

**From:** SkyWarn Announcement List ()  
**To:** Skywarn-list@oak.powersrvcs.net  
**Date:** Sun, April 26, 2009 12:31:33 AM  
**Subject:** SKYWARN Newsletter #260

Hello to all..

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Newsletter Issued: 4/26/09.

SKYWARN Training Sessions Completed in Salem, Brookline and Attleboro, Mass..

The first three SKYWARN Training sessions of 2009 were completed in Salem, Brookline and Attleboro, Massachusetts. The Salem, Massachusetts session had around 50 people with 25 people at Brookline. The session in Attleboro had 30 people. Additional SKYWARN Training sessions have been booked and are detailed in the NWS Taunton SKYWARN Training 2009 update.

NWS Taunton SKYWARN Training 2009 Update..

Here is the latest SKYWARN Training Schedule with previously scheduled sessions

removed and additional sessions in Scituate, Grafton and Nantucket, Massachusetts.

Links to the new schedule are listed below and the entire Training Schedule has

been listed again for people's convenience:

Updated SKYWARN Training Schedule 2009 links:

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

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

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 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

Thursday May 14th, 2009 630-930 PM:  
Rowe Elementary School  
86 Pond Road  
Rowe, Massachusetts  
Sponsored by: Western Massachusetts SKYWARN and the Rowe School District  
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

Thursday May 21st, 2009 7-10 PM:  
Scituate Town Library  
85 Branch Street  
Scituate, Massachusetts  
Taught by: Amateur Radio Coordinators

Saturday June 6th, 2009 1-4 PM:  
Nantucket Town Building (Old Electric Company Building)  
2 Fairgrounds Road  
Nantucket, Massachusetts  
Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecasters

Tuesday June 23rd, 2009 7-10 PM:  
Grafton Fire Department Headquarters  
26 Upton Street (Route 140)

Grafton, Massachusetts

Taught by: NWS Taunton Forecasters

Sessions still being looked into for the following locations:

- Woodstock, CT
- Northwest Hillsborough County NH
- Providence, RI (Fall Class at Channel 12 potentially)
- Gardner, Mass (Amateur Radio driven class)
- Blue Hill, Mass (Fall Session)
- Martha's Vineyard Island
- Western Essex County Massachusetts (Taught by Amateur Radio Coordinators)

Further SKYWARN Training Schedule updates will be posted in future SKYWARN Newsletters.

NWS Gray Maine SKYWARN Training 2009 Update..

SKYWARN Training is ongoing at the NWS Gray, Maine office. Sessions in Poland

and Booth Bay Harbor Maine have been completed as well as a session in Conway,

New Hampshire. Additional sessions have been setup. For a complete listing on

SKYWARN Training and the NWS Gray Maine SKYWARN program, please see the following links:

[http://www.erh.noaa.gov/gyx/spotters\\_skywarn/skywarn2.shtml](http://www.erh.noaa.gov/gyx/spotters_skywarn/skywarn2.shtml)

<http://www.wx1gyx.org>

SKYWARN Versus COCORAHS Frequently Asked Questions..

There have been a number of questions on the COCORAHS program and its recent arrival into Rhode Island in the Spring of 2008 and Massachusetts in March of 2009. COCORAHS will be coming to Connecticut in July 2009 and is expected to reach Maine and New Hampshire later this year. To quell the questions on COCORAHS and any concerns SKYWARN Spotters and Amateur Radio Operators may have about the program, the following Frequently Asked Questions document discusses what the program is and what it isn't and how it is a separate function and usage versus SKYWARN though SKYWARN Spotters can join the program and that is encouraged. Here are the Frequently Asked Questions:

1.) What is COCORAHS?

COCORAHS stands for Community Collaborative Rain Hail & Snow Network. It is designed to gather measurements of rain, hail and snow from storms as they move through the area. It can be from any and all storms. There is no threshold for when you report into COCORAHS. Precipitation totals, even when no precipitation has fallen, are recorded into the system. Its purpose is to give complete observations for any precipitation event. The system has been in existence since 1998 and just recently came to two states in New England.

2.) Is it a pure National Weather Service Program?

It is a joint partnership between NOAA, the National Weather Service and Colorado State University. Other partnerships and agencies supporting the program are listed on the COCORAHS web site.

3.) Why are they developing a COCORAHS program? Doesn't SKYWARN perform that function?

