



CENTRALIA AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE TEAM

October, 2020

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

Winlink Digital Message Practice Sessions



Summer is behind us and the good weather is quickly fading. As such, our opportunities to conduct field exercises are a little more difficult but that's to be expected here in the Pacific Northwest.

Moving back indoors gives our ARES team a perfect opportunity to practice sending and receiving Winlink messages. If you haven't already taken advantage of it, the Lewis County and Centralia ARES Sunday evening

net at 6:45pm on the BawFaw repeater provides a perfect opportunity to practice message traffic with a weekly Winlink or ICS 213 message. Checking into the net is simple and all you have to do is copy the practice message.

Additionally, our late October training at the Mt. View Baptist Church provided yet another chance to learn all there is to know about Winlink messages. James, AE7TF, did a great job explaining how everything needed to be completed on the message forms and helped the team work through two practice messages. As you should know by now, the Washington State EOC prefers digital messages sent to them when and where possible and practice sessions keep us all better operators.

You will certainly see more of these practice sessions in the months to come. Future training will include practice sending and receiving digital and voice messages from both the Centralia EOC and our communications vans. Thanks for keeping on top of this training.

SHARES Weekly Check Ins

For a little over a year now, the Centralia Police Department and its Amateur Radio Emergency Service team have been licensed to operate on the Homeland Security Shared Resources (SHARES) HF network as part of our disaster response communications system. As a SHARES member we are asked to participate in their weekly HF nets. Both Paul, KE7PCB and Chuck, W5KAV have had their home radios modified allowing them to check into the Federal SHARES Northwest net each Wednesday morning at 9am using the call sign(s) authorized to our response agency. Want to know more about SHARES and the weekly net? Contact Chuck or Paul for more information. Our thanks to both of them for their continued dedication to SHARES.

Digital Mobile Radios (DMR) Training

AEC Bill Knepper, N7GWK, our DMR radio guru, has agreed to put together a few short training pieces for upcoming meetings to answer some of the questions you have about code plugs, talk groups, zones and DMR operations in general. If you have questions or need more information, send him an email so he can prepare the training you want. These are great radios and it is time we learn all they can do.

Last 5th Saturday Exercise of 2020

Our final 5th Saturday exercise of 2020 occurred on October 31st. For some time our ARES team has been working to come up with a decent propagation map for our K7CEM repeater. While Lewis and South Thurston counties are beautiful places to live and work, hills, valleys and large piles of just plain dirt can and often do create reception issues. Knowing where those reception issues occur is important so we continually work to identify their locations.

Between 10am and noon on Saturday, a mix of ARES hams and Riverside Fire hams joined to conduct just over 75 propagation location checks throughout our K7CEM response area. In addition, about a dozen tests were completed on our other CARES repeater. Skip, K1HEK, was also able to test the BawFaw Repeater's 6 meter capability with his mobile HF system.

While the exercise began in heavy fog, within an hour the sun was out and it was a beautiful day to play radio. On a future exercise we want to do a similar series of propagation tests using simplex just to confirm what we know about coverage in our response area. Thanks to everyone who participated in the 5th Saturday exercise. It was a great day!

ARES Responses Shift With The Seasons



With the summer months behind us it is time for our ARES team to shift priorities. During the summer months and into the early fall, wildfire response training is our top priority but with the fall rains refresher training shifts to regional flood responses.

Our area has experienced several "100 year" flood events in past years and no year goes by without flood waters threatening our community. We are the only place on Interstate 5 between Canada and Mexico where flood waters have cut that transportation route for days at a time. Predictions from this year's fall and winter weather outlook show an 85% chance of a La Nina through the winter and 60% chance through the spring. These predictions are associated with cooler and wetter than average conditions in the Pacific Northwest. Traditionally, our flood months are November, December and January.

Our last major flood event was 2007 so it has been awhile however nothing has changed in the region to prevent massive flood events from happening again. Time to shift with the seasons and be prepared.

Time To Check & Resupply Your ARES Go-bag



After an article about go-bags appeared in the August 2020 QST magazine, I received quite a few emails requesting a list of "exactly" what items I carried in my go-bag. While I appreciated the reader's interest, a go-bag is a very personal item. Only you know what you might need based on location, type of deployment, and other factors. In our particular area winters are cold but not usually harsh. Rain and floods are more our style during the winter months. Still, there are things you need to include and check to be prepared.

Time to change out wildfire goggles, masks and gloves for warmer stocking caps and gloves. Chemical handwarmers are also a good idea. Beyond these changes, it is time to perhaps change batteries in your flashlights and any radios that use AA batteries as your backup power systems. Don't forget to change out water and snacks as well and update medications. Recheck your first aid kits and replace those pesky band-aids you used over the summer. A change in seasons means a change in preparation for active ARES teams. The time to resupply between summer and winter requires a mental change as well.