

Spark Gap

Volume 22, Issue 9, September 2005



Jim Haynie,
W5JBP, ARRL
President

*The Official
Newsletter of the
Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club*



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ARRL President Submits Congressional Testimony on Hams' Katrina Response

NEWINGTON, CT, Sep 15, 2005—
ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP,
has provided written testimony on
Amateur Radio's response in the
Hurricane Katrina disaster to the US
House Government Reform Committee.
Haynie submitted the testimony to the
congressional panel today "on the
successful efforts of Amateur Radio
operators providing communications
for first responders, disaster relief

agencies and countless individuals in connection
with the Hurricane Katrina relief effort" on behalf
of the League.

"As has been proven consistently
and repeatedly in the past, when
communications systems fail due to a
wide-area or localized natural disaster,
Amateur Radio works, right away, all
the time," Haynie's statement said.
"This report is not, therefore, a
statement of concern about what
must be changed or improved. It is,
rather, a report on what is going right, and what
works, in emergency communications in the Gulf
Coast and what can be depended on to work the
next time there is a natural disaster, and the times
after that."

The congressional committee, chaired by Virginia
Republican Tom Davis, is holding hearings on the
Hurricane Katrina response. Haynie told the panel
that upward of 1000 Amateur Radio volunteers
were or have been serving in the stricken area to
provide communication for served agencies such
as the American Red Cross and The Salvation
Army and to facilitate interoperability among
agencies.

"Trained volunteer Amateur Radio operators are
also providing health-and-welfare communications
from within the affected area to the rest of the
United States and the world," Haynie said. "In the
past week, the Coast Guard, the Red Cross, and

the Federal Emergency Management Agency all
put out calls for volunteer Amateur Radio
operators to provide communications, because
phone lines and cell sites were inoperative, and
public safety communications facilities were
overwhelmed due to loss of repeater towers and
the large number of first responders in the area."

Haynie pointed out that the main reason Amateur
Radio works when other communication systems
fail during natural disasters is that it's not
infrastructure-dependent and is decentralized.

"Amateurs are trained in emergency
communications. They are disciplined operators,
and their stations are, in general,
portable and reliable," he told the
panel.

The ARRL President also put in a
good word for the FCC's
Enforcement Bureau for what he
called "its efficient and successful
efforts" during the hurricane
response in monitoring HF nets to
minimize incidents of interference.

"The Committee should be aware that this vast
volunteer resource is always at the disposal of the
federal government," Haynie concluded. "The
United States absolutely can rely on the Amateur
Radio Service. Amateur Radio provides immediate,
high-quality communications that work every time,
when all else fails."

*Note: To read President Haynie's complete
testimony as submitted to the US House Govern-
ment Reform Committee, please see the ARRL.org
website.*

Amateur Radio Equipment Donations Making a Difference in Gulf Region

NEWINGTON, CT, Sep 13, 2005—Amateur Radio equipment and supplies now arriving at the American Red Cross Hurricane Katrina relief staging area in Montgomery, Alabama, are being turned around as quickly as possible and heading out into the field with volunteers. A team headed by Alabama ARRL Section Manager Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, has been on duty for some two weeks now, overseeing Amateur Radio volunteer intake and registration and trying to satisfy the ever-changing requirements of the Red Cross and other served agencies. Sarratt says equipment that started showing up



Amateur Radio equipment and supplies donated to ARRL for the Hurricane Katrina response is unloaded at the volunteer staging area in Montgomery, Alabama, for deployment to the field with volunteers from all over the US. [Allen Pitts, W1AGP, Photo

over the weekend is being inventoried and sent right into the field as needed. “The American Red Cross and other served agencies are very thankful and appreciative that we are helping them out,” Sarratt said this week. “I have talked with several ARC folks who said they could not operate without us!” ARES and MARS member Matt Hackman, KB1FUP, was among a Rhode Island contingent processed over the weekend through the Montgomery marshaling center for duty in Mississippi. The New England volunteers were able to take advantage of the newly donated handheld transceivers, HF transceivers and antennas for use in and around Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Hackman said Red Cross personnel were using VHF simplex to keep in contact with each shelter. He and two other Rhode Islanders replaced operators rotating out of duty. “I was assigned to the First Baptist Church in Pascagoula, which is being operated as a feeding station by the Southern Baptist Convention,” he explained. “SBC is separate from Red Cross with their own relief organization and own Amateur Radio support, but very well staffed and equipped, and we are all working together.”

