
SKYWARN Newsletter #251

Hello to all..

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SKYWARN Coordinators Strategy Meeting Summary from March 15th, 2008..

The first of 2 SKYWARN Strategy Meetings for 2008 was held for SKYWARN Coordinators and net controls on Saturday March 15th, 2008. There were 14 people in attendance. They were as follows:

KB1GHX-Glenn Field	NWS Taunton Warning Coordination Meteorologist
N1XTB-Phil McNamara	ARES Emergency Coordinator-Air Force MARS Liaison
KB1CYO-Phil McLaughlin	NWS Taunton Amateur Radio Operator
N1JMA-Martin Mendelson	Rhode Island State SKYWARN Coordinator
KB1KQW-Jim Palmer	North Shore Assistant SKYWARN Coordinator
N1PJ-PJ Howe	Worcester County SKYWARN Coordinator
N1FY-Carl Aveni	NWS Taunton Amateur Radio Operator
KB1G-Bill Boyes	Rhode Island SKYWARN Net Control Operator
K1GMG-Gregg Gallant	Hartford-Tolland, CT County Assistant SKYWARN Coordinator
KB1DGY-Bernie Dubb	Windham County, CT SKYWARN Coordinator
K1HRV-Dave Doe	Norfolk County SKYWARN Coordinator
W1MPN-Mike Neilsen	NWS Taunton SKYWARN Special Advisor
N1XRS-Tony Duarte	Acushnet Emergency Management Communications Officer
KD1CY-Rob Macedo	ARES SKYWARN Coordinator for NWS Taunton

The first item for the meeting was a presentation on weather and other

significant events from November 2007-March 2008. A review of winter storms that affected the region as well as the severe weather event from March 5th was discussed along with those winter storms that caused wind damage and flood issues. SKYWARN Recognition Day results were shared with the group as well.

Finalized severe weather reporting results were also discussed showing that from a reporting perspective, the 2007 severe weather season was higher in total number of reports than 2006 but that the impact of the 2006 events from a severe weather event were greater. There were a total of 412 severe weather reports received and 372 came in through Amateur Radio which resulted in 90.3% of the reporting coming in via Amateur Radio. As a breakdown for 2007, there was the following:

- One major severe weather outbreak classified as having 40 or more reports within a single event and that was July 15th, 2007.
- Four severe weather outbreaks with 28 or more reports (May 16th, July 6th, July 28th and August 3rd.
- Several outbreaks with Tornado Warnings including 1 multiple Tornado Warning event for Essex County on June 2nd, 2007.
- Four severe weather events where 20 or more severe reports were received in a single severe weather situation.

An update on NWS Gray Maine Operations was given. A meeting was held at NWS Gray after the NWS Taunton meeting where significant ground was covered on setting up additional repeater frequencies and network infrastructure for New Hampshire and Maine for SKYWARN. SKYWARN Training planning for the NWS Gray, Maine office was also being done with several sessions booked. HF and VoIP liaison paths are solid between NWS Gray and Taunton and additional liaison paths via VHF and UHF are being worked.

An update on the VoIP Hurricane Net was also given. The net format change from weekly to monthly with presentations every month was discussed along with the need for more net controls and check-ins from stations in the affected area of hurricanes. Enhancements to the

VoIP Hurricane Net Web reporting form was discussed along with the fact that Hurricane "Spotter" training was given on the March monthly net. The VoIP Hurricane Net will be represented at the National Hurricane Conference by Dennis Dura-K2DCD, Rob Macedo-KD1CY, Jim Palmer-KB1KQW and Rich Long-KF6BKA.

An update on SKYWARN 2008 planning for NWS Taunton was given. A meeting was held by Amateur Radio SKYWARN Coordinators with WBZ-TV Channel 4 to extend the relationship with them and to add more PR to the Amateur Radio component of the SKYWARN program and that was discussed at the meeting. The relationship with WCVB-TV Channel 5 continues to grow as well with positive comments relayed by the Concord Amateur Radio Club by Harvey Leonard on the efforts of Amateur Radio SKYWARN Spotters.

