

From: SkyWarn Announcement List ()
To: Skywarn-list@oak.powersrvcs.net
Date: Mon, March 23, 2009 12:47:20 AM
Subject: SKYWARN Newsletter #257

Hello to all..

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Newsletter Issued: 3/22/09.

SKYWARN Training 2009 Update..

SKYWARN Training sessions are being scheduled and taking shape across the region.

The latest schedule can be seen at the following links:

<http://www.wx1box.org/node/36>

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

It is noted that the NWS Taunton web site link does not have a few of the Amateur Radio sessions. That link will be updated over the next week.

The schedule from the WX1BOX web site is listed below for convenience.

The following is the current SKYWARN Training Schedule for 2009. Please check back frequently for updates on the SKYWARN Training that will be scheduled throughout this year.

Tuesday April 14th, 2009 6-9 PM:
Salem State College (North Campus)
Room TBD
Salem, Massachusetts
Sponsored by: Salem State College
Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecasters

Saturday April 18th, 2009 11 AM-2 PM:

Dexter-Southfield School - Clay Center Auditorium
20 Newton Street
Brookline, Massachusetts
Sponsored by: Brookline Emergency Management and the Dexter Southfield School and Amateur Radio Club
Taught by: Amateur Radio SKYWARN Coordinators

Thursday April 23rd, 2009 7-10 PM:
Sturdy Memorial Hospital
Rice-Webb Auditorium
Attleboro, Massachusetts
Sponsored by: Sturdy Memorial Amateur Radio Club/ARES
Taught by: Amateur Radio Coordinators

Tuesday May 5th, 2009 7-10 PM:
Cape Cod National Seashore
Salt Pond Visitor Center
Intersection of Route 6 and Nauset Road
Sponsored by: Cape Cod National Seashore and Cape Cod ARES
Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecasters

Tuesday May 12th, 2009 630-930 PM:
Spofford Fire Station
9 Pontiac Drive
Spofford, NH
Sponsored by: Cheshire County ARES and the Chesterfield/Spofford Fire Department
Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecasters

Saturday May 16th, 2009 1-4 PM:
Island Free Library
9 Dodge Street
Block Island, RI
Sponsored by: Island Free Library and Rhode Island SKYWARN
Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecasters

Monday May 18th, 2009 7-10 PM:
Morton Hospital and Medical Center - Margaret Stone Conference Room
88 Washington Street
Taunton, Massachusetts
Sponsored by: Taunton Amateur Communications Group (TACG)
Taught by: Amateur Radio Coordinators

The following sites are going to be booked for the spring timeframe.

Sessions

will be taught by NWS Forecasters unless otherwise noted:

- Woodstock, Connecticut
- Western Franklin County Massachusetts
- Northwest Hillsborough County New Hampshire
- Northbridge, Massachusetts
- Providence, Rhode Island

- Scituate, Massachusetts (Taught by Amateur Radio Coordinators)
- Nantucket Island
- Martha's Vineyard Island
- Western Essex County Massachusetts (Taught by Amateur Radio Coordinators)

The following sites are going to be booked for the Summer/Fall Timeframe.

Sessions

will be taught by NWS Forecasters unless otherwise noted:

- Middlesex County Massachusetts (Taught by Amateur Radio Coordinators)
- Walpole Massachusetts (Taught by Amateur Radio Coordinators)
- Blue Hill Massachusetts
- Providence RI at Channel 12 if Channel 12 cannot be done in the Spring timeframe.

Please review the links and this SKYWARN Newsletter for updates on the 2009 SKYWARN Training Schedule.

SKYWARN Training in Belmont for Belmont CERT/EMA Successful..

On March 12th, approximately 40 members of the Belmont Emergency Management Agency and CERT, Citizens Emergency Response Team was completed at the Belmont High School. The training went very well and bolstered the SKYWARN Spotter ranks in an area just outside of Boston, Massachusetts. Below is a link with photos as the training was given to the Belmont CERT/EMA personnel:

<http://ema.arrl.org/node/1579>

NWS Taunton SKYWARN Recognition Day 2008 Report Featured in April 2009 QST Magazine..