The best estimate is that some 1000 Amateur Radio volunteers are helping out in hurricane-ravaged areas along the Gulf Coast and at evacuee centers there and in other states. For the time being, additional volunteers are being told to stand by, but that situation could change as currently restricted areas are reopened and as replacement operators are needed. Sarratt says he has registered approximately 100 Amateur Radio volunteers

through the Montgomery marshaling center. Those still in the pipeline will replace operators already on the ground in affected areas when they rotate out, he said. Sarratt rescinded an urgent call for operators put out over the weekend. Sarratt said this week that some operators have been deployed from Montgomery to Red Cross shelters alone, while others have gone in teams of two. Amateur Radio has been the primary means of contact with the outside world for many shelters still lacking reliable communication. He noted, however, that some shelters do now have commercial telecommunication systems available. “We have deployed many great Amateur Radio operators to the field, Sarratt remarked. “Guys have traveled from all over the USA on their own dime to do the right thing and help others. I’m very proud of them.” Sarratt said several “shining stars” in the field have made the volunteer effort work well and “kept Amateur Radio looking great.”

ARRL Louisiana Acting Section Emergency Coordinator Al Oubre, K5DPG, reports, meanwhile, that the emergency activation at the Louisiana State Office of Emergency Preparedness in Baton Rouge is winding down. Telephone and cell service around the state is slowly being restored, he reports, and Louisiana does not need additional help at this time. Operators from Wisconsin were expected to arrive September 12, while others were coming in from Western Washington and Colorado. Oubre said when St Bernard and Jefferson

parishes dry out sufficiently, the Red Cross will then be able to move into that area and set up support services. At that point, he said, more Amateur Radio volunteers may be needed.

Amateur Radio stations along the Mississippi Gulf Coast have begun handling more health-and-welfare traffic. Louisiana Section Manager Mickey Cox, K5MC, says he and Benson Scott, AE5V, have been passing H&W traffic via the National Traffic System (NTS) using voice and digital modes and *WinLink 2000*. Cox is seeking outlets for incoming traffic bound for the affected areas. South Texas Section Emergency Coordinator Jerry Reimer, KK5CA, reports Amateur Radio support for sheltering operations at the Houston Astrodome and other locations around the city is expected to be wrapped up by this weekend. Hams have been shadowing officials and shelter workers and providing a communication link with the

Katrina Response

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KB9SKI

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NCVEC Question Pool Committee announces new schedule

(Sep 12, 2005) — The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) has announced that the Question Pool Committee (QPC) has adjusted its schedule for revising Amateur Radio examination question pools. This decision was prompted by recent FCC announcements, changes in radio communication technology and recommendations from VECs. “The QPC feels it is imperative to produce a new Technician Class pool now to better position the Amateur Radio Service for growth in the years ahead,” the QPC said in a statement released September 9. “The new schedule impacts previously announced release dates for all three question pools.” The Technician class (Element 2) pool now tops the schedule and is due for release in January 1, 2006, effective July 1, 2006. General class (Element 3) pool updates, previously scheduled to become effective on July 1, 2008, will be released December 1, 2006, and become effective July 1, 2007. The Extra class (Element 4) pool originally scheduled for 2005, will be released on December 1, 2007, and will become effective July 1, 2008. Barring any major rules changes, subsequent updates to all pools will follow the traditional four-year cycle, the QPC said. Selected by representatives of the 12 VECs attending the NCVEC’s annual conference. The QPC consists of Chair Jim Wiley, KL7CC, Anchorage VEC; Perry Green, WY10, ARRL VEC, and Larry Pollock, NB5X, W5YI VEC. A team of associates representing various VEC organizations as well as experts selected from the amateur community will assist the QPC. Interested persons are encouraged to submit questions to the NCVEC QPC via the NCVEC Web site. ■

Amateur Radio Donations...