Continuing on an update for SKYWARN 2008 planning, additional ways to increase reporting were discussed and plans to execute that work. Those items include:

- Information to be posted on SKYWARN on the Mass. Volunteer Service Alliance.
- Enhancements to the NWS Taunton Operations desk and support function with new operators and additional tools. (Winlink tool added in 2007)
- Public Safety Desk setup and other means to gather more reports.
- Damage assessment work/Work and PR through the media.
- SKYWARN Document revamped (Keep it current and updated to keep activation process intact, Continuity of Operations)

Updates and follow-through on other projects that are in the queue that will be worked include:

- Assist NWS on other endeavors (Prevailing Winds Newsletter on a more frequent basis, more support of Storm Ready and coordinating it.)
- NWS Open House support when the next Open House occurs which at the meeting, Glenn Field stated that the Open House will not occur until 2009 at the earliest.

-NOAA Weather Radio event and Amateur Radio support.

-Lat/Lon database entry.

-SKYWARN Tri-fold brochure.

Glenn Field had a number of comments and items that were discussed at the meeting. Glenn mentioned that both he and Bill Babcock have the ability to auto enter confirmed SKYWARN Training dates which allows for better and quicker updates of the SKYWARN Training schedule on the NWS Taunton web site.

Glenn also mentioned that the NOAA Weather Radio will now also be available on the web as an online audio stream. This has been implemented at numerous NWS offices and will be implemented on the NWS Taunton web site in the coming weeks/months.

Glenn briefly discussed the NWS IM Chat system. This system may become something that needs to be utilized at the NWS office but is under significant scrutiny from the forecasters due to the distraction it can cause. The Ham Operations may be utilized to assist with this capability if it makes sense.

Glenn mentioned that there is now a Trademark signature added to the SKYWARN logo due to some issues in the Midwest with the SKYWARN logo and what that allows spotters to do when spotting severe weather. This TM symbol will be added to all SKYWARN logos going forward.

Glenn announced that the Southern New England Weather Conference will be on Saturday October 25th, 2008 at the Dexter-Southfield School in Brookline, Massachusetts. He noted that Blue Hill has put in for a grant and if that grant were to be obtained, it would drastically reduce the cost of the conference for those who want to attend. Some topics that Glenn stated will be given during the conference include:

-Panel Discussion on December 13th, 2008 Snow storm gridlock situation with Dave Glazebrook from MEMA, the Boston Acting EMA Director, SMART Route traveler representative, a regular reporter and hopefully a school superintendent who closed school before the storm hit.

For the panel discussion, Glenn requested information on whether folks new of school closings or schools that shut down earlier and either before the storm hit or just before the worst of the storm hit. Any SKYWARN Spotters with this information should please send this info to Rob Macedo via email at rmacedo@rcn.com

Other topics for the Southern New England Weather Conference include having a social scientist to discuss how the general public reacts to the warning that NWS issues with a case study on the Tornado Outbreak on the Super Tuesday primary. Dr. Richard Lizen from MIT will also present at the conference on refuting the Global Warming argument.

It was hoped to get former National Hurricane Center Director, Max Mayfield, at the conference but due to his schedule and other commitments, this was not practical. There is, however, potential that Max could be a speaker at the conference in 2 years time. Max Mayfield is currently working on a new Emergency Alert System type network that he is extremely interested in implementing. Other topics from the conference will be announced as we get closer to the 2008 conference.

Online Spotter training is still being worked by Bill Babcock. The hope is to have an online spotter training class available so that existing SKYWARN Spotters can get refreshed online by the second half of this year. When this is available, it will be announced in the next SKYWARN Newsletter.

Glenn Field discussed that there will be a significant consolidation of the Winter Weather products issued. Many products such as Snow Advisories, Heavy Snow Warnings, Heavy Sleet Warnings etc. will be consolidated back to Winter Storm Watches/Warnings and Winter Weather Advisories. Freezing Rain will remain a separate advisory and Ice Storm Warning will also remain a separate warning. This will be effective for the next season. There is also potential that a few other non-severe specific warning/advisory type information may be utilized. This would include

advisories for non-severe thunderstorms and snow squall watch/warning/advisory type products. This is a more longer term objective for the NWS. Further details will be posted when the changes take affect.

