

NWS Taunton, MA. SKYWARN Newsletter #246

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SKYWARN Training 2008 Update..

SKYWARN Training 2008 will commence with scheduling as we get into the later portion of January and into February. Due to scheduling constraints at NWS Taunton, training sessions may be less than in past years though SKYWARN Coordinators are working with NWS Taunton to try and distribute training to some areas where forecasters will not be able to reach this year such as Newburyport, Mass, Milton, Mass. and possibly other locations. It is also noted that the SKYWARN training schedule for 2008 may be spread through much of 2008 versus being focused on the spring and summer months.

Forecasters will focus on providing training in the Hartford, CT, Providence, RI, Boston Mass, Worcester, Mass, Springfield, Mass, Keene, NH area and in Hillsborough County, NH. Further details on SKYWARN training will be posted in later SKYWARN Newsletters.

TIPS, Training Information Public Service Net to Feature NWS Panel Discussion..

The Training Information and Public Service Net will feature a NWS Panel Discussion on New England Winter Weather featuring Bill Babcock, SKYWARN Program Leader from NWS Taunton and Rob Macedo-KD1CY, ARES SKYWARN Coordinator for NWS Taunton. In December, Roger Jeanfaivre-K1PAI, Hartford-Tolland County SKYWARN Coordinator and Steve Williams-K1SJW, Connecticut State SKYWARN Coordinator, both participated in a panel discussion on winter weather and discussed the Connecticut SKYWARN program.

The net can be heard on the KB1AEV linked repeater system in Connecticut. Frequencies can be seen at the following link:

<http://www.kb1aev.net/>

The net will also be on EchoLink *NEW-ENG* Conference Node: 9123/IRLP 9123. The 145.490 Fairhaven Repeater will likely carry the net covering portions of Southeast Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

SKYWARN Recognition Day 2007 Report..

The following is the SKYWARN recognition Day 2007 report for WX1BOX Operations:

It was another successful event at WX1BOX for SKYWARN Recognition Day (SRD) 2007. The following Amateur Radio Operators participated in SRD 2007 from WX1BOX:

KD1CY-Rob Macedo
KB1KQW-Jim Palmer
KA1NCF-Eric Horwitz
KB1MRH-Matt Dempsey
W1VFB-Greg Glynn
KB1LXH-Don Burke
N1PJ-PJ Howe
KB1CYO-Phil McLaughlin
KB1FVN-Joanne McLaughlin
KB1G-Bill Boyes
W1EAV-Chris Washburn
K2DCD-Dennis Dura (Manager of Preparedness and Response at ARRL HQ)
KB1GHX-Glenn Field (Warning Coordination Meteorologist at NWS Taunton)
KE5HFU-Rebecca Gould (Forecaster At NWS Taunton formerly from NWS Midland, TX)

From NWS Taunton, we made 207 unique contacts and 239 contacts if you counted duplicates. We worked 51 NWS offices from our location qualifying our operation for the F1 Tornado Certificate.

Operations were on VHF/UHF across many of the SKYWARN repeaters that were reachable from our location, EchoLink/IRLP and HF. HF band conditions suffered significantly from QSB but a number of contacts were made on 20, 40 and 80 meters. The VoIP and VHF/UHF modes made up for the erratic HF conditions. There was a reasonably large number of folks on the area repeaters looking for our NWS office as we scheduled time on each repeater and tried to get to each repeater following the schedule that we published.

Warning Coordination Meteorologist-Glenn Field, KB1GHX brought pizza for the Amateur Radio Operators and made a couple of contacts as he came in on a day off to be with us for a few hours Saturday Afternoon.

Another highlight from our SRD activities was having Dennis Dura-K2DCD, Manager of Preparedness and Response from ARRL HQ at our SRD in NWS Taunton. Dennis made a few contacts on EchoLink including with the NWS Mount Holly/Philadelphia Office where Dennis was the former NWS Mount Holly/Philadelphia Office SKYWARN Coordinator.