There is considerable overlap but they do not perform the same function. SKYWARN Spotters typically report rainfall and snowfall per reporting criteria, which has higher limits for when those reports are submitted. COCORAHS spotters report even when there is no precipitation into their system. Also, COCORAHS spotters do nothing with wind damage reports, wind measurement reports or flood reports. They are solely focused on precipitation amounts. COCORAHS is actually more like the Cooperative Weather Observer program versus anything in relation to SKYWARN though there is that considerable overlap between COCORAHS and SKYWARN.

4.) Can SKYWARN Spotters join COCORAHS?

SKYWARN Spotters can certainly join COCORAHS and it is encouraged as SKYWARN Spotters receive a very extensive overall training on severe weather and reporting criteria and the COCORAHS training requirement is much smaller and is focused on precipitation measurements. Having a good cross-pollination between the two systems would benefit both programs though it is not a requirement.

5.) What about COCORAHS observers, can they join SKYWARN?

Yes, the reverse is true as well understanding the training for SKYWARN was a 2.5-3 hour class versus the 30 minute training for COCORAHS. Again, a good cross-pollination between the two systems would benefit both programs though it's not a requirement.

6.) Is COCORAHS replacing the SKYWARN program?

Not at all. The two programs are mutually exclusive. COCORAHS is a partnership among different groups focused on precipitation collection. SKYWARN is a program focused on severe weather reporting and precipitation collection reporting where certain criteria are met and the program is purely a National Weather Service program with a strong partnership with ARRL's ARES program as well as other partnerships. COCORAHS and SKYWARN should be viewed as a potential partnership versus two programs competing for data.

7.) Why have two overlapping weather observing programs?

Essentially, partnership organizations were looking for ways to gather data and developed this system as a means to gather more data. While there is definitely overlap, there are areas that COCORAHS covers that SKYWARN does not and vice-versa so while there is overlap, the benefits of gathering additional data through COCORAHS far outweigh the considerable overlap between the programs.

8.) The training for COCORAHS is far less than the SKYWARN program. Why is that?

This is because COCORAHS focuses on measuring precipitation versus all the

other severe weather aspects. Precipitation measurements are covered under a segment of the SKYWARN training and are probably 30 minutes of the total training, which is similar to what the COCORAHS training is. The training information and slide shows are available online.

9.) Are there any special equipment required for COCORAHS?

There are hail pads and plastic rain gauges available for a small cost when you join the COCORAHS program. They are available on their web site as far as what standards are used for both the rain gauge and the hail pad. The rain gauge needed is under 25 dollars.

10.) Why use lower technology equipment for rain gauges versus the high-tech gauges? Does this mean the higher technology gauges are insufficient for reporting into the National Weather Service?

Lower technology plastic rain gauges are helpful because sometimes plastic rain gauges can give a more accurate reading in certain rainfall situations than the electronic tipping rain gauges and can be more accurate in mixed precipitation events. That said, any measured rain gauge totals where the instrument is performing as specified would be accepted by NWS for SKYWARN. For COCORAHS, the plastic rain gauge measurements are their standard and only those rain gauge readings will be accepted for COCORAHS.

11.) What if a COCORAHS observer and a SKYWARN observer submit a report for the same location? Does one get priority over the other?

Neither one gets priority. Sometimes, it will be the first report received that gets into the statements and other times an analysis maybe done to determine which report is more accurate and that report gets used. Other times, it can be the highest report, if deemed accurate, gets utilized in the statements.

12.) How do COCORAHS Spotters submit their reports?

COCORAHS spotters submit their reports on the COCORAHS web site and NWS will check the site to gather the data.

13.) What types of people or groups participate in COCORAHS?

Anyone can participate in COCORAHS. From people in the general public and SKYWARN Spotters to agencies such as river watersheds and other associations in environmental management that might have an interest measuring rainfall and providing the data to the partner organizations within COCORAHS and the National Weather Service. A list of partner organizations is available on their web site.

14.) Where can I find out more information about COCORAHS and what states are involved?

You can go to the COCORAHS web site at <http://www.cocorahs.org>  
You can also check out the NWS Taunton web site at <http://weather.gov/boston>  
As always, SKYWARN information and this Frequently Asked Questions document can be found at the NWS Taunton SKYWARN home page at <http://www.wx1box.org>

Dr. Gray's Colorado State University Team Expects Average Atlantic Hurricane Season..

Dr. Gray's Colorado State University team has lowered their Hurricane Season predictions to be an average hurricane season in its April 2009 forecast.