A SKYWARN Training update was given. The only forecaster driven session left to schedule was in Northwest Massachusetts and that was being worked. It would later be found out that a SKYWARN Training session in Salem Massachusetts at the Salem State College would be booked and that update has been made to the training schedule. Martin Mendelson-N1JMA mentioned that he had attempted to contact Frank Nocera about scheduling a Marine Spotter Class with the Navy in Rhode Island but hadn't heard from Frank. Glenn Field worked this issue to have Martin get in touch with Frank after the meeting. If that class is scheduled and opened to the public, it will be posted in the SKYWARN Newsletter and on the web.

At this point, Rob Macedo-KD1CY asked a question about the CocoRaHS program and its mission to collect daily rain and snow reports and assuring that SKYWARN is leveraged into that program. An action was taken to follow-up with Joe Dellicarpini to follow-up on the progress of this program.

The next item was on enhancements to the NWS Taunton Operations station. Rob Macedo took an action to follow up with the ET's on these items which include the Icom IC-735 HF Radio installation if power obstacles can be overcome and an EVDO router to hook up a Verizon Cell Phone Air Card that was taken down from the Fairhaven Repeater.

The next item discussed was liaison paths to various areas. Bill Boyes, KB1G, brought up some excellent points on restructuring liaison work in the state of Rhode Island and Martin-N1JMA agreed with doing something in this area and also trying to consolidate SKYWARN and the ARES Snow Desk nets. Rob Macedo took an action to get a meeting together with Rick Andreano-K3OOH, Bill-KB1G and Martin-N1JMA to go through these items.

Bernie Dubb-KB1DGY mentioned that the 147.225-Killingly, CT Repeater has an EchoLink node. Bernie took an action to find out more details about the node and using that as a liaison path either by NWS Taunton directly connecting or connecting it with the New England VoIP reflector system. There is also a 6 Meter Repeater in Scituate, Rhode Island on 53.29 PL: 82.5 that could also provide some liaison capability to portions of Connecticut and Central Massachusetts. Bernie took an action to research this with his alternate net controls and liaisons. That concluded discussions on liaison paths after well established paths were quickly reviewed.

The next item was a presentation on unique historical positioning of New England Hurricanes by Mike Neilsen-W1MPN. This presentation was very well received on how hurricanes that track into New England go into a very tight pipe or path before reaching New England and how some in this pipe or path either make landfall further south or veer out to sea. Some information on intensity and speed of New England hurricanes and how they impact the system and our area was also discussed.

The final items discussed were various NWS initiatives where the following updates were given:

- Need to setup another Storm Ready support discussion meeting in late April or May to continue the Storm Ready support effort. Rob Macedo took this action.

- Need to determine when and if Hams should help with Lat/Lon entry for various programs. This is currently on hold as the system that is being utilized that requires Lat/Lon entry may change.

- No new updates on a possible NOAA Weather Radio event with NECN and Matt Noyes. This will be monitored.

- Other actions were discussed and mentioned earlier in the meeting

and this meeting summary.

A review of NWS Taunton contact info was done and there were no changes.

The next SKYWARN Strategy Meeting was tentatively scheduled for Saturday November 1st, 2008 for SKYWARN Coordinators and Net Controls.

SKYWARN Self-Activation Report from March 21st, 2008..

SKYWARN was self-activated as strong winds impacted much of Southern New England particularly at the higher elevations and in northeast parts of the region that were closest to a departing storm system that was moving past Northern New England. Reports of wind damage and numerous measured wind gusts of 50 MPH or greater were received.

SKYWARN was self-activated using several of the SKYWARN repeaters across Southern New England including the 145.49-Fairhaven and 145.47-Danvers Repeaters as well as the New England VoIP Reflector system IRLP 9123/Echolink Conference *NEW-ENG* Node: 9123. Amateur Radio Coordinators, Jim Palmer-KB1KQW, Tony Duarte-N1XRS, Ray Weber-KA1JJM and Rob Macedo-KD1CY monitored the strong wind event.

