

Madison County Emergency Management Agency

Communications Division

Tom Ecker, Executive Director

Steve Riley, Director of Communications

August, 2019

The next Communications Division meeting is Tuesday, August 6, 7:00PM at the EOC. Please plan to attend. The primary instruction will be on message handling, tactical, informal, formal, ICS forms, message logs, etc.

Welcome to Mark Mace, KD9NAU, as a new member of the Communications Division. We look forward to his active participation.

Several communicators participated in the display at the 4-H Fair last week. We'll get an update at the meeting. Jeff had his "go-box" there to try out.

Our Director, Tom, KA9SYP, has attended a national HLS meeting, so he should have some feedback on that event.

Jeff and Gary have been operating the Sunday evening Tone-Alert-Test from the EOC and also checking into the Hamilton County net at the same time. They have learned a few lessons on multi-radio operating within the ECC, so they will have a report on what they have observed/learned.

See you at the meeting Tuesday.

73,
Steve

Notes from Communications Division Meeting June 4, 2019

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 1900 by Jeff, K9DYR. He led the **27 present** in the Pledge to the Flag.
- 2) There were a few new faces present, so everyone stood and introduced themselves.
- 3) Steve, WA9CWE, reviewed the White River Run Communications Exercise held last Saturday. We had 13 communicators participating and 5 were first-timers. All went well, we practiced our Controlled Net operation (the same as is used during StormNet alerts) and it was a good refresher about using Tactical Call Signs and making transmissions only to the Net Control Station. There were about 150 runners/walkers in the event, and many expressed their appreciation that we were observing for their safety. Additionally one of the County Commissioners, Mike Phipps, was one of the runners, and he make an effort to talk with us.
- 4) Jeff, K9DYR, reviewed some portions of the updated Communications Plan, ESF-2. He passed out the Overview page and discussed RACES and ARES and when each group would be functioning and how. We reviewed Procedure 02-Amateur Frequency Use and the frequency use matrix our County will be using. Everyone needs to make certain that they have their radios correctly programmed with these frequencies. We reviewed Procedure 04-Amateur Radio Standard Operating Practices related to how we run our networks. Procedure 05-StormNet Severe Weather Observation Procedures was reviewed again and we reminded everyone how we intend to operate our nets and dispatch our observers. We talked about the fixed

Observation Points and how we want observers from home identifying. The desired reporting sequence was discussed too. Reports are to be short and quick. Steve reviewed the Repeater ID's that vary according to the situation and need. You should monitor to determine the current status. They are: Normal Mode; Storm Watch; Tornado Watch; Emergency Net; Controlled Net. A Control Operator or a Warning Division member will update the repeater status as appropriate. Jeff reminded observers not to leave their assigned location without notifying the Net Control unless it's a threatening situation. Knowing that there are some areas that have poorer repeater reception we'll try to send observers to those locations that have higher power radios.