Due to a pending winter storm that was expected to affect the area on the Sunday Night and Monday after SRD, we did not get as many forecasters on the air as we would have liked but we did make a special connection for the newest forecaster at NWS Taunton. Rebecca Gould-KE5HFU transferred from the NWS Midland, TX Office to NWS Taunton, Mass. in mid-November. She made her first 2 contacts on Amateur Radio ever which included WX7CHS, NWS Cheyenne Wyoming and her former NWS office, W5MAF in NWS Midland, TX. These contacts were made over EchoLink.

As we have done for the last several years, we have continued testing and work with Eric Horwitz-KA1NCF software package known as "Netlog" which could be utilized in SKYWARN events and activations along with public service events. We are hoping to utilize this more during actual activations right from the NWS Office and it is being utilized by some SKYWARN Coordinators with their nets in the field. More information on the Netlog program can be found by emailing Eric Horwitz-KA1NCF at ka1ncf@ka1ncf.org.

Special thanks to Bill Boyes-KB1G for the pictures from SRD which are posted with this report on the WX1BOX web site at <http://www.wx1box.org> and for also letting us utilize his Icom HF radio in addition to the Alinco DX-70-TH radio that is installed at the NWS Office.

VoIP SKYWARN/Hurricane Prep Net Schedule Changes..

The VoIP Hurricane Net Management team has made a decision on format changes for the Weekly Prep net in 2008 which was announced on the last weekly net for 2007 on 12/15/07. Polls were opened to solicit people's inputs back in late November. Unfortunately, the input represented a very small number of the overall group so it was a bit difficult to determine what people's interests would be in any changes to the net so the net management team, factoring in what input we did get from the polls and our own vision for the net has come up with the following changes for 2008:

-The VoIP Hurricane Prep Net will meet monthly in the months of December through May on the first weekend of the month at 0000 UTC which is Saturday Evening for much of North America. For each net with the exception of the net in December which typically coincides

with SKYWARN Recognition Day, we will have a presentation/training session done on the net to attract interest.

-During Hurricane Season, we will move the net from monthly to weekly to attract more interest. The first net of each month will remain at 0000 UTC/Saturday Evening for much of North America and we will continue to do presentations unless hurricane activations preclude the time required to do the presentations. An option that will be finalized as we get closer to the 2008 season is whether the other nets that take place during the months in Hurricane Season will take place on that same time slot as the first net of the month or whether we will have that net take place on a weeknight. This will be decided as we move closer to the 2008 Hurricane Season. Based on the poll input, a Thursday Evening got the most votes as a potential date for a weeknight net. A decision will be made in the late April/early May 2008 timeframe on whether the net will be held weekly on the weekend during hurricane season or whether it will follow a first weekend of the month, and then weeknight on the remaining weeks of the month format during hurricane season.

To access the VoIP Hurricane Prep Net or the VoIP Hurricane Net during net activations, you can connect to the *WX-TALK* EchoLink Conference Node: 7203/IRLP 9219. For EchoLink PC users, you can find that conference in the EchoLink program. For those that use EchoLink or IRLP nodes to access the net, a listing of nodes can be found on the following web sites:

<http://status.irlp.net>

<http://www.echolink.org>

Once you find a node that you can use, contact the node owner on how to access the node to connect to the Echolink conference *WX-TALK* Node: 7203/IRLP 9219. Some nodes require an access code to be able to access a node.

A reminder to all that a portion of SKYWARN Operations with the NWS Taunton office occurs on the New England Reflector system on the *NEW-ENG* Conference Node:9123/IRLP 9123. If you are used to connecting to this system, it is a similar process to connect to the *WX-TALK* EchoLink conference/IRLP 9219 system.

Hurricane Noel Featured on January VoIP SKYWARN/Hurricane Prep Net..

The impact of Hurricane Noel over the Caribbean, Bahamas as a tropical storm and the impact of the remnants of Noel as a remnant Nor'easter system was a featured topic on the VoIP SKYWARN/Hurricane Prep Net.