Winds increased significantly around 9 AM across the region. A measured wind gust of 46 MPH was recorded in the Marstons Mills section of Barnstable by Frank O'Laughlin-WQ1O. A measured wind gust of 47 MPH was reported at N1EVH-Mike Naselroad's location in Lynn, Massachusetts. At 945 AM, a measured wind gust of 52 MPH with a large limb down on wires and an isolated power outage occurring in Montgomery, Massachusetts. A measured wind gust of 46 MPH was reported in Cranston, RI at 957 AM. In Westport, Massachusetts, wires were blown down on Horseneck Road near the Dartmouth town line with wires down in Orleans, Massachusetts at 1130 AM.

Additional measured wind gusts of 58 MPH in Cambridge at 1233 PM, 47 MPH in Ipswich, Mass at 2 PM, 47 MPH in West Peabody at 150 PM, 52

MPH in Gloucester at 214 PM and 52 MPH in Salem at 254 PM were also received. A measured wind gust of 45 MPH was recorded in New Boston, New Hampshire at 531 PM with a measured wind gust in Stow, Mass. of 63 MPH at 431 PM. Other measured wind gusts recorded between 11 AM-3 PM of 46 MPH or greater included a 50 MPH measured wind gust in Boston and Brookline, Mass and 46 MPH in Norwood and Scituate, Massachusetts. A measured wind gust of 48 MPH was recorded at 1020 AM at the Southwick EOC with a large tree blown down blocking Route 202 at Route 10 blocking road for 2 hours with half the town losing power. This was recorded by Emergency Management Director and Ham Radio Operator, Charlie Dunlap-K1II. A measured wind gust of 62 MPH was recorded at 1244 PM in Goshen, Massachusetts per Ray Weber-KA1JJM. This report was received the next day from this weather station and work is underway to gather this information from that weather station on a more timely basis.

Additional damage reports were received in New Bedford with several locations of wires down between 1 and 3 PM. Trees and wires down on three different streets in Leominster at 147 PM and 255 PM reported by AA2T-Jerry Rogich, SKYWARN Spotter and Leominster EMA member. Power lines were blown down on Ruth Avenue in Peabody with a large pine tree blown down in Revere. A Tree was blown down blocking the road in Coventry, RI with a tree down across Holten Street in Danvers, Massachusetts. Trees and wires were blown down on Maple Avenue in Taunton, Massachusetts. Reports of damage went on through about 430 PM before winds slowly abated. Additional damage reports were received in parts of Northern Connecticut as measured wind gusts were in the 46-50 MPH range in Hartford and Tolland Counties of Connecticut.

Special thanks to all those that assisted in this self-activation of SKYWARN for strong winds and wind damage!

NWS Taunton, Mass. SKYWARN Training 2008 Schedule Update..

There has been one new update to the NWS Taunton, Mass. SKYWARN Training 2008 schedule. A new training session has been scheduled at the Salem

State College in Salem, Massachusetts for Wednesday April 16th from 6-9 PM.

Efforts continue on securing a SKYWARN Training session in Northwest Massachusetts for Tuesday May 6th but a site has not been confirmed as of yet. The Sturdy Memorial Amateur Radio Club would like to host a SKYWARN Training session on a Wednesday or Thursday in May and this is being worked and will likely be taught by an Amateur Radio Coordinator.

A correction has been made to the SKYWARN Training location at WFSB Channel 3. The town that the site is located in is Rocky Hill, Connecticut and not Hartford, Connecticut. That change/correction has been made. Below are the links to the latest SKYWARN Training schedules on the WX1BOX web site and the NWS Taunton:

http://www.wx1box.org/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=8&page_id=1

<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/box/skywarnTraining.shtml>

NWS Gray, Maine. SKYWARN Training 2008 Schedule Update..

The National Weather Service in Gray, Maine has confirmed 2 additional SKYWARN Training Sessions in their County Warning Area. Meteorologist and SKYWARN Spotter Coordinator, Mike Cempa from the NWS Gray, Maine office has also confirmed 2 additional SKYWARN Training sessions in New Hampshire. Mike also hopes to hit other areas such as Lebanon, NH, the Connecticut River Valley as well as Jackson or Rangeley, Maine, Sanford, Maine and the Concord, NH area. Mike is hoping to do the majority of these additional sessions in the April through June timeframe. A SKYWARN Training session was completed in Augusta, Maine on March 19th.