- 5) Steve is working on a County Map identifying the home location of our members. It will be distributed when complete. The last one was from 2009.
- 6) Jeff distributed information on an inexpensive hand held anemometer that can be used during StormNet observations to measure actual wind speed. Remember to report "Measured" or "Estimated" when you report. Steve mentioned that he had seen a mag mount tri-cup anemometer that could be put on the roof of your car and have a display on the dash. Dale said that he had seen it advertised on www.inspeed.com. The basic unit is \$99.
- 7) Director Tom, KA9SYP, discussed the response to the Pendleton Tornado last Monday.
 - a) The first 3 days were 22 hour days for him and many others.
 - b) The NWS sent up 3 Meteorologists to evaluate the damage on Tuesday. Dale, KV9W, worked closely with them.
 - c) The tornado was 100 yards wide and 6 miles long.
 - d) It was an EF1 in Pendleton, and EF2 further out in the County.
 - e) It hit at 8:05PM and by 8:20PM a command post had been established.
 - f) This same storm was an EF4 in Dayton, OH.
 - g) They set up an Incident Command Post at the Pendleton Fire Department initially. It had no power, so they ran generators for 2 days. Then the Command Post was moved to the Indiana State Police Post.
 - h) Everyone needed was at the Command Post. The State Police response was outstanding as they called in Troopers from all over the State, and performed the function to seal off Pendleton from anyone coming in.
 - i) Damage Assessment started on Tuesday and ran for 2 days. 1600 homes were contacted physically and 500 were affected in some way.
 - j) 50 Homes were damaged or destroyed.
 - k) Most damage was the result of fallen trees hitting houses, garages and parked vehicles.
 - l) Huge trees required cranes to get them off houses since cutting them up wasn't an option.
 - m) 5 Other County Directors & Staff assisted in the response.
 - n) This is the first time we set up a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) and it worked out really well.
 - o) COAD was very good and provided 700 volunteers in 2 days.
 - p) By Tuesday @ 2PM every door had been knocked on. This had to be done on foot since driving wasn't possible. Police, Sheriff and FD personnel do most all of it.
 - q) The affected area was divided into "Divisions" and activities coordinated in that manner with certain groups responsible for a Division.
 - r) Many cars were totaled by trees.
 - s) As the trees went over huge root balls came up and pulled up gas lines in 3 places that had to be dealt with.
 - t) Debris as it was removed was moved along the sides of the streets. In some areas was like going down an alley.
 - u) Food and water was delivered to many houses that didn't have supplies as everyone was requested to "shelter in place". If you left you couldn't come back in town for 2 ½ days. Caused some issues, but had to be done because of the impossible traffic issues.
 - v) On the 3rd day the roads were opened to two lanes.
 - w) Some door-to-door feeding of residents occurred, and responders were fed (very well) at the Fire Station.
 - x) Many businesses and restaurants called offering "what do you want?" They provided 3 meals a day at the Fire Station.
 - y) Debris management didn't go as expected. It was much more of a problem than expected. As of 4PM today there is at least 150 truck loads left. Residents brought it to the street and it was collected and hauled to the Reformatory until they couldn't take any more.
 - z) An issue was "who does it?" and "How to load trucks?" What type of equipment was needed to load the trucks.
 - aa) The State turned down every request that was made to them from our County.,
 - bb) When the tornado occurred there were activities at the ball fields at the park. It took over an hour for Strike Teams to clear a path to get to the kids.
 - cc) IMI offered and received debris and BestWay donated dumpsters and the hauling of them. These companies were very appreciated.
 - dd) The County Highway personnel/equipment loaded the dumpsters.
 - ee) Tom did daily updates at 6AM, 10AM, 2PM & 5PM.
 - ff) ISP helped put the plans together every day & brought in and rotated Troopers, 17 at a time!
 - gg) An effort was made to handle "scammers" who were trying to take advantage of homeowners. Pretty well ran them off.
 - hh) Todd, KA9WJD, performed the PIO function full time & an ISP PIO helped also. Several platforms.
 - ii) They closed the Command Post on Thursday at 6PM. Leadership stayed, but didn't utilize a CP.

- jj) Now in the "Long Term Recovery" phase. We haven't done that before. Focusing upon "unmet needs".
 - kk) A State VOAD Representative who had done this before presented a program today and the Town Council and the County Commissioners set up a committee.
 - ll) It was important to the Town to hold the June Jamboree, and it started today. A cleanup of that area was a high priority.
 - mm) The School System had a particular issue. There were 2 day left of school, and the Seniors take their finals on the last day as required for graduation. So the bus routes had to be cleaned up so school could be held.
 - nn) The Pet Trailer that we store was used. There were 15 pets stored. 2 Baby Owls that their Mother had been killed were recovered and saved.
 - oo) We didn't need the Red Cross. They were in the way and not allowed in the Command Post.
 - pp) Overall the general plan worked well and everyone learned a lot from this event. An after action report will be generated, but it'll take a while.
 - qq) National News CNN and FOX showed up, but since there weren't any fatalities they didn't stay around.
 - rr) There won't be enough damage for a Presidential Declaration for funding assistance. We'd have to have \$400K uninsured and the State at total of \$10M. There will likely be SBA funding for businesses.
 - ss) You might check your homeowners Insurance for Debris Management & Tree Removal. Often there is a \$1K max and in this event it'll average \$6-7K per homeowner. Removing a tree costs at least \$500.
 - tt) Tom guided them thru the whole process. It was a lot like our EOC Tabletop exercises.
- 8) Dale, KV9W, reviewed the radar from the Tornado beginning at 8:00PM. It showed the EF1 Tornado and the EF2 at White Oaks Addition. There was a second track thru Markleville and Middletown. There were actually 8 TORNADOS in Indiana that night and we had 3 of them. He also showed many pictures of the damage and discussed the interesting aspects of them. Damage to houses was mostly because of tree damage. A lot of tops of trees were twisted or cut off.
- 9) There was discussion about outdoor sirens, but they start at \$25K and then have to be installed, maintenance contracts, etc. They are costly and effective marginally outdoors only. They are 1960's technology. We're now recommending that everyone sign up for Nixle. The County has 20K people signed up now (free). Can provide alert to phones, cell phones, emails, all social media methods. This did send out messages prior to the Pendleton Tornado. This method is more cost effective for the County (\$20K for the whole County).
- 10) The meeting was closed at 2100.