The NWS Taunton SKYWARN Recognition Day 2008 Report and pictures were featured

in the April 2009 QST Magazine. The article can be seen on page 71 of QST and

is part of a broader article on the Ten Year Anniversary of SKYWARN Recognition

Day found on pages 69-71 of the magazine. The report of NWS Taunton SKYWARN Recognition Day activities which included some mention of recent SKYWARN Activations in December 2008 since it delayed the submission of the SRD logs is listed below:

After a historic summer severe weather season by New England standards, we were greeted 5 days after SRD with an epic ice storm that wreaked major havoc in our County Warning Area, north of the Mass. Pike and along and west of I-495 through Northeast, Central and Western Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire. It resulted in our largest ARESMAT deployment since the 9/11 attacks and resulted in a 27 consecutive hour SKYWARN Activation that spanned one overnight. At the height of the storm, we had close to 400,000 without power in Massachusetts with a similar number in New Hampshire. We then had 4 additional SKYWARN Activations after that for snow/wind issues

which also kept us busy.

We had 313 unique contacts, 364 total contacts with duplicates and 62 NWS Forecast Offices contacted. Our highest numbers ever. We had 14 Ham Operators participate and 2 weather forecasters participate. They were as follows:

W1MPN-Mike Neilsen
N1PJ-PJ Howe
K2DCD-Dennis Dura ARRL HQ Manager of Preparedness and Response
KB1KQW-Jim Palmer
KB1CYO-Phil McLaughlin
KB1FVN-Joanne McLaughlin
KB1G-Bill Boyes
KD1CY-Rob Macedo
W1VFB-Gregg Glynn
KB1PQB-Jason Sample
KB1QKI-Chris Sample
KB1NEG-Andrew Barden
2 Belmont CERT Members who were Amateur Radio Operators
KB1GHX-Glenn Field, Warning Coordination Meteorologist
Eleanor Vallier-Talbot, Outreach Coordinator

SKYWARN Strategy Meetings at NWS Taunton, Mass. and Gray Maine Offices Held..

On Saturday March 14th, 2009, the NWS Taunton office held its first of 2 meetings for 2009 for SKYWARN Coordinators and Net Controls. On Sunday March 15th, 2009, a similar strategy meeting was held at the NWS Gray, Maine office. Detailed meeting summaries for this meeting will be posted in the next SKYWARN Newsletter.

National Hurricane Center Announces Changes to Products for 2009 Hurricane Season..

The following is some information on some changes to the National Hurricane Center products for the 2009 Hurricane Season. All of these changes are listed in the NHC Public Information Statements under the following link:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns_index.shtml

The exact product changes and links to those product changes are listed below:

Changes to storm surge information in Tropical Cyclone Public Advisories effective May 15th, 2009:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns8_2009.shtml

Format Changes to the Tropical Cyclone Public Advisory Effective May 15,

2009:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns7_2009.shtml

Atlantic and Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclone Wind Field Graphics
Operational

Effective May 15, 2009:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns6_2009.shtml

Atlantic and Eastern Pacific Graphical Tropical Weather Outlooks Operational
Effective May 15, 2009:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns5_2009.shtml

Probabilistic Hurricane Storm Surge Products become Operational and Expand
in

Thresholds Effective June 1, 2009:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns4_2009.shtml

Discontinuation of Special Tropical Disturbance Statements and Beginning of
Special Tropical Weather Outlooks Effective May 15, 2009:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns3_2009.shtml

Format Change to the Tropical Cyclone Discussion for the Atlantic Basin
Effective

June 1, 2009:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns2_2009.shtml

Format Change to the Tropical Cyclone Discussion for the Atlantic Basin
Effective

June 1, 2009:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pns1_2009.shtml

National Hurricane Center Announces New Q&A Topics for Web Site..

The National Hurricane Center (NHC) announces a new feature highlighting one
member of the NHC staff each month. The inaugural issue can be seen in PDF
or Word format via the following link off the NHC web site:

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/q_and_a.shtml

Ice Storm Information and ARRL Letter Article: New England Ham Response to
Ice Storm..

