

# Madison County Emergency Management Agency

## Communications Division

Tom Ecker, Executive Director

Steve Riley, Director of Communications

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February, 2019

Our regular meeting will be Tuesday, February 5, 7:00 PM at the EOC. The training and discussion will focus upon "GO-BOXES" for communications equipment. Jeff had gathered information and ideas related to these boxes, and there will be a couple of members who will have theirs to show.

2018 was another good year for our Division. Our 37 active members logged 1,605 man-hours for the 70 events/activities that we participated in. We had 52 Tone Alert Tests, 7 Meetings/Training opportunities, 3 Exercises, 2 StormNets, 1 Alert and 5 other events. Thanks to our newest members who pitched in and participated in a great way in 2018, and to Jeff for leading so many of the activities.

Remember to continue to work on the Independent Study Courses. We'd like all active members to complete as a minimum IC-100, 200, 700 and 800. There are many more that you may find of interest and the information will be useful at some point. The tracking spreadsheet lists a total of 413 courses that have been completed and reported by our active membership. That's an average of 11 per member! Good work.

Mark you calendar for the StormNet Training on Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 – 9:00 PM at Anderson University York Hall. Check the Anderson Repeater Club Web Site for a map of the campus to find the hall and available parking. The University is on break that week, so there should be adequate parking for all. Be sure to invite all of your friends who have an interest in severe weather so we have a good turnout again.

The EOC Exercises have been going well. Jeff will have an update as to what has been learned and changes/updates to prior plans.

Thanks to the Communications Division members who participated in the equipment offering for the Repeater Club. A nice boost to the Club treasury has resulted. I might also note that of the 60 different hams who are members of either the Madison County ARC, the Anderson Repeater Club or this Communications Division, 19 are members of all three! That shows great support by our active hams.

See you on Tuesday, Steve

### Notes from Communications Division Meeting December 4, 2018

1. The meeting was called to order at 1900 by Jeff, K9DYZ, and he led all in the Pledge to the Flag. There were 17 in attendance.
2. Jeff confirmed that all had received the Newsletter to make certain that we have the correct email address for everyone. Tom, W9EEL, also noted that the Newsletter is posted on the Anderson Repeater Club web site.

3. Jeff reminded everyone that we should all complete IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800 if not already done.
4. Since the last meeting repair work has been completed on the .82 antenna. We believe that the "shadow" has been moved away from our populated areas of concern, but Jeff has not had time to do the confirmation checks. He'll need some help monitoring when he gets out to do that testing.
5. The run-The-Mounds Communications Exercise was reviewed by Steve, WA9CWE. We had 5 new members help out this year in addition to many regulars. All went well and the runners were appreciative of seeing our guys spread out along the course. This was an opportunity to test out equipment and temporary antennas. We utilized .52 simplex with no problems.
6. With winter weather upcoming we all need to be prepared. The Warning Division will be providing forecasts but it's up to us to be up-to-date on what's happening. The Nextel messages are helpful also.
7. There is an EOC Exercise planned for January 29, 6PM at the EOC. May be a tabletop, or perhaps we'll dispatch our communicators out to various sites to actually set up a station. Come prepared with your go-bag. More information upcoming.
8. Dennis, N9OWN, and Mike, KC9DJU, reported that the MCARC has received the new ICOM-7300 HF radio and it's operational from the ECC. It had digital capability and Jeff mentioned that the State is beginning to push for that capability in each county. As usual we're ahead of the curve. Initial testing has been completed per Dennis.
9. Mike, KC9DJU, updated us on the repair work done on MCU-2. It's had the lower 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the sheetmetal replaced and has been repainted.
10. Director Tom, KA9SYP, reported that there is a District Communications Exercise tomorrow with focus on testing all modes with the exception of Amateur Radio. Grant County will be the hub and Jeff has done preliminary testing on all of the talk groups needed. Our county is up and running.
11. The County tower in Pendleton is near where a new sports complex is to be constructed. When they cut the road for the facility the tower site will lose commercial power for up to 2 days. The site has a generator so it shouldn't be an issue but we will be taking one of our large generators out to the site as backup. All tower sites in Madison County will be rewired with manual transfer switches and common plugs so our generators will be able to immediately plug into them should it be necessary. Marion County and Hamilton County will be doing the same thing with the same plugs so all counties can use others generators.
12. Jeff has found from his recent meetings and classes that Madison County has a very good reputation around the State due to our good organization and the excellent leadership of our organization.
13. The County has a maintenance agreement for the servicing of the generators at each of the tower sites (5) and also our generator trailers. The EOC site generator was found to be out of adjustment and will be fixed in the next couple of weeks. Not an issue except for very cold weather. Also the generators in the barn were found to have out-of-date batteries and have been replaced.
14. This evening training was a video from "HamNation" about the ARES activity during Hurricane Michael. Some EOC's had no communications to the State EOC. HF was the primary means of ARES communications. SARNET was a backup as a local repeater had a power issue that kept it down for a couple of days. Most shelters had no communications so it went thru the HF net. There were 10 to 30 shelters supported with communications. Hams from outside the affected area were in to support the area.
15. Tom talked about the Florida SARNET Network. It is essentially repeaters throughout the Panhandle and down the coast that are tied together using the State DOT microwave network. Tom noted that the repeaters are identified by the "town name" location so as users left one area they were told to go to another town named system and they had to know the frequency that the system would be on.
16. Other items of interest from the hurricane was that there were many shelters without power. The hams stayed at the shelter until they had re-established reliable communications by other means. There were at least 40 amateurs (still counting) that deployed. In many cases the hams were at the shelters before the Red Cross. FEMA provided trailers with toilets, showers, clothes washers, food, etc. Hams needed to bring there IS Certs with them to prove their training. Other vetting was done on-site. The video is on ARNEWSLINE.ORG, and this was episode #373. Tom pointed out that each station provided it's on radio, battery, antenna, feedlines, etc. They had handhelds, but didn't depend upon them. It usually takes more power than a handheld provides. Also need a headset if you are set up in a shelter.
17. Tom noted that there was some organizations that "self-deployed" and one group at Pensacola was actually arrested since they weren't approved to be there. Volunteers need to be careful who you hook up with before getting involved. RACES/ARES organizations tend to be approved. Also make sure you are self-sufficient as was shown in pictures viewed.
18. Steve pointed out that our County does not have an ARES organization. We never have as our EMA Communications organization provides that function as RACES and in the same way that ARES would. Our county is one of many in the State that does not have an ARES EC associated with the ARRL organization.
19. This meeting was closed at 1955.