A Power Point presentation along with a recording of the net can be seen on the VoIP SKYWARN/Hurricane Net Web site at <http://www.voipwx.net>

The Power Point presentation is 1.6 MB in size and the recording is 5.7 MB in size. For best results, download the presentation and recording on to your hard drive to review the Power Point and listen to the recording. The presentations have also been archived on the VoIP WX Net Presentations Archive of the VoIPWXNet web page off the Main Menu of the web site.

ARRL Letter Article: Ice Storms Move Across the Midwestern United States..

The following ARRL Letter Article details ice storms that moved across the Midwestern United States in December causing issues and activation of ARES across the affected states.

==> ICE STORMS MOVE ACROSS MIDWESTERN UNITED STATES

Ice storms swept across the Plains states earlier this week, and as of Wednesday, nearly 1 million homes and business were without power. In Oklahoma alone, there were approximately 600,000 without power, with 250,000 households and businesses in Tulsa alone without power. Officials in Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma had declared states of emergency. President Bush declared a federal emergency in Oklahoma on Tuesday, ordering government aid to supplement state and local efforts. Authorities said Tulsa and Oklahoma City each had more than 100 reports of fires since the storm began, mostly from tree limbs crashing into live power lines.

According to ARRL Oklahoma District Emergency Coordinator Mark Conklin, N7XYO, "Starting early Monday morning, Oklahoma ARES was activated to support local area hospitals, as only five of the area hospitals had power from the grid. As of Wednesday, all hospitals had power. ARES volunteers are providing communications for one hospital at this time, but the Oklahoma State University Medical Center and Tulsa Spine Hospital also requested assistance. ARES is also working with the local Medical Emergency Response Center and the Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency."

Tim Hoss, Safety Officer at the Oklahoma State University Medical Center, said, "I want to personally thank each and every one of the volunteers that came to our facility and kept us in constant communication with the Medical Emergency Response Center. I hope you and all your fellow hams know how greatly respected you are in the eyes of the emergency planners for Tulsa. Your organization is the one that will get through and perform flawlessly when no one else can."

More than 30 shelters were opened across the area. More than 1500 people have stayed at least one night in one of the shelters.

Ice ranging from a quarter-inch to an inch thick has glazed roads in much of the central Plains and Midwest. At least 24 deaths -- mostly traffic accidents -- have been blamed on the storm since it developed last weekend: 15 in Oklahoma, four in Kansas, three in Missouri and one each in Nebraska and Michigan.

The power outage was the worst ever in Oklahoma, with more than 618,000 homes and businesses without electricity as of late Tuesday. Officials said it could be a week to 10 days before power is fully restored. Elsewhere, nearly 350,000 people were affected by outages in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Illinois.

The National Weather Service said that all ice storm warnings for the storm have come to an end. Freezing rain and winter weather advisories over Northern Missouri and Western Illinois expired Wednesday morning. Other winter weather advisories across the Midwest, including Northeast Oklahoma, also expired Wednesday morning. Collinsville, Oklahoma experienced 1.5 inches of freezing rain; Davenport, Iowa had .4 inches of freezing rain; Manhattan, Kansas had .75 inches of freezing rain; Poplar Grove, Illinois had more than one inch of sleet and freezing rain. Iowa is expected to get another five inches of snow, and Nebraska up to 10 inches.

ARRL Letter Article: Northwest US Pounded by Storms, Floods, Hams Across region Activated..

This ARRL Letter article discusses December storms in the Northwest US that pounded the region with wind damage and flooding causing activations of ARES and SKYWARN. Public Information officers/coordinators in the Northwest US got great media attention both locally and nationally on their efforts. Below is the ARRL Letter Article on what occurred in early December:

==> NORTHWEST US POUNDED BY STORMS, FLOODS; HAMS ACROSS REGION ACTIVATED

For the past week, the wake of fierce storms have ravaged the Pacific Northwest, killing at least seven people and leading to widespread flooding and mudslides that shut down roads and highways, including Interstate 5; other infrastructure, such as telephone lines and electricity, have been obliterated. The latest of three storms slammed

into the state on Monday, December 3, hitting hardest on the Olympic Peninsula, Kitsap County and the southwestern corner of Washington state as well as the northwest corner of Oregon, leaving at least 73,000 residents without power; more than 50,000 were still in the dark Tuesday. Pacific Power said that nearly 36,000 of its customers were still without power on Thursday. The storm overwhelmed a number of sewage treatment plants, allowing tons of raw sewage to spew into Puget Sound.