The Major Ice Storm of December 11th-12th led to one of the largest
responses
of ARES and SKYWARN in recent memory. It resulted in a 27 consecutive hour
SKYWARN Activation and the largest ARES Mutual Aid Team (ARESMAT) deployment
since the September 11th, 2001 Terrorist Attacks. A review of this event was
done on the VoIP Hurricane Prep Net with presentations on the Ice Storm
given to other Amateur Radio groups in the section as well as a detailed
ARES report written by North Shore ARES. The following are links
to various articles and an article that appeared in the ARRL Letter. A

complete

SKYWARN Activation report on the Ice Storm will be sent in addition to these resources and reports to the SKYWARN email list. See articles and links below:

March 2009 VoIP Hurricane Net Training Topic on ARES/SKYWARN Ice Storm Response:

<http://www.voipwx.net/node/242>

North Shore ARES Ice Storm Report, Power Point presentation, Articles, Photos and Video:

http://www.nsradio.org/ARES/icestorm_121208/index.htm

<http://www.nsradio.org/video/features/icestorm08/>

ARRL National Web Site links to Web Stories:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/12/15/10506/?nc=1>

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/12/18/10511/?nc=1>

ARRL Letter Article:

==> HAMS STAND BY TO HELP AS NEW ENGLAND RECOVERS FROM ICE STORM AND PREPARES FOR MORE

The major ice storm that hit New England December 11 has pretty much gone away <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/12/15/10506/?nc=1>>, but with forecasters calling for more winter weather in the next few days, hams are still on the job. During the storm, Amateur Radio operators from all over the area responded to calls for assistance from various served agencies, and local leadership does not expect the need for the hams to lessen anytime soon.

According to Eastern Massachusetts Section Emergency Coordinator Rob Macedo, KD1CY, almost 400,000 customers in Massachusetts lost power at the height of the storm. Phone service, particularly landline service, was disrupted in some areas. Crews have been working hard to restore power to residents, Macedo said: "As of late Sunday evening, almost 140,000 were without power in Massachusetts with over double that number in New Hampshire. On Wednesday, the number of homes without power had dropped to 45,000-50,000 in both states." Southern New England received 2-4 inches of rainfall; isolated higher amounts caused river, stream and urban flooding. Strong winds in the region resulted in tree and wire damage, as well as coastal flooding along the shoreline.

In Western Massachusetts, Section Emergency Coordinator John Ruggerio, N2YHK, reported that ARES units in his Section responded to calls for assistance from local EOCs. "EOC operations in Worcester were secured on Monday evening, as the shelters were closed and power was restored to most areas at that time," Ruggerio said.

"Amateur Radio operators from the North and South Shore of Eastern Massachusetts assisted with operations in Western Massachusetts,

fulfilling needs from Saturday night into Monday morning," Ruggerio recounted. "ARES units in the Western Massachusetts Section provided support during the day on Monday for the town of Gardner in Franklin County. An additional team from Eastern Massachusetts -- including one ham from the Rhode Island/Massachusetts border -- came in on Monday evening. That team helped out in Gardner until 12:30 Tuesday afternoon when the shelters and communications for the local hospital were no longer required, as power was restored to much of the area."

Ruggerio said that the local hospital in Gardner lost phone service for much of the day starting Monday morning. "They got service back later that evening, but until then, Amateur Radio was the only means of two-way communications between the hospital and EOC." Message traffic on prescription fills and other priority, but non-emergency traffic, were fulfilled during that timeframe, he said.

"The Gardner operation was the largest Amateur Radio Emergency Services Mutual Aid Team (ARESMAT) that Eastern Massachusetts ARES has supplied since the September 11 terrorist attacks," Macedo said. "Including the one amateur provided for the Worcester EOC, a total of 16 hams assisted for all the ARESMAT needs in Western Massachusetts."

Macedo said the ARES unit in Franklin County completed its support in the town of Heath on early Monday Morning: "Many of the Franklin County ARES team also assisted with Gardner, providing an additional seven hams to the operation. More than 200 man-hours were logged just in the Gardner ARESMAT alone -- this does not include State Emergency Operations Center operations or the National Weather Service response phase operations."

