

Madison County Emergency Management Agency

Communications Division

Tom Ecker, Executive Director

Steve Riley, Director of Communications

August, 2020

Our regular Communications Division meeting will be on Tuesday, August 4, at 7:00PM in the EOC Training Room. Please plan to attend, masks are suggested again per State mandate. We are set up for “social distancing” but it’s still a good practice for us old-timers!

Per Jeff: By the way, the State Exercise scheduled for the end of August into September has officially been cancelled. It is possible that the State will come up with some sort of tabletop to “replace” it, but who knows. We in Madison County are fortunate in that we have been practicing all of the procedures we would have been trying in that Exercise. We have done those repeatedly over the last couple of months and continue to do so, improving our plan continuously. No HSEEP credit for it, but the practical experience has been awesome!

The White River Run communications exercise held in support of the Anderson Road Runners Club event is scheduled for Saturday morning, September 5. Details will be provided later, but we plan to make this a more comprehensive exercise for our communicators. We plan to set up MCU-1 as the Net Control Station and utilize the various cameras that the city has along the White River Walk course in addition to ours on the MCU. Perhaps we can station MCU-2 at an appropriate point too for additional visibility and emphasis on amateur radio. We’d like for as many of our communicators as possible to participate in this event. We usually start about 8:00AM for our safety talk and assignments. We should be done by 11:00AM. The course is different this year as it’s NOT starting from the Shadyside Lake Activity Center as in years past, but at a location downtown south of Eisenhower Bridge near the “Blue Bridge”. As soon as I get a map of the course I’ll let you know where we’ll be, where to park, etc.

The August issue of QST has an article on “Go-Bags for short Deployments”, Page 67. This is a bit of a variation of the Go-Bags that we have discussed and demonstrated in past meetings. An event like the White River Run or the Run-The-Mounds would be excellent candidates for such a bag. I especially like the 10 pound limit and emphasis on PPE and first aid items in addition to the communications items. If you want to put one together do so and show us what you have come up with.

We hope that you have been working on the items associate with your TASK BOOK. Everyone should be able to achieve the Level 1 requirements with what you have done already. Remember that everyone who is a member of the Anderson Repeater Club, Madison County Amateur Radio Club, or our Communications Division is considered a member of the Madison County ARES (unless you opt out). Level 2 is a bit more challenging, but many have met most of the requirements and are working on the ones that we haven’t concerned ourselves with in the past (ie: ARRL EC-001). Keep in mind that this Task Book is to assist you in understanding the minimal skills and knowledge that we hope all communicators will want to achieve. It also documents your skill set should you want to participate elsewhere.

On Saturday, July 18, the guys took MCU-2 out to Shadyside Park and set up for some HF operating. After some experimenting with a vertical antenna the dipole that is usually used was erected and several contacts made. There were some “learning experiences” as needed items were procured. Our overall objective is to have the vehicle self-contained for operation on short notice and quickly upon arrival at a needed location. This exercise was a good opportunity to train other communicators in what is needed to make it operational.

There have been some issues related to the 2 meter radio in the ECC having an intermittent noisy signal especially during the Sunday evening net. The radio was replaced and the situation improved, but we couldn't confirm that it was resolved. An analysis of the primary radio indicated that it was working fine. We put a wattmeter on the radio and noticed that with 6 watts out there was on the order of 3 watts reflected! That's an SWR well over 5:1. The antenna in use is a mag mount in the overhead of the room, probably laying against a heating duct. Jeff removed it and has it on the desk, and the situation seems to have improved. We'll be getting it connected to the external antenna on the front (south) tower and that should resolve the issue and also improve our ability to communicate with other external counties and repeaters. The point of this discussion is that it's important to know that you have an antenna that is resonate at the frequency desired. Most modern radios will “shut down or throttle back” RF output when the reflected power is excessive (usually over about 3:1). The environment of an antenna can detune it considerably resulting in problems that you don't expect.

See you at the meeting on Tuesday.

73,
Steve

Notes from the June Meeting – Gary, W9GNR

6-2-2020
1900hrs

Madison County EMA Communications Division Meeting

Meeting brought to order by Jeff K9DYR

Pledge of Allegiance

First meeting week in two months due to Covid shutdown.

Last meeting was a virtual, 2m radio on 146.82, training exercise

Gary W9GNR explained proposed 440 roundtable net in compliance with FS2

CharleyK9TZJ turned in 2 certificates for FEMA Independent Study Classes to include the ARRL IC 001.

Members turned in 14 certificates for FEMA Independent Study Classes in May.

A minimum requirement for EMA Comm. Div. members is FEAM IS100, IS200 and IS700.

The ARRL EC 001 is provided by a Mentor or Video/on-line.

Upcoming events;

White Water run has been postponed to September 5

Run the Mounds is still scheduled for November 7

State wide exercise for the Central districts is still on schedule to end of August first of September. This Exercise is focused Logistics and distribution of commodities.

2nd Harvest food distribution has been a test for distribution of commodities for the exercise format.

Madison County Emergency Management Communicator Task Books were handed out to all Comm. Div. personnel at the meeting. Additional copies are available from Jeff K9DYR. This will be your personal record of your capabilities in Comm. Div. that are recognized throughout the United States.

Gary W9GNR, Madison County ARES Emergency Coordinator reported Madison County ARES personnel ran 18 exercise/training sessions for a total of 250 volunteer hours. Jeff K9DYR explained additional hours from normal were due to providing MCU-1 daily for the Madison County Health Department for a week and a half.

EMA update:

The last week in May, the EOC began allowing meetings with social Distancing

As restrictions continue to be lifted additional training, Project Lifesaver exercises, MCU-1 training will continue

Members were encouraged to continue building their "Go Boxes". Steve WA9CWE has an excellent article in the Communication Division New Letter for June 2020. A copy can be found on the Anderson Repeater Website.

Mike KC9DJU announced that the Field event would be held at the EOC in the ECC room June 27-28.

Dale KV9W emailed in weather report updated by Tom W9EEL at the meeting.

Thunderstorms arriving in Madison County between 1500-1800hrs. Some storms may be severe, mostly heavy rain, hail and gusty winds. A line of storms appears to be breaking up into smaller storms.

A few questions were circulated regarding FL Digi by Charlie K9TZJ and Ferrin N9VZL.

1948hrs

Meeting adjourned.