



CENTRALIA AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE TEAM

August, 2020

Amateur Radio is a hobby ... Amateur Radio Emergency Service is a commitment!

WSP Trooper Justin Schaffer Memorial Service



When Washington State Patrol Trooper Justin Schaffer died in the line of duty on May 15th, no one fully understood how Covid-19 would change things. Nearly three months would pass before Trooper Schaffer's memorial service could occur.

Our Centralia ARES team was honored to play a small part during the memorial service by helping to provide parking direction and some traffic control in and around Fort Borst Park where the service was to be held. Our August 3rd ARES training was conducted at the park to allow our teams to understand their role in the service and to be sure everyone knew where to go. There were multiple red, yellow and blue designated parking areas and we had been told to expect as many as 250 law enforcement vehicles. Additionally, we needed to locate a place for our own ARES communications van as well.

Wednesday, August 5th dawned with beautiful blue skies and warm temperatures. An early morning meeting to discuss timing of the law enforcement procession as it moved up Interstate 5 was impressive with rows of local and state motorcycles lined up. As the morning progressed, Riverside Fire and Chehalis Fire erected their ladder equipment to display a huge flag over the procession route. Seattle Police Department's mounted horse unit arrived with the traditional two mounted officers and one riderless mount representing a fallen officer. A bagpipe team and honor guard formed as everyone received word that the procession was exiting Interstate 5 into downtown Centralia and local traffic routes were temporarily shut down. While some of the family and dignitaries entered Borst Park via the Johnson Road entrance, the majority of law enforcement vehicles were directed around the west side of the park and entered into their respective parking lots through the back of the park. Our ARES volunteers often worked alongside WSP personnel and while busy, parking went smoothly.



Motor vehicles carrying Trooper Schaffer's family moved slowly as they entered the park and were escorted by a WSP honor guard walking on each side of the vehicles, a single hand on the fender, protecting and guiding them to the memorial service. It was truly a moving experience to witness such an outpouring of support for this fallen officer and his family. This is the law enforcement community at its very best.

The Centralia Amateur Radio Emergen-

Service team was proud to be a part of this ceremony and we thank the Washington State Patrol and the Centralia Police Department for allowing us to participate.



Stacy Denham Is Centralia's New Chief of Police



Ever since Chief Carl Nielsen retired in June of this year, Deputy Chief Stacy Denham has been the acting Chief but City Manager Rob Hill moved quickly to make Stacy Centralia's next Chief of Police. Chief Denham has worked closely with our ARES team over the past years and has enthusiastically supported our volunteer efforts.

As I was writing this for our August ARES newsletter, I realized I didn't have an "official" photo of the new Chief, but I like this photo better. Taken at last year's National Night Out Against Crime party in Washington Park, this photo shows a soaking wet recently dunked Stacy Denham hugging a formerly dry Centralia Mayor.

We wish you all the best Chief Denham and remain willing and ready to work closely with you and your staff in the future.

Wildfire Training Exercise As Summer Heats Up

Overall, summer weather hasn't been too bad with one exception (so far) of a weekend full of 100+ degree days so why not pick that time to work through another wildfire training exercise? We've practiced our windshield survey deployments several times using one of our comm vans for communications support. We've conducted evacuation route planning from several areas in and around Centralia. We have worked on house counts to get a quick estimate of potential evacuations should that be required and we've discussed potential threats and hazards that should be identified and reported as necessary. Next it was time to work on site and situation evaluations and reporting.



At times during a wildfire, homeowners may suddenly smell or see smoke and be unaware of the actual working fire. They are quick to become concerned and often call 911. During this training session, our volunteers were sent to multiple locations primarily to evaluate the likelihood of the active fire being the origin of the "smell of smoke" complaint.

Team members had to locate the addresses given using their map book and once on scene, evaluate what they see, smell and hear. Is the smoke consistent with the wind direction from the active fire? They needed to evaluate the terrain, fuel package and density of the smoke to decide the probability of smoke from the active fire or if a potential second fire was present. Finally, each team member was asked to report their evaluation back to the Communication van in a concise and factual manner.

This type of training gives us an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with roads, map coordinates, reporting and the general lay of the land. Becoming proficient at this takes time and practice. Even radio communications, something we are used to, becomes more difficult as information must be repeated back to "close the loop", but overall, we can use the practice and will be returning to this type of exercise in September.

COVID-19
coronavirus

Unfortunately, Covid-19 and all its regulatory issues and fears is still with us as we leave August with no real end in sight. We will continue to conduct exercises and social distancing where and when possible. Zoom meetings as training sessions continue as an option and will become more necessary as our northwest weather closes in. In the meantime, stay safe as we move into September.