This is lower than their December forecast. The team cited lower ocean temperatures and the possibility of an El Nino to limit tropical system formation. An archive of their forecasts can be seen via the following link:

<http://tropical.atmos.colostate.edu/forecasts/>

While an average Hurricane Season is expected and if this occurs would mean a less active season than 2008, it only takes one hurricane in your area for the season to be memorable. In 1992, only 6 named systems formed but one of the systems was Hurricane Andrew. People in Southern New England should maintain vigilance for the 2009 Hurricane Season particularly in the months of August and September.

P3-Hurricane Hunter Tour Locations in the Northeast US..

The P3-Hurricane Hunter Aircraft will be on tour in the Northeast United States sponsored by the NWS Gray, Maine and NWS Brookhaven/Upton NY offices. The NWS Taunton office will be sponsoring the P3-Hurricane Hunter Tour in 2011. Below are links to information on the P3-Hurricane Hunter Tour detailing the timeframe and dates of the tour at their respective locations:

[http://www.erh.noaa.gov/gyx/hurricane\\_hunter.html](http://www.erh.noaa.gov/gyx/hurricane_hunter.html)  
<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/okx/hat/>

ARRL Letter Article: Hams in Southeastern US Provide Spotting Assistance to NWS..

The following is an ARRL Letter Article on severe weather in the Southeastern United States. The web story complete with pictures can be seen at the following link and the article from the ARRL Letter is below:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/04/14/10766/?nc=1>

==> HAMS IN SOUTHEASTERN US PROVIDE SPOTTING ASSISTANCE TO NWS

As tornados swept through the southeastern part of the country on April 10, hams in Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas and Georgia were on the air providing assistance to the National Weather Service (NWS) <<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>>.

In Alabama, hams in Madison, Shelby and Calhoun Counties activated SKYWARN Nets. According to Madison County Emergency Coordinator Rolf Goedhart, K4RGG storm spotters in that county were quite active on their Net. "At 12:37, at

the request of the Madison County Emergency Operations Center and in response to a tornado watch, we formally activated the Madison County Emergency Net," Goedhart told the ARRL. "For about an hour and a half, there was virtually no dead air, either on the SKYWARN net or the Madison County Emergency Net. In fact, reports were flowing fast enough to make one pause, deciding when or even whether to call NCS with a report." Goedhart said that Hilton, at the Huntsville NWS amateur station, estimated handling more than 200 reports from the northern counties of the state in the nine hours that the Net was open.

In Tennessee, members of the Heart of Tennessee (HOT) ARES <<http://www.hotares.com>> started an NWS SKYWARN Net at 12:18 PM as the storms approached. "Amateur operators relayed storm damage information to NWS for evaluation in determining tornado strength in the area," Rutherford County Emergency Coordinator Keith Miller, N9DGK, told the ARRL. "ARES members were monitoring the developing line of storms as watches and warnings were issued in the adjacent counties in the Middle Tennessee area."

Miller said that since primary communications for police departments, fire departments, Emergency Medical Service, County Sheriff or County Emergency Management Agency were not lost, backup communication was not required per the County EMA Director. His ARES group did not receive any requests to staff emergency shelters.

ARRL Georgia Section Emergency Coordinator Gene Clark, W4AYK, told the ARRL that hams in Gwinnett County activated a SKYWARN Net at 4:30 PM on April 10. "According to plan, a de-centralized Net Control function was used, with the Net Manager coordinating weather spotter reports to the NWS office in Peachtree City," he said. "Forty-one amateurs reported seven different reportable weather situations to the NWS."

In Newton County, Emergency Coordinator Charles Davis, WA4UJC, activated a weather Net at 8 PM. Ten operators from different areas of the county, as well as from adjacent counties, participated in the Net, reporting golf ball-sized hail and heavy rain. "When power went out for three hours due to a broken power pole on the west side of the county, the Net continued with hams using mobile transceivers and backup power," Clark explained. "The power outage caused us to lose repeater capabilities, so the hams relied on simplex. Using backup power, they contacted a linked repeater system and maintained communication with the NWS until securing at 11:15 that night."

Arkansas hams were busy with the storm, too. At 7:24 PM CDT, the NWS issued a tornado warning for areas north of the Arkansas town of Mena in Polk County; at 8:01 PM CDT, the warning was extended into Mena. Nine minutes later, an EF-3 tornado struck the city, killing three people.

