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The ARES E-Letter  
Special Edition  
September 11, 2005  
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Edited by Rick Palm, K1CE

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## SPECIAL EDITION TWO: HURRICANE KATRINA FOLLOW-UP

It's been quite a week of studying the ARES response to Hurricane Katrina while keeping a wary eye on storm Ophelia, just off shore here in Flagler County, on the Florida central east coast. Local ARES was on alert. We had winds and driving rain as Ophelia tried to decide which way to turn. Yesterday, it marched to the northeast and today we have an uneasy, almost surreal calm. But, the sky is clear.

Back to Katrina: I can't remember a more comprehensive ARES response, especially in terms of inter-county and interstate mutual assistance, plus the concomitant, unprecedented activity by ARRL HQ staff in support of that response, ever. Even the Chief Operating Officer Harold Kramer, WJ1B, worked over the Labor Day holiday weekend. And word arrived yesterday that the "Hurricane Katrina Amateur Radio Volunteers Needed Clearing House" now is live on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/agencies/>>. The ARRL Letter: "This database will be the primary means for relief organizations requiring Amateur Radio volunteers for communication support to list their needs. Additionally, volunteers looking to help may search the listings to match up their capabilities with the various requirements." That is a first, as far as I know. Credit Joe Tomasone, AB2M, for the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Communications Volunteer Registration and Message Traffic Database he developed.

On the Northern Florida ARES Net this morning, a report was made that "renegade" hams were turned away from an affected area and were to be adorned with "metal bracelets" if they did not leave. Message: Coordinate your volunteer efforts with your own home ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC), or his/her designees. Also, be prepared to be self-sufficient: "If you need it, you bring it," advised Alabama SEC Jay Isbell, KA4KUN. - K1CE

"All of us know this will be a months-long effort. Just because we are unable to immediately send those of you who have registered, that does not mean we will not need you in the future. Your patience in awaiting an assignment that may never come is appreciated. The requirements are likely to change in the future; we are unable to give any idea of when that will be." - Jerry Reimer, KK5CA, STX SEC

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+ NORTHERN TEXAS SECTION RESPONSE

The NTX Section had been on alert since Monday, August 29. NTX SEC Harris Swan, K5MWC, and STX SEC Jerry Reimer, KK5CA, had agreed early on a plan to make effective use of NTX ARES members in response to requests from the affected area. That plan was to prepare a list of people volunteering to go if requested; Reimer would coordinate all requests for assistance.

NTX ARES has primarily been supporting the West Gulf ARES Emergency Net, dealing with H/W traffic, and supporting Red Cross, Salvation Army, and FEMA. Several of the county EOCs requested support as they anticipated operations with the large number of evacuees expected.

NTX will supplement resources in the affected area, provide support to local shelter operations and support relief agencies in response

to their requests. The tempo will certainly pick up as time goes by; NTX ARES is planning for long-term needs. -- NTX SEC Harris Swan, K5MWC

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The following is culled from a status report by the indefatigable Jerry Reimer, KK5CA, South Texas SEC: Hurricane Katrina ARES operations continue in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, North and South Texas sections, using operators recruited from Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, Tennessee, Florida and other nearby states and sections.

#### + LOUISIANA

ARES continues to support Red Cross shelter and Southern Baptist Convention debris-clearing operations in St. Tammany parish, where disaster relief workers are housed and fed at the First Baptist Church in Covington. In Washington Parish, ARES operators are arriving to provide critical communication among hospitals and the parish EOC. Over a dozen operators from Texas alone have traveled to Louisiana. Victoria County (Texas) ARES EC John Wagner, WA5VBP, flew into the New Orleans airport where it was determined that his assignment was unsafe; he was sent on to serve in Baton Rouge.

Communications among the field teams and the state EOC in Baton Rouge continues using HF voice on 75 meters and 40 meters. Surprisingly, many VHF and UHF repeaters remained operational after the storm's passing. Louisiana SEC Gary Stratton, K5GLS, temporarily delegated his authority to former SM Al Oubre, K5DPG. Stratton will be working on restoring the communications infrastructure.

In yesterday's ARRL Letter, Stratton was cited as saying Amateur Radio was the only means for state officials at the state EOC in Baton Rouge to communicate earlier this week with parishes above Lake Pontchartrain. Also, there was a communication to the EOC from FEMA that said, "Ham radio is our prime communications with you, and they should get anything they need."

Reports also have ARES ops even loaning government agencies their equipment.