Support for the Massachusetts State Emergency Operations Center also continues, Macedo said. "Massachusetts State RACES Radio Officer Tom Kinahan, N1CPE, told us that support was required at least through Wednesday evening for the aftermath of the storm. We will continue to provide support for as long as requested to support the State EOC." Eastern Massachusetts ARES supplied three Amateur Radio operators to support the state EOC during the storm.

Throughout the storm, Section leadership from across the region met in twice-daily conference calls with ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD. In a call on Tuesday, New Hampshire Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator David Colter, WA1ZCN, told Dura he had just got his power back early that morning. "I spoke to the ECs for Hillsborough and West Rockingham Counties last night," Colter said, "and they continue to staff two shelters and EOCs. Apparently, neither site has an available landline. There is cell service in the area, but it's spotty. The Milford animal shelter folks have been using ham radio for coordination in a limited way for several days as they retrieve chilly animals. The temporary animal shelter is co-located at the Milford people shelter."

According to American Red Cross Communications Volunteer Tom Carrigan, NE1R, the Disaster Operations Center (DOC) at the Central Massachusetts Chapter of the American Red Cross is a "beehive of activity trying to cover all the demands for services from the many towns still operating shelters and for mobile feeding operations throughout the affected area. We are still sending cots and blankets, as well as water, heater meals and snacks to New Braintree, and other towns. Nearly every Worcester County town north of Worcester and west of the Wachusett Reservoir has received services from the ARC. Mobile feeding has continued in Worcester, Paxton, Rutland, Gardner, Leominster and many other communities where utility workers and public safety workers have been working long hours outdoors. Several shelters have been supported by Red Cross volunteers during the over-nights, as well as days, and Red Cross volunteers from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and New Jersey have joined the effort."

Carrigan said that as "thousands of people remain without electric power as the weather turns colder and messier, we expect that some who have been toughing it out at home may give in and come to a shelter."

Macedo noted that the bad weather is just beginning for New England, as the active storm pattern shows no signs of abating: "Another major winter storm is expected on Friday that could dump a significant amount of snowfall on the region. Another major storm is also possible Sunday night into Monday. We have been advised that the State EOC could be back in operation on Friday and we are preparing staffing for those needs. We will leave ARES on standby status through Monday, pending the impact of these storms on our region, as well as the weakened infrastructure that remains from the impact of the ice storm."

ARRL Letter Article: Oklahoma Hams Warn of Oncoming Tornadoes..

The following ARRL Letter Article describes Oklahoma Hams warnings of oncoming tornadoes in their states.

==> OKLAHOMA HAMS WARN OF ONCOMING TORNADOES

A rare winter tornado struck Oklahoma around dinner time on Tuesday, February 10. According to various news reports, Oklahoma officials credited Amateur Radio operators with spotting the tornadoes and relaying the information to the National Weather Service.

ARRL Oklahoma Section Emergency Coordinator Charles Goodson, KC5UEG, told the ARRL that the Southern Oklahoma ARES group (SOARES) <<http://www.soares.org>> and other Amateur Radio operators from the Ardmore area served as SKYWARN storm spotters. "After the tornado passed Lone Grove and Ardmore, several hams went back to the Lone Grove area," Goodson said. "One ham went to the Red Cross building and set up a communication command post from the Red Cross radio room. It was amateur operators who had the first visual contact with the tornadoes. They started reporting the tornado to Neil Mayo, KC5AMX, the Emergency

Coordinator for Murray County and our Net control for severe weather events; he in turn reports to the National Weather Service in Norman via Amateur Radio."

The town of Lone Grove, population 4600 and located about 100 miles south of Oklahoma City, bore the brunt of the storm, with the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (ODEM) reporting eight deaths and more than 100 homes destroyed. Two other tornadoes hit the Oklahoma City metro area and the north-central Oklahoma region late Tuesday. No serious injuries were reported in the Oklahoma City storm, but at least six homes were destroyed and businesses were damaged there, ODEM officials said.

