

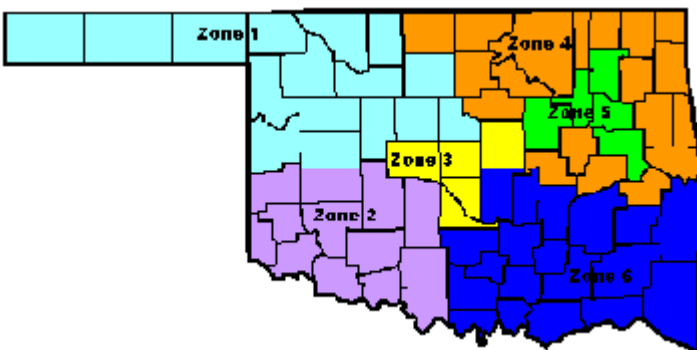


The Plan Is Working.

By Mark Conklin N7XYO

Tulsa, Okla - The re-building/organizing of Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) in Oklahoma is off to a good start. The leadership of Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) Kevin Atnip KD5WUP and his staff Charles Goodson KC5UEG, Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator (A-SEC) /Chief of Staff; Mike Key N5KEY, A-SEC and Assistant Chief of Staff; and Roland Stolfa, A-SEC and IT Manager, are the foundation that has made for a much stronger ARES organization here in the Oklahoma Section.

One part of the reorganization is the addition of an A-SEC to the Oklahoma Section ARES structure to help better organize, manage and train the ARES volunteers in the 77 counties that cover 69,903 square miles in Oklahoma. Another addition to the ARES structure is the Zone Emergency Coordinator (ZEC). This ZEC is also an A-SEC and assists the SEC with his duties at the zone level. In Oklahoma we have six zones; one zone is composed of the counties around metro Oklahoma City, another counties around metro Tulsa, then the state is divided in to four quarters to create the remaining four zones.



Zone 5 consists of the two districts that are near and around Tulsa, the second largest city in Oklahoma. Z5 District 1 is Creek, Tulsa, and Rogers counties. Z5 District 2 is Wagoner and Muskogee counties. With Zone 5, it made the most sense to start re-building ARES in the most populous counties that have the larger pools of amateur radio operators available to help. With the help of a lot of hard-working and dedicated volunteers, Tulsa County (Z5, D1, C1) has made a great start in re-building the ARES program in the Tulsa Area.

The most recent success in Zone 5 culminated in a Simulated Emergency Test (SET) in Tulsa County on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2006. The basis of the success started months ago with a re-

dedication by the leaders in the county to the re-building the program and with the appointment of a few assistant ECs to help facilitate the improvements.

Tulsa Area District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) Brian Gnad KB5TSI put much thought and time into designing the SET plan that involved a communications failure of telephone and cell phone systems caused by a wild fire started by a lighting strike. The out-of-control wild fire required the evacuation of parts of the city of Glenpool, a suburb south of Tulsa. This SET tested the response of three ARES Rapid Response Teams (RRT) supporting the Tulsa Area Emergency Management (TAEMA), the Tulsa Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Sapulpa Chapter of the Salvation Army, three area hospitals and Life Flight.

A major component that lead to the success was the preparations made before the SET. Beginning with the review of contact information for all of the registered ARES volunteers in Tulsa County. A training session for the volunteers the weekend before the SET was another key step in the plan. The training session contained a review of the ARES Oklahoma organization, the *Day One Bag* – being prepared to respond, ARES vs. RACES FAQ - why it's important to register for BOTH, appropriate dress for responders, using tactical call signs and traffic management, LOGGING ALL TRAFFIC, ARRL Health and Welfare messages, and an overview of the SET for Oct 14th.



Gary Parham KC5ZQP and Larry Holden KC5KLM inspect a Day One Bag during the Oct. 7th Training session. (Photo By Mark Conklin N7XYO)

On the 14th as the scenario played out, each of the RRTs was notified by their served agencies that ARES communication support would be needed due to the telephone/cell phone failure in the affected area. TAEMA's EOC needed radio operators in the EOC and at the incident command near the "wild fire" in Glenpool. Red Cross' ECO needed radio operators in their EOC and at one and then a second shelter. Salvation Army's EOC needed radio operators at their EOC and a canteen supporting the uniform responders in Glenpool. Also TEAMA and MERC

(Medical Emergency Response Center) requested ARES support at three major hospitals in Tulsa.



Ed Compos K5CRQ (left) ARES RRT Leader supporting TAEMA discuss communication needs with Joe Iverson Warning and Communications Coordinator for TAEMA. (Photo By Mark Conklin N7XYO)

As each team was activated by its served agency, the RRT leaders in turn notified Tulsa County Emergency Coordinator (EC) Charlie Hoy KE5UD of the activation. As the event unfolded all ARES volunteers were notified and began checking into an INTAKE net.



Tulsa County ARES EC Charlie Hoy KE5FUD point out the location of Incident Command Post during the SET on Oct. 14th (Photo By Mark Conklin N7XYO)

The primary TACTICAL net was held on the 146.880 repeater and the INTAKE net was on the 146.805 repeater. Due to the well-equipped communications room at TAEMA's EOC the Net Control Stations (NCS) for both nets were able to operate from the EOC, making management of the ARES response a much easier task.

The SET went very well. Within about two hours all communications positions were filled by ARES volunteers and there was a list of check-ins from the INTAKE net of ARES volunteers able to respond to other needed locations or to relieve positions currently being manned.

As the stations became operational, mock disaster-related traffic was sent from each station to one or more of the EOCs. Messages also included a few NTS welfare messages sent from one of the shelters to the EOC at the Red Cross. The NTS traffic was to be sent via the NTS system on the next regular NTS traffic net.

After a few hours of the SET, Mark Conklin N7XYO A-SEC - Zone 5 EC, who had been observing the SET from the EOC at TAEMA, made an announcement on the net that the SET was concluded. Conklin thanked all stations for a job well done and instructed all stations to check out with net control before going to the pre-planned "hot wash" after-event debriefing at a local pizza parlor.



Mark Conklin N7XYO A-SEC - Zone 5 EC (right) and Tulsa County ARES EC Charlie Hoy KE5FUD meet with Tulsa County ARES volunteers during the "hot wash" de-briefing after the SET. (Photo By Tom White K5EHX)

During the "hot wash" meeting volunteers were again thanked for their time, talents, and efforts to help make this drill a success and for their commitment to supporting the ARES program in

Oklahoma. A full copy of the SET plan and the after-action report will be available sometime after Nov. 1 on www.tulsahamradio.org/ares_links.htm