#### + MISSISSIPPI

The hardest hit areas are perhaps the counties closest to the Gulf

coast, especially Hancock and Harrison Counties. ARES DEC Tom Hammack, W4WLF, requested 25 ARES operators for critical communication among EOCs, hospitals, and shelters. ARRL Northern Florida, West Central Florida and Southern Florida Sections are sending self-sufficient teams to meet this urgent need, and a few operators are coming from Arkansas. Hammack said his operators are sleeping on the floor where they are assigned. State RACES Officer and ARES DEC Ron Brown, AB5WF, is working on a staging area for Amateur Radio responders near the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) in Jackson. Mississippi SM/SEC Malcolm Keown, W5XX, received a replacement generator and now has telephone and Internet service.

[In correspondence with Malcolm, he gave me an appreciation for their mental status and what they are going through on the ground in Mississippi: "At this point nobody has much time to document activities. Nobody at this point really has a clear enough mind to put together a coherent story." -- K1CE]

#### + ALABAMA

The state capitol of Montgomery was the scene of processing and orienting Amateur Radio volunteers for Red Cross and other duty in Louisiana and Mississippi. Some volunteers will help support communication at Red Cross shelters set up for evacuees, while others will provide tactical communication for feeding stations or for emergency management. Alabama SM Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, has been coordinating ham radio volunteers at the Montgomery site. - ARRL Letter

#### + SOUTH TEXAS

The Red Cross reports housing more than 142,000 people in 485 shelters in 18 states. Texas has over 230,000 people who fled. Orange County ARES EC Rocky Wilson, N5MTX, has ARES operators supporting seven Red Cross facilities that include distribution centers and shelters. Since being activated on August 27, 35 ARES operators have provided over 1,200 person-hours, as operations continue. ARES groups from adjacent Jefferson and Polk Counties are providing much-needed mutual aid.

ARES District 14 (Harris County) DEC Ken Mitchell, KD2KW, was requested by the county emergency management office (HCOEM) to provide four operators 24 hours per day, on-site at the Houston Astrodome, and two at the county EOC, beginning September 1. Since

then, more than 90 operators have provided over 720 person-hours of direct communications support. All four county ARES ECs are providing operators at both sites.

Managing the incoming health and welfare inquiry messages is overwhelming nearly all NTS resources, especially at the local level.

To mitigate this, Amateur Radio clubs have been asked to contact nearby shelters as often as possible to pick up outgoing messages and process them into the NTS by any available means.

At the request of the state Adjutant General's office, Travis County ARES EC Don Dudley, AC5YK, facilitated National Guard in Waco with communication with Guard elements at the Louisiana Superdome.

#### + NEW ORLEANS

STX SEC Jerry Reimer, KK5CA, reports: "Amateur Radio operators are beginning to be sent into areas around New Orleans to support command and control operations for Red Cross and other disaster relief operations. The equipment requirement is VHF and UHF FM. Portable, hand-held and mobile stations are needed. Conditions remain primitive. A pass is required from the Louisiana State Police for access beyond roadblocks. Similar requirements exist in Mississippi, where the state EOC is located in Jackson."

#### + NORTHWEST HARRIS COUNTY (TEXAS) ARES

From Hal Merritt, KD5HWW, EC, Northwest Harris County (Texas) ARES: "I have a few moments to breathe and share some notes. We have three running missions: a deployment near Slidell, an operator in New Orleans, and the local event.

The local mission consists of serving the mass shelters in Houston. We saw rapid escalation, much more misinformation than information, and a dynamic situation. The core problem was one we've never seen before: We had trained and drilled on mass evacuations, but not the reverse (mass incoming evacuees). Our local resources were quickly overwhelmed, and I pulled the trigger on our MOU with surrounding county ARES groups. I am now tasking hams from several counties, but may be expanding my plea for operators statewide. The problem is that there is no lodging of any kind to be had. Every hotel and motel is completely full with evacuees.

There is ample local infrastructure, except housing. The event is running along the FEMA ICS (Incident Command System) and UC (Unified

Command) scripts. It may seem like chaos to the untrained eye, but it is a thing of beauty to see it working so well.

Normally, an ARES response team would report to, and be tasked by, the Liaison person of the FEMA Command Staff. There, it might be used as an ICS resource or tasked to Logistics for assignment to Task Forces or Strike Teams. Amateur Radio is not yet an official FEMA Resource Type, but that is being worked on. In this event, the Harris County OEM called us. The EOC is attached to ICS under Logistics, and that is how we fit into this event. The ICS is on site at the Astrodome complex.

The ARES response has two locations. The first team is situated with the EOC, providing communication for logistics (resource scheduling and support of the Dome team). They are making entries into a master event log, also.