According to ARRL Arkansas Section Emergency Coordinator John Nordlund, AD5FU, members of the Central Arkansas UHF Group (CAUHF) <<http://www.cauhf.org/weather/>> provided real-time reports to the National

Weather Service office in North Little Rock and to media outlets around the state. "The Group used the AR-Links SKYWARN net and the WarnIM system," Nordlund said. WarnIM is a SKYWARN instant messenger system serving to give those with or without ham radio access, or those who are in remote areas an additional means of communication in times of emergencies or severe weather events. Its features include live chat and access to updated radar data directly from the NWS.

"When the net closed at the end of the severe weather outbreak, NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist John Robinson stated on the WarnIM system that the North Little Rock NWS office had never had so much timely storm report information before," Nordlund said.

Nordlund visited Mena on April 11 and noted that the local ham operators are participating in any emergency tasks that are assigned to them -- based on their training and certifications -- and are using simplex ham radio frequencies primarily to avoid additional loading of public safety frequencies as they carry out those assignments. "The damage path [of the tornado] is a striking example of the power of nature," he said. "The recovery effort of community volunteers is inspiring. This is another fine example of a local ham group that has their ducks lined up and on parade when it really counts."

ARRL Letter Article: EmComm Workshops at 2009 National Hurricane Conference  
Focus on  
Amateur Radio

The following is an ARRL Letter Article on EMCOMM workshops held at the 2009 National Hurricane Conference in Austin Texas. The ARRL web story link and the article are listed below:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/04/22/10779/?nc=1>

==> EMCOMM WORKSHOPS AT 2009 NATIONAL HURRICANE CONFERENCE FOCUS ON AMATEUR RADIO

On April 6-10, Amateur Radio had its largest presence ever at the 2009 National Hurricane Conference in Austin, Texas  
<<http://www.hurricanemeeting.com/>>. Representatives from the ARRL, WX4NHC <<http://www.wx4nhc.org/>>, the Amateur Radio Station at the National Hurricane Center (NHC) <<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>>, the Hurricane Watch Net (HWN) <<http://www.hwn.org/>> and VoIP Hurricane Net (VoIPWXNet) <<http://www.voipwx.net/>> completed several presentations at the conference as well as a presentation at the local Austin Amateur Radio Club. According to ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD, the workshops were very well attended with more than triple the participation of prior conferences.

"The Austin Amateur Radio Club, along with ARRL Field Organization Section and Division officials did an outstanding job of promoting the various presentations at the conference," Dura said. "It is these

coordinated efforts at the local club and ARRL Section, Division and National levels that will allow us to propel forward with our efforts in emergency communications and train people, allowing us to become a more valuable asset to served agencies."

Assistant WX4NHC Amateur Radio Coordinator Julio Ripoll, WD4R, thanked everyone who participated in the meeting "for making our NHC 2009 presentations and experience so successful and enjoyable. We had one of the largest attendances for the Amateur Radio workshop that I can remember."

Nearly 60 people attended the Amateur Radio Disaster Communications Workshop on the afternoon of April 7. WX4NHC Amateur Radio Coordinator John McHugh, K4AG, and Ripoll made the first presentation of the workshop. Explaining the 29 year history of their work at the NHC and the importance of measured surface data and damage reports, the pair told how this knowledge allows hurricane specialists to make better forecasts. They also told some stories and showed videos from several of the most critical activations over the past few years. They discussed the importance of the reporting from all stations, stressing that they will take reports by any means in support of the mission to help save lives.

Director of Operations of the VoIP Hurricane Net Rob Macedo, KD1CY, gave a presentation on the VoIP Hurricane Net and the role it plays in gathering data for WX4NHC. He also explained how it also can be used to connect various National Weather Service forecast offices, as well as local and regional Emergency Operation Centers during hurricanes. Macedo also explained how the net is looking for more contacts within the affected area to connect to the net and more amateurs to relay data from local and regional nets in the affected area of hurricanes. "The VoIP Hurricane Net relays info to WX4NHC using any and all means of reliable information from all sources to give WX4NHC the most information possible from the surface during a hurricane," Macedo explained.

Macedo also presented a session on the International Radio Emergency Support Coalition (IRESC) <<http://www.iresc.org/>> and its role in providing translators and additional contacts in the affected area during hurricanes and other disasters. "This includes monitoring and translation of international media broadcasts and press releases that the NHC may not normally receive," he said. "The IRESC EchoLink conference is often connected to the VoIP Hurricane Net during hurricanes to support both the net and listen-only activity for stations outside of the affected area that want to monitor the VoIP Hurricane Net during hurricanes."