ARRL Oklahoma Section Public Information Coordinator Kevin O'Dell, NOIRW, told the ARRL that his Ardmore home survived the tornado, but they are without power, water and other services. Other homes in his neighborhood were completely destroyed. Oklahoma Gas and Electric reported about 6000 customers are currently without power, with 3461 in Lone Grove.

Well-known contester Tim Duffy, K3LR, told the ARRL that he lost 40 percent of his home as a tornado blew through his town of Edmond, a suburb of Oklahoma City: "We lost all the doors and windows in the house, all the power, just everything. The damage is amazing. The cell phone system is still 'on tilt' with emergency services taking most of the channels. We're making big progress on getting things sorted out here. We will rebuild and make it better than it was before. With the house in complete disrepair, we'll be staying in a hotel for a while."

Duffy said that National Weather Service officials told him that the wind speed at his home was more than 150 MPH. While the family dog, a golden retriever, made it through the storm okay, Duffy said their pet cat is still missing. According to emergency management officials in Edmond, six homes were destroyed in the storm.

This storm took many by surprise because even in tornado-prone Oklahoma, February twisters are rare. According to the NWS, since 1950, only 44 twisters have touched down in the state during the month of February. The Lone Grove tornado was the third to cause multiple fatalities in the state since March 2007, when a Panhandle couple became the state's first tornado deaths in almost six years.

ARRL Letter Article: Hams in Australia with Massive Bushfires..

The following ARRL Letter article describes the efforts of Hams in Australia with the massive bushfire incident that occurred several weeks ago.

==> HAMS IN AUSTRALIA ASSIST WITH MASSIVE BUSHFIRES

In the Australian state of Victoria, Amateur Radio operators have been activated to provide communications links into towns that have had their

normal communications destroyed by the bushfires that have decimated the state. Members of the Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network in Victoria (WICEN (Vic)) <<http://www.vic.wicen.org.au/>> -- Australia's version of ARES -- were activated on February 8, with members being deployed to areas with loss of power and other facilities.

According to the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) <<http://www.wia.org.au/>> -- that country's IARU Member-Society -- authorities and resources in Victoria have been "stretched to the limit." WICEN has been on high alert since the fires started on January 28. On February 11, WICEN (Vic) Secretary Mark Dods, VK3XMU, said, "It now appears that WICEN's role in this emergency is going to be a long hard marathon over an extended period."

The fires -- some of which are believed to have been deliberately set, while at least one fire began due to a lightning strike -- have so far claimed 201 lives, including one firefighter; local police say they do not expect the death toll to go much higher. Covering more than 1100 square miles, the fires have destroyed more than 1800 homes; officials estimate at least 7500 people are now homeless due to the fires. Victoria Premier John Brumby, in speaking about the bushfires, said, "Out there, it is hell on earth" <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/index.php?option=com_mymedia&Itemid=29%C3%83%C2%A2%C3%82%C5%92%C3%82%C2%A9=en&media_id=364&task=text>.

On February 12, Dods said that "WICEN was given the task of establishing a link between Narbethong and the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre in Alexandra. Initially, the Narbethong-Alexandra link will be on HF. The two WICEN operators that were on standby for deployment to Buxton have been dispatched to Alexandra to join a column that will be moving down the Maroondah Highway to Narbethong this afternoon. An extra WICEN operator is being deployed to the Alexandra MECC to assist the operator already there with expected extra traffic from Narbethong. Three WICEN operators are now working 8 hour shifts at the Alexandra Incident Command Centre (ICC), operating CFA/DSE radios. We will be providing operators for this task until further notice."

Dods said hams would make "temporary repairs" to VK3RTN, the 6 meter repeater on Mt Gordon that suffered damage during the fire, making it usable until they can get and install a new repeater. The Mt Gordon repeater is being used as a link between Alexandra and Narbethong. The WICEN station in Narbethong closed Saturday, February 14. "The Alexandra WICEN station will continue to operate after the closure of Narbethong," Dods said. "Their role includes guiding relief operators into the town, maintaining an HF link to Melbourne and a listening watch. Operators in the Alexandra ICC have reported increased radio traffic overnight and emphasised the need for concise, prompt and accurate handling of the traffic despite the sometimes tense environment."