The link below has the latest NWS Gray, Maine SKYWARN Training Schedule including the recently added sessions in New Hampshire:

http://www.erh.noaa.gov/gyx/spotters_skywarn/skywarn2.shtml

ARRL Letter Article: Michigan Amateurs Team Up with the State..

ARRL Letter Article on organizational changes in Michigan ARES and RACES. See article below:

==> MICHIGAN AMATEURS TEAM UP WITH STATE

ARRL Michigan Section Manager Dale Williams, WA8EFK, and Michigan Section Emergency Coordinator John McDonough, WB8RCR, have been working with the Homeland Security Division of the Michigan State Police Emergency Management to align the capabilities of the Amateur Radio Public Service Corps (ARPSC) more closely with the communications needs of the state's public service agencies.

ARPSC -- Michigan's integrated ARES/RACES program -- also participates in the Michigan State Department Emergency Management Coordinators Quarterly meetings at the State Emergency Operating Center. It is here, Williams said, that discussion of the Public Safety communications grants are discussed and their investment justifications are detailed. "We have been afforded the opportunity to discuss Amateur Radio's involvement with communications interoperability, as well as our ability to fill gaps in disparate networks and outages. As a result of these conferences, I was asked to include a list of ARPSC's needs for the next three years."

To further that end, Williams told the ARRL that they have been successful in incorporating the ARPSC Program into the Michigan State Preparedness Priorities. Michigan intends to develop the ARPSC into a fully integrated communications team operating under common standards and procedures, including maintaining and enhancing the statewide Amateur Radio communications system; establishing suggested standards for Amateur Radio capabilities in local Emergency Operations Centers, and developing a public awareness and education program to bolster the ranks of Amateur Radio participants. The hope, Williams said, is to have all this implemented by 2010.

Williams said, "Since the early 1980s, Michigan has operated an

integrated ARES, RACES and NTS program referred to as the Michigan Amateur Radio Public Service Corps. By combining the forces of these normally separate structures, these valuable resources are pulled together to form an active trained and unified organization. The Section Emergency Coordinator also holds the positions of Section Traffic Manager and RACES Radio Officer. Membership in ARPSC is open to all amateurs and is structured to allow a beginning ham to progress from an entry-level position to a RACES-qualified operator by meeting specific training milestones."

"There is no doubt that by presenting a unified organization, the Michigan ARPSC has demonstrated the effective use of resources, training and our unique capabilities so that we have become a well respected public service organization in the state," Williams said.

ARRL Letter Article: Hams on Hand as TORNADOS Sweep Through Georgia, Downtown Atlanta..

The following ARRL Letter Article talks about how Hams supported operations as tornados ripped through Georgia and Downtown Atlanta:

==> HAMS ON HAND AS TORNADOS SWEEP THROUGH GEORGIA, DOWNTOWN ATLANTA

When tornados swept through Georgia this past weekend, Amateur Radio operators were on hand to assist where needed. On Friday, March 14, an EF-2 tornado touched down in downtown Atlanta at 9:38 PM (local time). The National Weather Service said the twister was 6 miles long and 200 yards wide. Downtown Atlanta was a busy place that evening; not only was there a professional basketball game, college basketball fans were in town for the Southeast Conference tournament at the Georgia Dome. Due to the tornados, the final college game of the day was postponed until the next day. According to reports, the tornado blew off portions of the roof of the Georgia Dome.

An EF-2 tornado has wind speeds from 111-135 MPH. In such a tornado, roofs are torn off well-constructed houses, foundations of frame homes are shifted, mobile homes can be completely destroyed, large trees are

snapped or uprooted, light-object missiles are generated and cars can be lifted off the ground.

ARRL Georgia Section Manager Susan Swiderski, AF4FO, said "William Chandler, KG4JTK, went from house to house in the wind and the rain checking for any injuries in the homes that had sustained damage by falling trees and debris. At the same time, he issued reports via radio to Barry Kanne, W4TGA, the Emergency Coordinator for neighboring DeKalb County, regarding fallen trees, billboards, power lines and other threats to public safety. Barry relayed this information to the Atlanta 911 center and to the Grady Hospital Emergency Operations Center." DeKalb County is directly to the east of Fulton County; Atlanta is the county seat of Fulton County.