National Guard troops evacuated residents in Vernonia, Oregon on Tuesday, December 4, and tens of thousands of residents remained without power after the storms struck that state; Vernonia, a mountain timber town of about 2200 residents on the Nehalem River, is about 35 miles northwest of Portland. The town had been largely cut off by landslides that blocked roads into the community, but Guard trucks with high clearance were able to get in late Monday. The governors of Washington and Oregon declared states of emergency, which could speed relief efforts in flood-hit areas.

Throughout it all, Amateur Radio operators were there to help. In Oregon, after a visit Tuesday to Vernonia, Governor Ted Kulongoski said, "I'm going to tell you who the heroes were from the very beginning of this...the ham radio operators. These people just came in and actually provided a tremendous communication link to us." The Oregon Office of Emergency Management said the radio operators were tireless in their efforts to keep the systems connected. When even state police had difficulty reaching some of their own troops, ham radio worked, setting up networks so emergency officials could communicate and relaying lists of supplies needed in stricken areas.

Amateur Radio's role in again providing communications when other systems were destroyed or overloaded was not missed by the media. Many TV, radio and newspaper items have appeared, praising the hams and noting their service to the communities. ARRL Oregon Section Public Information Coordinator Steve Sanders, KE7JSS, has been responding to many media requests, including an article distributed via the Associated Press. Portland's KATU Channel 2 spotlighted the role Amateur Radio played throughout the storms

<http://www.hello-radio.org/video/oregon2.wmv>.

In Oregon, ARES is still providing communications to the coast, with more than 60 volunteers working at the coast and many more at points in between. The District One Emergency Radio Network was activated at 8 AM Monday morning and was still in operation as of Thursday, December 6; District One ARES serves Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Multnomah, Tillamook and Washington counties -- the northwest corner of the state.

According to Sanders, "We are working closely with the American Red Cross as well as the major hospitals, Heartnet radio network and district-wide emergency managers, including the Oregon Office of Emergency Management in Salem."

ARRL Oregon District One Emergency Coordinator David Kidd, KA7OZO, said, "The Red Cross has set up two shelters in Tillamook County and four in Columbia County. The Columbia County Emergency Center reported that Astoria is without phone service and the outage is expected to remain so for the rest of the week. Columbia County will continue to provide 911 service and relays for Clatsop County. The ham station continues to be operational at the Vernonia Fire Department and has contact with Clatsop and Columbia Counties and is relaying traffic as needed and will support the Red Cross resupply operation in progress."

According to Sally Jones, Administrator for the Columbia 911 Communications District, "The 911 lines that would normally be answered in Seaside and Astoria for callers in Clatsop County were diverted by the phone company to the Columbia 911 Communications Center on a temporary emergency basis. The emergency phone calls are being taken by Columbia 911 staff who are relaying the information via Columbia County and Clatsop County Amateur Radio Emergency Services volunteers to the police fire and emergency medical dispatchers in Clatsop County, who then are activating Clatsop County first responders." Clatsop County's 911 service also went down in the storm, but officials there relied on ham radio operators to transmit messages, including information about people in need.

The National Weather Service reported that flood warnings were issued earlier in the week but cancelled a bit after midnight (PST) Thursday for the Nehalem River near Foss, affecting Clatsop and Tillamook Counties and South Yamhill River at McMinnville, affecting Yamhill County. Flood warnings are still in effect Friday morning for the Tualatin River at Farmington, affecting Washington County. Most rivers across Washington and Oregon have crested and are falling below flood stage. Flooding does continue on a few rivers with record flooding on the Chehalis River in Washington and on the Tualatin River in Oregon.