(continued from previous page)

Harris County emergency operations center (EOC). In Tullahoma, Tennessee, Jimmy Floyd, NQ4U, has been among a group of operators helping to staff a communications/command center for a shelter operation housing 170 evacuees. They’ve been relaying messages between the shelter site and the Red Cross center. “We have also been active in communicating with other shelters on HF and attempting to locate family and friends of the evacuees,” Floyd said. In Rains County, Texas, some 60 miles east of Dallas, ARES/RACES member T.W. Ivey, K5IJT, reported his team has been keeping in contact with the county EOC via VHF repeater. Given its equipment limitations,

VEC News

July 2005

Jason T. Carmichael, K9JTC, Technician
Jonathon C. Adams, KC9HXU, Technician
Keith D. Hood, KC9CDQ, upgrade to General

August 2005

Kenneth L. Sexton, KC9ICK, Technician
Ryan Rather, KC9ICJ, Technician
Thomas D. Szymanski, KC9ICL, Technician
Robert T. Vanat, W9RTV, upgrade to General

Congratulations!

however, the group has been unsuccessful in establishing communication with the Texas Guard, which provides shelter security.

Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) Liaison Officer Jeff Schneller, N2HPO, says TSA canteen are holding with their present complement of Amateur Radio operators and may not rotate them out of service. “As of today, as operators need to leave, we may just scale down,” he told ARRL. “We thank all those who are assisting and were willing to assist, along with the ARRL and the National Fire Sprinkler Association, who pooled their membership for operators for us.” He also thanked the American Red Cross for referring radio operators to SATERN operations. SATERN has continued monitoring 7.288 MHz and 3.965 MHz each half hour throughout the day and evening. In addition, the SATERN Net activates daily at 1400 UTC on 14.265 MHz. “I advise all radio operators to take the ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications courses and FEMA home study courses so you are better prepared for the next time,” said Schneller, who was heavily involved in the September 11, 2001, Amateur Radio response in New York City. Observed ARRL Chief Operating Officer Harold Kramer, WJ1B, “The Amateur Radio community has demonstrated an incredible commitment to public service. We should be proud of our efforts.” ■

WANTED

We need articles or article suggestions for the Spark Gap. Please send us your thoughts on amateur radio related topics or let us know what you want to see in your newsletter. Contact either Bob LaGrange, N9SIU, or Linda Harshbarger, KC9GCH.

WA9RDF
Repeater
**146.835/
146.235 MHz**
151.4 Hz PL
Tone

Weekly Net
Every Sunday
at 7PM EST

***Tune in to hear
the ARRL
Newslines!***

Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time. This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills. Newline is often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby. For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to netcontrol@midstatehams.org, and we will record your check-in!



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Spark Gap

2005 Schedule of Events

Public Service Events and/or Educational/Testing Opportunities

SEPTEMBER

- 17 MARC Meeting/Picnic**
Union Christian Church, 1267 East County Road 300 South, Franklin, IN
- 24 Greenwood High School Marching Band Invitational**
Greenwood, IN
- 25 Greenfield Hamfest**
Hancock County 4H Fairgrounds, Greenfield, IN

OCTOBER

- 15 MARC Meeting**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN
- 15 Indianapolis Marathon**
Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, or visit IndyHams.org for more information

NOVEMBER

- 19 MARC Meeting**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

DECEMBER

- 17 MARC Meeting**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

Note: For most Indianapolis events, contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, to volunteer or for more information check out website www.indyhams.org.

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131
See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.