Dods recounted that there was what he called a "flurry of activity" on the evening of February 14: "WICEN received a request from DSE

[Department of Sustainability and Environment] to provide operators at Woori Yallock ICC. We were asked to cover the night shift last night and the next four nights. Being a Saturday night, it was difficult to contact operators with many being not at home, and others having their mobile phones diverted to voice mail. Two operators agreed to be deployed at short notice, however. They travelled to Woori Yallock only to find that there had been an administrative foul-up and that they were not required. Those operators have returned home with my thanks and apologies. This false start at Woori Yallock does give us a 'heads up' that DSE and CFA [Country Fire Authority] resources may be beginning to stretch thin, and lead to more ICC deployments."

On February 17, Dods said that two WICEN operators will be going to "McAdam's Hill, east of Lake Mountain, to provide health and welfare communications for the firefighters at a Base Camp being set up there. Initially, the primary operating frequency will be 3.6 MHz, so there may well be a need for stations monitoring that frequency to relay traffic. Deployment of a portable 2m repeater to support the McAdam's Hill station is under consideration."

The WICEN HF Net continues to operate on 3.6 MHz at 1000 and 2130 hours (UTC + 11) daily. "As well as keeping a check on the welfare of operators in the field, the Net is being used to pass updated activation information, and also for amateurs in remote areas of the state to check their communications," Dods said. "It is reassuring to hear stations from all over the state and interstate on the Net, demonstrating that we can, if necessary, establish communications independent of hilltop infrastructure. It has been very handy to have other amateurs monitoring 3.6 MHz when they can to relay when fading occurs. Many thanks to those operators who have relayed traffic so far."

Dennis Dura, K2DCD, ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager said: "The work the Australian hams have been doing and the issues WICEN have been facing are not unlike what ARES personnel encounter here. The long hours and duration of the disaster response and the dwindling availability of amateur volunteers take a toll. Yet Amateur Radio still is able to complete the mission. The flexibility we bring is key to meeting the emergency communications needs of those the amateur community serves. Our hearts go out to all those that have lost loved ones and whose lives have been forever changed by these fires. Our colleagues in WICEN make the Amateur Radio community proud in the work they are performing in these very difficult conditions."

ARRL Letter Article: As Storms Pummeled Northwestern States, Hams Responded to Local Needs..

The following ARRL Letter article is on Hams response in Northwestern states to storms in late Decmeber and early Janaury. See article below:

==> AS STORMS PUMMELED NORTHWESTERN STATES, HAMS RESPONDED TO LOCAL NEEDS

After another week of wild weather in Oregon and Washington (January 7-9), residents in those states are just beginning to see the Sun. With an onslaught of wind, snow and rain this winter season, hams in the affected areas have been called upon by local served agencies to lend a hand. From providing 911 support to helping out with communications in area shelters, Amateur Radio operators have assisted since the beginning of the storm events

<<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/12/24/10525/>>.

<<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/12/26/10528/?nc=1>>

According to David Kidd, KA7OZO, District Emergency Coordinator for Oregon's District One <<http://www.oregonaresd1.org/main.html>>, the storms moved into his area on Wednesday, January 7 and continued throughout the rest of the week. ARES units in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook Counties were activated in advance of the storms that brought flooding, mud slides, blocked roadways from downed trees, as well power outages.

In Clatsop County, Kidd said that amateurs assisted in the county's Emergency Operations Center, while in Columbia and Tillamook Counties, the County Emergency Coordinator activated their local ARES units for the duration of the storms. "Columbia County deployed radio teams to four areas where they anticipated getting severe floods," Kidd told the ARRL. "These places can flood at the blink of an eyelash, so they pre-deployed hams to these areas."

Luckily for Oregonians, the storm tracked through Washington. "We were spared somewhat when the storm stalled over Washington," Kidd said. "Granted, we got a lot of wind and rain, but not like they did north of us. All the counties here are watching their rivers go down and are in some level of recovery mode."