Assistant Net Manager of the Hurricane Watch Net Brad Pioveson, W9FX, gave a presentation on the HWN's 44 year history. Explaining that the HWN has been around longer than operations at WX4NHC, Pioveson described how in the days before WX4NHC, HWN ham radio operators -- using phones and faxes -- passed information on tropical advisories to the NHC. He

also detailed some potential changes at the HWN that will include not just the monitoring of their traditional 14.325 MHz frequency, but also branching out onto other bands.

"Given the extremely poor propagation that we've seen lately," Pioveson said, "we see the need for the HWN to expand its reach to other HF bands. The Maximum Usable Frequency simply doesn't allow for 20 meters to propagate as it has in the past. We need to scale our operations to other HF bands when propagation is poor so we can support stations in the affected area of a hurricane."

ARRL Southeastern Division Director Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, explained how the Alabama section is preparing for an upcoming hurricane interoperability exercise, giving a breakdown of the Alabama Section by region. Sarratt explained that the focus of the exercise is a "worst case scenario hurricane" with cell phones rendered unusable during the hurricane exercise. He also gave a breakdown of the ARRL HQ disaster response mechanism, saying that all ARES members and leadership should recognize and observe the ARES Field Organization structure <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/org/>>.

On the evening of April 7, the same presenters gave similar presentations to the Austin Amateur Radio Club meeting after a BBQ put on by the local club. West Gulf Division Director Dr David Woolweaver, K5RAV, was present for all the Tuesday workshops and the local club meeting. At the meeting, Woolweaver thanked everyone for their support of the conference workshops and for attending the club meeting. He also took the opportunity to announce that he was appointing Lee Cooper, W5LHC, president of the Austin Amateur Radio Club (AARC), as Assistant Director for Emergency Communications in the West Gulf Division. "This is a necessary appointment in our Division to address the importance of emergency communications," Woolweaver told the group.

On April 8, Dura and Macedo gave a workshop to emergency management officials and representatives of government agencies. The workshop focused on situational awareness and disaster intelligence, stressing its importance to Emergency Management and how it creates more opportunities to utilize Amateur Radio. The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session relating to Amateur Radio Emergency Communications. "Collecting and gathering data and sharing information and reporting during disasters is another way Amateur Radio can assist beyond the typical message handling," Dura said. "Monitoring critical infrastructure -- such as in the case of the Red River in North Dakota -- is an example, and these examples can be applied to hurricanes."

Macedo gave the audience several disaster intelligence examples used during hurricanes, as well as from his ARES and SKYWARN work in the ARRL's Eastern Massachusetts section: "On several occasions, SKYWARN spotters gave information to emergency management. This information, along with other data, helped emergency management officials to escalate their response in several recent disaster-related incidents. This model

can also be utilized during hurricanes."

During the closing session, Director of Safety Operations and Emergency Management for the City of Houston Arcadio Avalos asked several questions, starting a discussion on coordination and credentialing.

"Based upon his experiences from Hurricane Ike last year, he said he understood the importance of Amateur Radio and wanted to assist in easing logistical issues for the next time this work is needed in his area," Dura said. "He will be assisting to ease those issues on the public safety side of things. He also took copious notes on how he could improve things on the Amateur Radio side. He mentioned that he viewed Amateur Radio as a 'huge asset' in this task and wanted to ensure that no coordination issues arise for next time so Amateur Radio support can be utilized even further and more efficiently."

All sessions were videotaped through the efforts of professional videographer and VoIP Hurricane Net Control Scheduler Jim Palmer, KB1KQW. Macedo said that the videos should be available the first part of May on the North Shore Radio Association (NSRA) Web site <<http://www.nsradio.org/video>>.

The 2010 National Hurricane Conference is scheduled for March 29-April 2 in Orlando, Florida.

ARRL Letter Article: NWS Awards Arkansas Ham Top Honor..

This ARRL Letter Article discusses how an Arkansas Ham received a top honor from the National Weather Service in Little Rock, Arkansas. The ARRL Web Story link and ARRL Letter Article is listed below:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/04/20/10775/?nc=1>

==> NWS AWARDS ARKANSAS HAM TOP HONOR

In late March, officials at the National Weather Service (NWS) office in Little Rock, Arkansas, awarded Brother Anselm Allen, WB5JLD, the prestigious Thomas Jefferson Award for his service as a Cooperative Weather Observer <<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/coop/>>. Named for the third President of the United States -- who kept an almost unbroken series of weather records from 1776 to 1816 -- the award is the highest and most prestigious award bestowed on Cooperative Weather Observers; only five Jefferson Awards are conferred each year. Cooperative observers are trained by the NWS to provide temperature (air and soil), precipitation and river data on a daily basis.