The main effort is in the field, however. We have teams of four to six operators. There is a Team Leader who is in charge. He/she is responsible for on-site task assignments and for getting the relief team quickly up to speed. The Team Leaders are ARES AECs, or other amateurs with large public service event experience.

We are running six-hour shifts. No one is scheduled for more than six hours, and they have only one shift per day. Having seen what happens when someone gets too tired, we would rather do without, than have someone get hurt; or worse, get other people hurt. Superheroes need not apply.

The ARES leadership is focused on coordination. Every possible task is being delegated. Although we are working 12-hour days, the real action is with the Team Leaders and Net Controls. No, things are not being done exactly like we would have done it, but it is getting done; and generally, with the highest degree of professionalism. Every time I screw up, there seems to be a number of folks there to beat me up and get the job done right.

Please relay my deepest gratitude to all that have stepped up to the plate. - Contact Hal Merritt, KD5HWW, at [mhal.merritt@worldnet.att.net](mailto:mhal.merritt@worldnet.att.net)

**+ HILLSBOROUGH (FLORIDA) OPS DEPLOYED TO MISSISSIPPI MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR KATRINA SURVIVORS**

Six trained communication volunteers from the Tampa Bay, Florida,

area (sponsored by the Hillsborough County EOC) have been in Mississippi. Using ham radio while awaiting their deployment with state of Florida communications assets, they became one of the few outlets for "I'm Alive" messages out of the area. With local operators in the affected area providing communications to local police, fire, and search teams, there has been limited means of transmitting H/W messages from the victims to their families outside the disaster zone.

Members of the Hillsborough team have been visiting shelters and feeding stations collecting messages from victims. More than 100 messages have been transmitted from Gulfport to Tampa via the Tampa Amateur Radio Club, and local hams in Tampa have been making heart-breaking phone calls to loved ones across the country who had no word for a week on the fate of their family members in Mississippi.

The official mission of the Hillsborough team is to set up and operate EDICs (Emergency Deployable Interoperable Communications System), a fly-away computer-controlled communications system that interconnects radios and cell phones of different frequencies and types so that public service communication can be restored in a disaster area. It allows the radios that survived to be put to use so that police officers and firefighters can better coordinate recovery operations.

The EDICs unit may be tasked to Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, or to Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. The team is to deploy with Florida law enforcement teams staged in Gulfport. -- Pete Kemp, KZ1Z, West Central Florida Section PIO

Gary Sessums, KC5QCN, member of the Hillsborough team writes: "Thanks for the mention in the ARES newsletter about the Hillsborough County ARES/RACES deployment. We are on site in Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi. We have passed over 100 H/W messages in addition to our public safety tasking. We are on the MARS, CAP, and SHARES nets, in addition to Amateur Radio. I am trying to arrange relief for the local ARES/RACES operators at the Harrison County EOC, as those guys have been running non-stop since before the storm hit."

#### + INTEROPERABILITY TIP

Watching in frustration at the breakdown of communications in the Gulf coast response, I was made acutely aware of the viability of Amateur Radio in terms of interoperability. We have the ability to

change frequencies in our radios to serve the location and needs of the area.

Mobile HF, VHF and UHF radios can be re-programmed on the fly. With that in mind, one of the necessary contents of anyone's "grab and go" equipment should be the manuals, or copies of specific pages, for any radio they carry with them.

I also write down the necessary steps -- and only the necessary steps -- to program and use the radio away from the manual. I word process the steps small enough so that I can laminate them as part of my credentials lanyard. As a backup, I put another credit-card-size laminated copy in a wallet that I keep separate in a coat pocket or in the cargo pocket of my trousers. -- Chuck Heron, KD7BWG, DEC, Gila County ARES, Arizona, Executive Officer, Gila County EMCOMM (ARES/RACES), <[mkd7bwg@arri.net](mailto:mkd7bwg@arri.net)>

#### + ON RESPONDER FATIGUE

From Fred Leif, W6WTI: Thank you for putting out the special edition ARES E-Letter. It is important that hams outside the impact and support areas have a sense of the service that is being provided so that we can help explain to our neighbors and the public the vital role that Amateur Radio is playing.

Amateur Radio serves best while the communications emergency exists. The full response and recovery from Katrina will take a very long time, but when the response agencies and recovery teams have established networks that meet their communications needs, the hams should be allowed to stand down. It will be difficult to determine when this occurs, but the ARES leaders should keep an eye on this ball. We don't want "responder fatigue" to the extent that we can't get operators for the next event. Bringing our service to bear on the communications emergency, and recognizing when it is time to step aside is a vital management function.