The City of Atlanta Web site reported that "[e]xtensive damage has been reported to a number of landmark buildings in downtown, including the Omni Hotel, Georgia World Congress Center, CNN Building, the Georgia Dome and Phillips Arena and homes and businesses in nearby neighborhoods." The Red Cross opened a shelter at Central Recreation Center. There was "no external damage" to Hartsfield International Airport.

Eyewitness accounts said that "huge hunks of metal and broken glass were everywhere [in Atlanta], as well as overturned cars and benches in the road. Olympic Centennial Park is a mess." The high winds caused major damage to several other landmarks including the Georgia World Congress Center. Many hotels and office buildings had their windows blown out. Grady Memorial Hospital, the major trauma center for the Atlanta metro area, had its 100 foot tall communications tower blown off the hospital roof, disabling communications with emergency medical personnel.

ARRL Georgia Section Traffic Manager Charles Pennington, K4GK, served as Net Manager during the storms: "After several hours of recovery and damage assessment, it became obvious that while Atlanta had received major damage to downtown area, there were no fatalities reported and amazingly only 21 persons were treated for injuries." Two fatalities

were reported in northwest Georgia.

In Effingham County, near Savannah on Georgia's coastline, Swiderski said a tornado "took down six power towers during the annual St Patrick's Day celebrations," thrusting the community into "total blackout conditions."

"A local 2 meter SKYWARN net, with Greg Tillman, N4VAD, serving as NCS, provided a vital link with the staff at Memorial University Medical Center in Savannah. Dr Ra Meguiar, N4RVM, a physician and senior hospital administrator, later sent a letter of appreciation in recognition of the local hams 'for staying with us through the weather and the power outage.' He said that this was his first experience in participating in a severe weather net and the 'support was invaluable,'" Swiderski said.

According to Swiderski, reports came mostly through the linked repeater system, "usually from a liaison from one of the many local nets that were going on in county after county, but there were also reports from stand-alone hams who had the misfortune of being in an affected area. There were reports of wall clouds, funnel clouds and hailstones -- large hailstones, sometimes as large as baseballs."

Tillman said that two mobile homes were completely destroyed and one was "tossed like a rag doll, rolling over numerous times 100 feet from its foundation where the anchors were pulled up from the ground." Nearly a dozen other homes and automobiles were damaged; five people from Effingham were transported to the local hospital for treatment and evaluation, he said.

"In some of the counties, this event was a true 'baptism under fire' for brand new Emergency Coordinators," Swiderski said. "I'm pleased to say that they all conducted themselves and all of the challenges admirably."

ARRL Letter Article: National Hurricane Conference Set for April..

The following is an ARRL Letter Article on the National Hurricane

Conference and the Amateur Radio Workshop that will be held during the conference.

==> NATIONAL HURRICANE CONFERENCE SET FOR APRIL

The 30th Annual National Hurricane Conference

<http://www.hurricanemeeting.com> begins on March 31, running through April 4 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando, Florida. This annual event brings together many disciplines in the Emergency Management field to address tropical events that impact the United States.

Once again, Amateur Radio is being highlighted on Tuesday, April 1 in a 4.5 hour training session. ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD, is the Chairman of the Amateur Radio Committee of the NHC, and has put together what he calls "a worthwhile learning experience for the attendees."

Leading off the afternoon will be a presentation on Amateur Radio and the National Hurricane Center (NHC) Station WX4NHC <http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/w4ehw> by John McHugh, K4AG, and Julio Ripoll, WD4R, the Amateur Radio Coordinators at the NHC <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>. The VoIP Hurricane Net <http://www.voipwx.net> will then be highlighted in a presentation by Rob Macedo, KD1CY, Director of Operations.

The final formal presentation of the afternoon will be the subject of Macedo's and Dura's "Emergency Management's use of Amateur Radio for Situational Awareness and Disaster Intelligence." This discussion is focused on the Emergency Managers and their staff to give them clear concepts to include Amateur Radio in their operational plans beyond the more traditional uses of emergency traffic handling. As time permits, the afternoon will conclude with an open forum on current issues in Amateur Radio's response to tropical events.

That's all for this edition of the SKYWARN Newsletter!

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Macedo (KD1CY)

ARES SKYWARN Coordinator

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