In addition to Allen's outstanding support of the National Weather Service, he is also an Amateur Radio operator and is active on local nets. Allen is only the second observer to receive the Jefferson Award in the Little Rock County Warning Area <<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lzk/html/imgviewer1.php?pic=x73>>.

The NWS has trained more than 11,000 people to take weather observations on farms, in urban and suburban areas, National Parks, seashores and mountaintops, giving the NWS a true weather picture representative of where people live, work and play. Formally created in 1890 under the Organic Act, the Cooperative Observer program has a twofold mission: To provide observational meteorological data, usually consisting of daily maximum and minimum temperatures, snowfall, and 24-hour precipitation totals, required to define the climate of the United States and to help measure long-term climate changes; and to provide observational meteorological data in near real-time to support forecast, warning and other public service programs of the NWS.

Volunteer weather observers provide data that are invaluable in learning more about the floods, droughts, heat and cold waves. The data are also used in agricultural planning and assessment, engineering, environmental-impact assessment, utilities planning and litigation. Information gathered by Cooperative Observers plays a critical role in efforts to recognize and evaluate the extent of human impacts on climate from local to global scales. -- Information provided by the National Weather Service, Little Rock

ARRL Letter Article: Boston Area Hams Provide Communications Support for Annual Marathon..

While a bit off topic on weather, cool conditions allowed for a relatively quiet Boston Marathon where Amateur Radio is responsible for assisting with Ambulance Requests, communications between medical buses and looking for any public safety issues along the 26-mile route. Below is the ARRL Web Story link and ARRL Letter article:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/04/22/10780/?nc=1>

==> BOSTON AREA HAMS PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT FOR ANNUAL MARATHON

More than 250 Amateur Radio operators provided communication support for the 113th running of the Boston Marathon <<http://www.bostonmarathon.com>> on Monday, April 20, also known as Patriots' Day <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriots\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriots_Day)>. With more than 26,000 official runners and 500,000 spectators along the 26 mile route, the marathon utilized amateurs at the starting line, along the course at each water and first aid station, and at the finish line.

"This is the largest public service event in New England in terms of the number of Amateur Radio operators required for a one-day event, and we can always use more hams to help us," said Marathon Amateur Radio Communications (MARC) <<http://marc.mmra.org/marc/index.html>> Course Coordinator Steve Schwarm, W3EVE. "We're glad that the weather was cool and the number of ambulance requests this year was lower than past years, where we had higher temperatures and more medical issues."

Even with the more temperate weather, MARC Finish Line Coordinator Paul

Topolski, W1SEX, said the medical tents at the finish line were near capacity by mid-afternoon. "Hams provided communications, status and logistical issue updates between the medical tents to our finish line net control as needed," he said.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) was active with operations at the State Emergency Operations Center in Framingham, with their operations room acting as a Unified Command Center (UCC) for the marathon. RACES members staffed the communications room at the SEOC, and ARRL Eastern Massachusetts Section Manager Mike Neilsen, W1MPN, staffed the UCC. Neilson fed status reports on any issues along the marathon route into the operations room, as well as issues from the UCC to the operations room.

"This is the first time we've had an Amateur Radio Operator in the operations room of the UCC," said Massachusetts State RACES Radio Officer Tom Kinahan, N1CPE. "We have been coordinating with the Boston Marathon Net Control and the finish line communications in Boston to provide updates into our station and to our Amateur Radio operator in the UCC."

The Net Control center is located with a line-of-sight to the Boston area and to the entire 26 mile route in case simplex communication is required. More than a dozen repeaters were utilized to provide overlapping coverage to the marathon route. The Clay Center Amateur Radio Club, the Minuteman Repeater Association, the Framingham Amateur Radio Association and many other clubs in the New England area support the marathon operations.

With so many amateurs placed along the marathon route, ARRL Eastern Massachusetts Section Emergency Coordinator Rob Macedo, KD1CY, placed Eastern Massachusetts ARES on standby in case something went wrong along the marathon route, or a major incident occurred coincident with the marathon. "This is standard operating procedure for 'Marathon Monday'" he said. "We want our members to maintain a heightened state of awareness during the event."

Patriots' Day -- a state holiday in Massachusetts and Maine -- commemorates the anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the first battles of the American Revolutionary War.

Respectfully Submitted,

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<http://www.wx1box.org>