#### + DIGITAL OUTLETS

Louisiana SEC Gary Stratton, K5GLS, reports "We now have digital (Pactor/Internet/WL2K) outlets for H/W traffic into the areas noted below in Louisiana and Mississippi. National Traffic System (NTS) traffic can be sent to <[mae5v@winlink.org](mailto:mae5v@winlink.org)>. At the point that destination traffic handlers feel they can take on all comers, the directions to reach them will be shared. Louisiana towns and

parishes: St. Tammany, Abita Spring, Covington, Folsom, Lacombe, Madisonville, Mandeville, Pearl River, Son, Slidell, Tangipahoa, Amite, Hammond, Independence, Kentwood, Ponchatoula, Roseland, Tangipahoa, Ticfaw, Terrebonne, Houma, Washington, Angie, Bogalusa, Franklinton, Varnado. Mississippi Towns: Gautier, Ocean Springs, Pascagoula. - Relayed by Benson Scott, AE5V

+ BRIEFS:

The Ohio Single Side Band Net (OSSBN) was to announce that H/W traffic will be accepted. OSSBN Net Manager Connie Hamilton, N8IO, who is also an Assistant Section Manager, said conditions have changed, allowing for a reasonable chance of traffic getting delivered. -- Joe Phillips, K8QOE, Ohio Section Manager

+ HURRICANE KATRINA HF RESPONSE AND RECOVERY FREQUENCIES

The following frequencies and links are the courtesy of John Mayger, W4DJ. As far as net activity is concerned, I've been listening primarily to the Gulf Coast ARES Net on 7285 kHz, and the SATERN Net on 14.265 MHz, although I'm sure there are many other active nets. Good propagation to the Florida east coast from those two nets have allowed me to monitor their excellent, professional work. - K1CE

2802.4 USB American Red Cross Disaster  
3171.4 USB American Red Cross Disaster  
5136.4 USB American Red Cross Disaster  
5141.4 USB American Red Cross Disaster  
5211.0 USB FEMA  
5236.0 USB SHARES Coordination Network  
6859.5 USB American Red Cross Disaster  
7507.0 USB USN/USCG hurricane net  
7550.5 USB American Red Cross Disaster (primary)  
7698.5 USB American Red Cross Disaster  
9380.0 USB USN/USCG hurricane net  
10493.0 USB FEMA  
14396.5 USB SHARES Coordination Network

AMATEUR HF GULF COAST HURRICANE NETS

3845.0 LSB Gulf Coast West Hurricane  
3862.5 LSB Mississippi Section Traffic  
3873.0 LSB Central Gulf Coast Hurricane  
3873.0 LSB Louisiana ARES Emergency (night)

3873.0 LSB Texas ARES Emergency (night)  
3873.0 LSB Mississippi ARES Emergency  
3910.0 LSB Mississippi ARES  
3910.0 LSB Louisiana Traffic  
3923.0 LSB Mississippi ARES  
3925.0 LSB Central Gulf Coast Hurricane  
3925.0 LSB Louisiana Emergency (altn)  
3935.0 LSB Central Gulf Coast Hurricane  
3935.0 LSB Louisiana ARES (health and welfare)  
3935.0 LSB Texas ARES (health and welfare)  
3935.0 LSB Mississippi ARES (health and welfare)  
3935.0 LSB Alabama Emergency  
3940.0 LSB Southern Florida Emergency  
3950.0 LSB Northern Florida Emergency  
3955.0 LSB South Texas Emergency  
3965.0 LSB Alabama Emergency (altn)  
3967.0 LSB Gulf Coast (outgoing traffic)  
3975.0 LSB Texas RACES  
3993.5 LSB Gulf Coast (health & welfare)  
3995.0 LSB Gulf Coast Wx

7225.0 LSB Central Gulf Coast Hurricane  
7235.0 LSB Louisiana Emergency  
7235.0 LSB Central Gulf Coast Hurricane  
7235.0 LSB Louisiana Emergency  
7240.0 LSB American Red Cross US Gulf Coast Disaster  
7240.0 LSB Texas Emergency  
7243.0 LSB Alabama Emergency  
7245.0 LSB Southern Louisiana  
7248.0 LSB Texas RACES  
7250.0 LSB Texas Emergency  
7260.0 LSB Gulf Coast West Hurricane  
7264.0 LSB Gulf Coast (health and welfare)  
7265.0 LSB Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio (SATERN) (altn)  
7273.0 LSB Texas ARES (altn)  
7280.0 LSB NTS Region 5  
7280.0 LSB Louisiana Emergency (altn)  
7283.0 LSB Gulf Coast (outgoing only)  
7285.0 LSB West Gulf ARES Emergency (day)  
7285.0 LSB Louisiana ARES Emergency (day)  
7285.0 LSB Mississippi ARES Emergency  
7285.0 LSB Texas ARES Emergency (day)  
7290.0 LSB Central Gulf Coast Hurricane  
7290.0 LSB Gulf Coast Weather  
7290.0 LSB Texas ARES (health and welfare)  
7290.0 LSB Louisiana ARES (health and welfare) (day)