In Lewis County, Washington, hams were prepared for the storms. On Wednesday, January 7, the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners declared the county a disaster area "due to exhausted resources and flood level predictions at or exceeding 1996, 2006, and 2007 flood levels." The Lewis County EOC placed Amateur Radio operators affiliated with local ARES units on standby.

According to Lewis County Emergency Management Deputy Director Ross McDowell, the unincorporated areas of Packwood and Randle had been without land-line telephone service since January 7. "Repairs cannot take place until the flood waters recede. This area is without 911 service due to all alternate facilities being under water. Ham operators/radios will be used in emergencies [to facilitate 911 services]."

On January 10, the Lewis County Department of Emergency Management expanded its use of RACES ham radio operators to stay in contact with the City of Centralia EOC and to continue communication with Morton,

Randle and Packwood ham radio operators. RACES continued to provide support throughout the storm event.

The storm brought rain and high winds to Washington, causing widespread avalanches, mudslides, flooding and road closures, as the heavy snowfall that buried parts of the state began to melt rapidly. More than 30,000 people were told to leave their homes in flood-endangered areas across western Washington as authorities warned of heavy flooding.

Warmer temperatures and heavy rains were melting snow dumped on the mountains during the weekend storm, with 10 inches of snow melting in a 12 hour period at Snoqualmie Pass, about 50 miles east of Seattle. Throughout the state, about 60 highways were closed.

ARRL Eastern Washington Section Manager Mark Tharp, KB7HDX, reported that hams in Kittitas and Yakima Counties were on standby during the storms, but "Spokane is holding their own." ARRL Northwestern Division Director Jim Fenstermaker, K9JF, said, "So far, most of the problems are in Western Washington. We here in Seattle are cut off from the rest of the USA by landslides and avalanches to the east, and flooding to the south and north. All major highways are affected, as is all rail transportation. The only way out or in is via air. We had more unexpected rain on Thursday, but it should clear up by the weekend."

ARRL Web Site Article: In Nevada, Hams are NWS' Eyes..

The following ARRL web site article is how a storm near Christmas 2008 damaged the NWS Reno Nevada Radar and how the local NWS office relied on Hams for weather data with the radar damage. The article and a link to an article that has pictures of the damaged radar is listed below:

ARRL Web Site Article Link: In Nevada, Hams are NWS' Eyes:
<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/12/24/10523/?nc=1>

Article below:

With winter upon us, and inclement weather coming almost daily in one form or another, the wind and its treatment of mountaintop equipment is a major concern. According to ARRL Nevada Section Emergency Coordinator Don Carlson, KQ6FM, the mountains of Northern Nevada take their share of beatings, but he said that in this case, "winter has certainly come in like a lion. On December 19, a major winter storm hit the area, bringing with it hurricane-force winds to high elevations." Gusts of more than 140 miles per hour battered the mountain, damaging sensitive electronic weather gear, including the NEXRAD radar system used by the National Weather Service office in Reno.

"Fortunately, Northwest Nevada has a very active team of amateurs who are members of the National Weather Service's SKYWARN weather spotter program," Carlson said. "Since the demise of the radar system, NWS Reno has asked spotters to assist by providing real-time weather information via Amateur

Radio."

Carlson said that Dee Arnold, KA7LOZ, manned WX7RNO, the amateur station at the NWS Reno office to take reports that came in from a very large area of the region. At times when no one is available to actually be on site, weather service personnel turn the 2 meter radio on and monitor reports that can be delivered at any time of the day or night. "We will have to be their eyes for the time being until the radar site can be accessed and repaired, which may not be for some time and could be several weeks," Arnold said.

Spotters file reports on the Wide Area Data Club's high-level linked system that covers a good portion of both Northern Nevada and North Central California. "The Amateur Radio SKYWARN weather spotters will remain on duty giving reports until further notice, as another storm approaches the area over Christmas," Carlson recounted. "Amateurs have also been providing highway information over mountain passes during the recent flurry of early winter storms."

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Macedo (KD1CY)
ARES SKYWARN Coordinator
Eastern Massachusetts ARES Section Emergency Coordinator
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