According to ARRL Oregon Section Manager Bonnie Altus, AB7ZQ, telephone and electric services were slowly coming back as of Thursday evening. "It sounds like some telephones were starting to be restored in the worst hit areas last night and today. Clatsop County got some phones back for a few prefixes last night, and Vernonia started getting some phones back this morning," she said.

"A medical clinic in Vernonia had to be relocated due to flood damage and there are some medically fragile people in the Red Cross shelters there," Altus said. "Where they had this shelter set up, landlines are not readily available and cell phones are not always reliable, so the net is continuing to support them." She said that the ARES net is operating from 6 AM-9PM daily.

ARRL Western Washington Section Manager Jim Pace, K7CEX, said, "The Washington and Oregon Coast and inland areas of Western Washington were struck by extreme winds (maximum gusts of over 100 miles per hour) and torrential rains. Although none of Western Washington was spared, the counties of Grays Harbor, Pacific and Lewis seemed to be hit the hardest. In Lewis County, where I live, dikes broke allowing three rivers to flow over Interstate 5; most of the cities of Centralia, Chehalis, and Adna were almost completely under water." Rescue operations are being handled with helicopters from the US Coast Guard, National Guard, Navy, King County Sheriff and Air Lift Northwest, Pace said. "On Tuesday, the ham station at Thurston County EOC reported 60 people had been picked off of roof tops so far. Lewis County reported similar situations with nearly 200 folks. Rescue operations will go through the night again tonight."

Pace said that Southwest Washington has been "hit pretty hard. In fact, the flooding has trapped me in my neighborhood. There are several teams working to support assessment and rescue. Sheriff, Coast Guard and Navy helicopters are picking folks off of rooftops and out of destroyed homes. The water has closed Interstate 5 for about 20 miles -- at one point the depth is 9 feet over the pavement."

In Washington, some 130 people had to be rescued from flooded areas by Coast Guard helicopters. Mudslides and floods blocked roads, and Interstate 5, the principal north-south route along the West Coast, was closed near Centralia because of about 10 feet of water over the road. Many schools and government offices were closed for a second day. Mudslides also halted Amtrak passenger train service between Portland and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Mudslides blocked numerous roads and forced an undetermined number of residents to evacuate condominiums, apartments and houses in Seattle, at least nine houses in suburban Burien and several mobile homes in Shelton.

Washington Governor Chris Gregoire, who toured the ravaged region by helicopter Tuesday, touched down at a high school shelter in Chehalis and offered encouragement to the roughly 40 people staying there. She also ordered a plane to deliver food and emergency supplies to the high

school in Pe Ell, about 25 miles to the west, because the roads were blocked by water. "It's hard to comprehend 5-10 feet under until you see those houses," Gregoire said. The governor also flew to the water's edge on Interstate 5, which has been shut down since Monday at Centralia because of flooding. On Tuesday, officials said a three mile section of the road was under as much as 10 feet of water from the surging Chehalis River.

Pace said that in Pacific County ARES members have been manning the County Emergency Operations Center at South Bend "almost 24/7. Ham radio has been the only reliable means of communications in the county since the landline and cell phones have been out of service."

The Thurston County Department of Emergency Management activated ARES on Tuesday, December 4 to support ongoing flood evacuation operations in southwest portion of the county. The team staffed the County Emergency Operations Center's radio room in Olympia and manned sites at the Rochester Fire Station, various evacuation centers as well as landing zones for the helicopter rescue teams. "They used Amateur Radio to coordinate resources and limited tactical traffic between sites," Pace said. "Hams were also primary operators on several county radio systems. One ham was stationed at the Rochester helicopter landing zone all day Tuesday, even though he knew his own business was in trouble from the high water and will have to be rebuilt."

