob Patterson, Executive Director - Mercy Emergency Medical Services, based in southwest Missouri. He was the person tasked with coordination of all the EMS activities in the aftermath of the F5 tornado that took out most of Joplin, MO including the hospital. He described the chronology of the "what and where" involved in safely removing and relocating 183 patients to appropriate healthcare facilities in neighboring town and cities, including his own. He spoke for over an hour and I am happy to report that his presentation was liberally sprinkled with praise for ham radio and the excellent support they provided once the tornado had moved on. He said his only regret was not getting the ham community activated earlier in the recovery effort. But he had nothing but praise for our fellow ham operators and their service to the hospitals and other elements of the healthcare community.

**UPDATE ON STATE ARES ID:** Matt Gonter (AC4MG - recently WD4OAZ) has taken over the primary role of processing the intake and handling of the State ARES ID card as ASEC for Education and Validation. He will process new ID candidates and current ID holders for new and updated ID cards. Matt will be working with Barry Kanne (W4TGA) who performs the actual printing of the ID cards. We'll update the GAARES.ORG website shortly to reflect this update and new additional information. Matt's E-mail address is [matt.ares@gonter.net](mailto:matt.ares@gonter.net)

**JONES COUNTY PRACTICE DIGITAL NET:** The Jones County group holds a digital practice net Wednesday nights around 8:45pm on 3.5875 with PSK31 centered on 1000. They send attendees up the waterfall to pass practice traffic and then

return to 1000 using MT63-1000L. You're invited to join in with them. Contact Gary Branch (N5BI - EC for Jones County) at gabranch@att.net.

**NORTHWEST DIGITAL NET:** The Northwest District holds a digital net every Tuesday evening at 7:30pm taking check-ins on 3.583 with PSK125 centered between 1000 and 1500 depending on nearby traffic. Look for NCS to be call sign W4NWX.

**NEW AND RECENT LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS:** Gary Alberstadt (KA3FZO) DEC for Southwest Georgia. Tom Hayward (W6UHN) EC Upson County. Paul Russell Jr. (N4AIR) EC Fannin County.

**ANNUAL COMMEX EXERCISE:** Jim Millsap (WB4NWS) DEC Metro Atlanta reports that GEMA will be conducting a Communications Exercise (COMMEX) Wednesday and Thursday, May 6-7 at Stone Mountain Park. Many Public Safety Agencies will bring their EMCOMM vehicles and have already coordinated Amateur Radio support. North Fulton, Rockdale and Cherokee County ARES groups have been requested by their respective County Agencies to support them during the two day exercise. In addition, the GEMA State Operations Center (SOC) Amateur Radio Station will be activated to accept voice and data traffic. The GEMA COMMEX tests the preparedness and interoperability between the many agencies participating and what Amateur Radio can "bring to the table" to support emergency communications. During the exercise, public safety and amateur stations are given sealed envelope tasks to complete. To further tests capabilities, "injects" a.k.a. unexpected events, are thrown into the mix to see if the tasks can be completed. Past exercises have had some real life scenarios added into the mix and results of the two day exercise are covered in a "hotwash" on Friday morning. Communications Leader (COML), Communications Technician (COMT), Auxiliary Communications or AUXCOMM (ARES, RACES, etc.), and many other Incident Command positions are tested as well. Charles Pennington, K4GK, will activate 3.975 & 7.2875 as needed on May 6th and 7th. Both WX4GSP and WX4GMA will be activated. VHF/UHF simplex frequencies will be utilized along with area repeaters including D-Star. Stay tuned for the final results!

**SPECIAL EVENT STATION:** Steve Bramham, (W4SKB), has received FCC authorization to activate a Special Event Station, N4V, to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Ending of the Vietnam War on April 30th 1975. N4V will be on the air at various times during the day from April 30th through May 3rd on the following frequencies: 3.840MHz, 7.240MHz, 14.240MHz, 21.340MHz, & 28.340MHz. The frequencies are located in the General portion of each band to allow more stations the opportunity to contact N4V. Note that the '40' digits in each frequency were also selected representing the 40th anniversary...actual frequencies will be plus or minus any QRM. A 'framed' certificate from N4V is available by mailing a SASE and the QSO/QSL information to: N4V, P.O. Box 3083, Kennesaw, Ga 30156. Steve Bramham W4SKB, Jim Millsap WB4NWS, Tom Holcomb K5AES and possibly Lowry Rouse KM4Z, will be the N4V operators.

**ONGOING ACTIVITY AT THE LEADERSHIP LEVEL:** Planning sessions taking place in May and this summer with Georgia Public Health in preparation for the Statewide SNS (Strategic National Stockpile) drill, scheduled for November 16-18 where we are in the early stages of looking at the possibility of merging our SET with their drill. The SNS drill will also include neighboring states. In an initial meeting with them in February they indicated an interest in conveying digital form messages. Barry Kanne (W4TGA) DEC for Public Health is coordinating this effort. We are continuing

to develop a better interface with MARS to learn how to more effectively coordinate our nets. I am hoping to involve MARS in the possible SNS drill.

David Benoist - AG4ZR  
Section Emergency Coordinator