7290.0 LSB Texas ARES (health and welfare)  
7290.0 LSB Mississippi ARES (health and welfare)

14265.0 USB Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio (SATERN)  
14300.0 USB Intercontinental Traffic  
14300.0 USB Maritime Mobile Service  
14303.0 USB International Assistance and Traffic  
14313.0 USB Intercontinental Traffic (altn)  
14313.0 USB Maritime Mobile Service (altn)  
14316.0 USB Health and Welfare  
14320.0 USB Health and Welfare  
14325.0 USB Hurricane Watch (Amateur-to-National Hurricane Center)  
14340.0 USB Louisiana (1900)

#### + RESOURCE LINKS

CAUTION: The links presented below are listed as possible resources for ARES deployment teams. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN VETTED BY ARRL. USE AT YOUR OWN RISK.

-K1CE

Health and Welfare Inquiries can be submitted to:

Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN)  
<<http://www.saturn.org/>>; for Health and Welfare inquiries after hurricanes and other disasters <<http://qso.com/satern/emailfrm.htm>>.

American Red Cross (H/W Inquiries): 866-GET-INFO (866-438-4636)  
American Red Cross donations and volunteering: 800-HELP-NOW (800-435-7669)  
<<http://www.redcross.org>>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
(Individual Disaster Assistance): 800-621-FEMA (800-621-3362)  
<<http://www.fema.gov/>>

Hurricane Katrina Survivor Lists and Information:

National Next of Kin Registration <<http://www.nokr.org/>>

Hurricane Katrina Survivors Online Forum and Survivor List  
<<http://www.hurricanekatrinasturvivors.com/main/>>

CNN Hurricane Katrina Survivor List <<http://www.cnn.com/safe>>

Globe Coast News Katrina Survivor List  
<<http://kenburtonne.web116.discountasp.net/Katrina/Status.aspx>>

New Orleans <<http://www.neworleans.craigslist.org>>

WDSU-TV6 New Orleans TV Station <<http://www.wdsu.com/news>>

New Orleans Newspaper <<http://www.nola.com>>

Hurricane Housing Information for Victims  
<<http://www.hurricanehousing.org>>

Links to Emergency Management and Related Sites:

<<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutlinkem.html>>

See also:

Florida Division of Emergency Management  
<<http://www.floridadisaster.org/>>

Alabama Emergency Management <<http://www.disaster.ema.alabama.gov/>>

Alabama Homeland Security <<http://www.homelandsecurity.alabama.gov/>>

Louisiana State Emergency Information  
<<http://www.lsp.org/emergency.html>>

Louisiana Homeland Security <<http://www.ohsep.louisiana.gov/>>

Louisiana Governor's Office <<http://www.gov.state.la.us/>>

City of New Orleans <<http://www.cityofno.com/portal.aspx>>

Mississippi Emergency Management <<http://www.msema.org/>>

Mississippi Emergency Management Emergency Line: 1-800-222-MEMA(6362)

Mississippi Homeland Security <<http://www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov/>>

Disaster Relief Organizations:

American Red Cross <<http://www.redcross.org>>

Salvation Army <<http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/>>

United Way <<http://national.unitedway.org/>>

Catholic Charities <<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/>>

Operation Blessing (800) 436-6348 <<http://www.ob.org/>>

United Jewish Communities <<http://www.ujc.org>>

United Methodists Relief Committee  
<<http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/emergency/hurricanes/2005/>>

Episcopal Relief <<http://www.er-d.org/>>

America's Second Harvest (800) 344-8070  
<<http://www.secondharvest.org/>>

+ FINAL NOTE AND PREDICTION

This special edition is released on the anniversary of the September 11 bombings that changed all of our lives. As with the humanitarian ARES response, then, it has been a privilege to monitor the incredible ARES response to the current catastrophe. Bravo to you, the ARES field activists.

It was also inspiring to see Newington and other staff give up their holiday and other time to support the ARES effort. Bravo to them -- they are members of the HQ staff for all of the right reasons.

And now, the prediction: When the curtain is finally drawn on this calamity, you will see Amateur Radio and ARES written -- or re-written -- into a host of more governmental and non-governmental organization plans for the future. Guaranteed. Mark my words on that one. Get your pens ready. - K1CE

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