Other hams, Pace said, who were not activated, helped in other ways. "At the request of local agencies, some filled sand bags while some manned phones to take damage reports at Seattle's Office of Emergency Management." Some teams have been activated but have not had an opportunity to report. "Others, such as the Lewis County Team -- the area hardest hit by the flood -- were cut off from traveling; however, when the local 147.06 repeater failed, Lewis County hams got on simplex and HF frequencies to check on each other and put themselves on standby for deployment when roads became passable," he said.

Pace praised the amateurs in the Western Washington Section: "They train the way they're going to respond, and they respond the way they are trained. Some will report to duty and never see a microphone, but will make copies, log data, empty wastebaskets, direct vehicle traffic and fill sand bags -- whatever needs to be done -- and never complain once."

The ARRL will update this story on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org>> as more information becomes available. The main priority of the Oregon and Western Washington Section leadership is assisting their served agencies. As they update the ARRL, the information will be posted online.

ARRL Letter Article: New Mexico Hams Assist with Thanksgiving Week Wildfire..

The following Article from the ARRL Letter discusses New Mexico Hams reaction to wildfires caused by dry weather conditions.

==> NEW MEXICO HAMS ASSIST WITH THANKSGIVING WEEK WILDFIRE

A 7500 acre wildfire erupted on Ojo Peak, part of the Manzano Mountains in the Cibola National Forest, southeast of Albuquerque, on Monday, November 19. Two days later, five New Mexico County ARES Groups were activated in support of the Torrance County Emergency Management Agency. Hams assisted by providing emergency communications for the American Red Cross evacuation shelters, Torrance County Dispatch and the County's fire units in the rugged terrain.

Arlene Perea, Fire Information Officer for the Cibola National Forest, said the cause has not been determined but that authorities have ruled out lightning. She said officials have not determined if the fire was intentionally set or the result of negligence, but they're trying to get some information about people who came off of trailheads. According to reports, approximately 90 families were forced to evacuate from their homes and seven structures were burned, including three homes. A few outbuildings suffered major damage.

Torrance County Emergency Manager John Cordova, KE5RNB, activated ARES, along with ARES Emergency Coordinator for Torrance County Daryl Clutter, NX5W. Socorro County ARES provided their communications trailer and Sandoval County ARES brought their mobile command unit. The Tapia Mesa, Sandoval County and Upper Rio FM Society 2 meter repeaters were utilized for this event.

In addition to providing emergency communications to Torrance County, ARES personnel assisted a portable kitchen that was sent by a church group to the American Red Cross evacuation center in Mountainair, 10 miles from the fire.

It started to snow in the Manzano Mountains early on Thanksgiving Day. This snow, along with water tankers from California and efforts of the fire fighters in difficult terrain, helped to contain the fire. According to the US Forest Service, the fire is 60 percent contained. Since a major part of the fire is in wilderness areas, it won't be fully contained until what Perea calls "a good snowfall" comes.

ARRL "In Brief" Article: Developer of Hurricane Intensity Scale Dies at 90..

The following ARRL "In Brief" Article discusses the death of Herbert Saffir, one of the developers of the hurricane intensity Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale. Below is the article:

* Developer of Hurricane Intensity Scale Dies at 90: Herbert Saffir, an engineer who created the five-category system used to describe hurricane strength and warn millions of an approaching storm's danger, died Wednesday, November 21. He was 90. A structural engineer, Saffir created his scale in 1969 -- laying out for the first time what kind of damage could be expected from an approaching hurricane. It has since become the definitive way to describe intensity for storms that form in the Atlantic and parts of the Pacific. Before the scale, hurricanes were simply described as major or minor. Saffir's innovation was ranking storm destruction by type, from Category 1 -- where trees and unanchored mobile homes receive the primary damage, to Category 5 -- the complete failure of roofs and some structures. The five descriptions of destruction were then matched with the sustained wind speeds producing the corresponding damage. Saffir's scale was expanded by former National Hurricane Center director Robert H. Simpson and became known as the Saffir-Simpson scale in the 1970s. Simpson added possible storm surge heights for each category, and the hurricane center staff made a small adjustment to the scale's wind speeds. -- Some information from the Associated Press

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

Respectfully Submitted,

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