

Madison County Emergency Management Agency

Communications Division

Tom Ecker, Executive Director

Steve Riley, Director of Communications

December, 2018

The regular meeting of the Communications Division will be Tuesday, December 4, 7:00PM at the EOC. All members are encouraged to attend this last meeting of the year.

Saturday, December 1, is “SKYWARN Recognition Day” supported by the National Weather Service and the ARRL. If you are on HF on Saturday (0000 to 2400 UTC) you may hear a number of special event stations operating from NWS offices around the country. EchoLink and IRLP nodes are expected to be active as well.

I'm sorry to report that Jerry Riley, N9ETL became a Silent Key on October 9. Jerry was very active in CD/EMA in the '70's thru the mid-'80's. He provided a lot of help in keeping the old Linwood EOC humming, including antenna work. Jerry was a very good ambassador for Amateur Radio and all of our public service activities. We'll miss him.

I'm also sorry to report that long time member Bob Shelton, K9IND, became a Silent Key on November 6. Bob was very active in CD/EMA from the mid '70's until about 2010. Bob was a very active and supportive member supporting all aspects of our communications mission. Bob will be missed also.

We continue to look for local amateurs who are interested in our public service mission of the Division. If you know of any local amateur who has not found our group make certain you invite them to a meeting and encourage them to submit an application. In today's world there is much more in the way of membership application and background review than there once was. Tom is making every effort to approve applications as quickly as possible. Our current active member list includes 44 amateurs.

As Jeff reminds us often we all need to continue to pursue the Independent Study courses available thru FEMA. Go to the web site: <https://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx> for the current list of available courses. We need for all members to complete as a minimum IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800. There are many other interesting and useful courses that you may find on the list. At last check our overall membership averaged 10 courses per member completed. It of course varies from 2 to over 60 for some of us old-timers. Jeff is maintaining a current list of completed courses, so as you complete one forward the completion link that is sent to you to Jeff so he can update his records.

Mark your calendar for the 2019 StormNet Training Class on Tuesday, March, 19, 7:00 to 9:00 PM. This year it will be at York Performance Hall on the Anderson University Campus. As the time approaches we'll be providing directions, parking info, etc, but start

planning and spreading the word to your friends & colleagues who are interested in severe weather observation.

Members are asked to continue to check into the Sunday Evening Tone Alert Tests at 8:00 PM on the .82 repeater. Use this as an opportunity to check your handhelds, not just your base station. When you get a new radio test it quickly to make certain you have all settings correct. Some of the new radios come default with a “tone burst” that occurs at the beginning of the transmission. That causes the repeater controller to “mute” the audio for 3 seconds, so we don’t hear your transmission. If you are not confirmed as checking in look for that as a cause. It happens with more regularity than we’d like to admit. By the way, our Sunday evening tests have occurred every Sunday since the late 1950’s. Back in the day we were on 6 meters AM (50.4 MHz.) and after our repeater got working well we switched to 2 meter FM.

Our antenna move and replacement cable on the .82 repeater seems to have been successful at improving our coverage to the northwest. Frankton and Elwood has improved significantly. There are still areas that a handheld doesn’t provide good communications, but that is to be expected. Remember as you go to that area as a severe weather spotter to make certain you are on high power.

The HF equipment in the ECC will soon see an upgrade as the MCARC has ordered a new ICOM 7300. Make sure you get checked out on that rig once it gets set up.

MCU-2, the Communications Van, has had repairs made to the sheetmetal on the outside panels. It looks much better now thanks to our Director’s efforts at finding funding for the repair. The outside now matches the quality of the inside work that has been done to make it a very usable communications resource. Thanks also to Mike, KC9DJU, Dale, KV9W, and several others who have put a lot of effort into making this vehicle something we can be proud of for our amateur communications activities and as additional support for MCU-1.

Jeff, K9DYR, as Tom’s Administrative Assistant, has had the opportunity to participate in a number of classes, meetings and other EMA activities here in central Indiana. As a result he has made some new and also renewed some contacts with EMA organizations in adjacent counties. Continued conversations and contacts of this type will be particularly important if we need support in the event of a major incident here in Madison County. Even though we have a pretty strong group should we need to man our ECC and other locations over an extended time period we’ll need added resources that adjacent county amateurs may be able to provide. Also should one of them need resources perhaps some of our group can assist them. With common understanding of the Incident Management System described in the IC-100/200/700/800 courses we should be able to accept outside resources or fit into their system with minimum training. Thanks to Jeff for pursuing these important contacts.

See you on Tuesday,
73,
Steve

**Notes from Communications Division Meeting
October 2, 2018**

1. Meeting called to order at 1900 by Jeff, K9DYR, who led attendees in Pledge to the Flag. There were 16 members present over the course of the meeting.
2. Jeff noted a new White Board has been installed in the Training Room.
3. Review of Event: August 28 EOC Exercise. An excellent exercise with a large number of communicators. POD's were set up in 2 conference rooms. The experience will pay off if this type of event occurs in the future. The event ran out of "injects" so some of the members had to make up appropriate events. Plan to have another in a month or so. Would like to have others attend.
4. Review of Event: September 7 Flood event. This was unique since there was no major rain event in our area. We had teams out measuring creeks. Steve, WA9CWE, commented on the effective use of the clipboard with covered paper Gary had suggested earlier. Worked fine but he used a "whiteboard marker" instead of a grease pencil. Gary, W9GNN, reminded everyone to be mindful of traffic and to look for good parking. Tom, W9EEL, commented that our rain was spotty, but there was 5-6" upstream which affected us. This is unusual. In winter when the ground is frozen this can be a problem too.
5. Review of Event: Jeff, K9DYR, attended an IATPS Conference last week in support of ESF-8 the Hospital Group. It involved interfacing with medical groups and had some hi-power speakers. 1) The EMA Director from the Texas Fertilizer Plant explosion discussed issues there. Amateur Radio was used. The event escalated quickly, a fire in an industrial area near an interstate. There were 3000 responders in a town of 2300 residents. Had to search the entire town for damage. 2) Evacuation during the hurricane. A hospital with 500 beds had a plan to bring in 96 hours of essential supplies by truck. The truck got flooded and lost supplies. This is a reminder to think about what we have in our go-bag and what we might unexpectedly need. 3) At the Las Vegas mass shooting it took a while to figure out. The FD shut off the power in the area which caused the EMS stations to lose lighting. No ambulances were allowed in the hot zone. There were 20 EMT's on the scene. All had been trained and prepared for an event of this type. What was missing was communications.
6. Review of Event: The .82 Antenna move on Sept. 29 had 23 communicators check in & help with signal measurements. We seem to have found a bad pigtail at the base of the antenna. It showed that there may have been water in the connector which could result in variable performance. We hope to have a new jumper tomorrow and will schedule the replacement and retest.
7. Review of Event: The fire at the Reformatory facility requested the MCU. Mike, KC9DJU, took it down.
8. Upcoming Event: Today is our Director, Tom, KA9SYP, birthday. Debbie has planned an open house on Sunday the 7th, from 2 to 5 at the Falls Park Community Building. Everyone is invited.
9. Upcoming Event: Sunday, November 4, is the Run-The-Mounds Communications Exercise. Plan to be there by 1PM. Should be completed by 3:30. Need as many communicators as possible as there are many observation points available. A long antenna is desirable from some of the low areas. We may use simplex again this year to test that capability.
10. Jeff, K9DYR, passed out and discussed the "Communications Division Field Guide" for our group. We reviewed each page. If updates or corrections are discovered forward your suggestions to Jeff. This guide has a lot of useful information for our members.
11. Tom, W9EEL, reviewed the updated Anderson Repeater Club web site. The old site and layout was beyond recovery and the old server not good. Tim and Tom rebuilt it. Same address with a new server. We went thru all of the useful information on the page with emphasis on the weather and StormNet segments.
12. We closed the meeting at 2030 and took a picture for the web site.