

Oakland County Amateur Radio Public Service Corp (ARPSC)
W8OAK Repeaters – 146.900 MHz/100pl & 444.325 MHz/107.2pl
Weekly 2 meter net 8 pm every Thursday
Hospital Radio Net – 7:30 pm last Thursday of Month
Packet 144.950 MHz/1200 baud, connects made with Oakxxx or
Callsign-# to OAKBBS (W8OAK-3) with nodes at
OAKNOD (N8NM-1 Pontiac – most coverage),
OAKEOC (W8OAK-7 at EOC) or K8DTX-7 (White Lake)
APRS – 144.390 MHz
Web Site: <http://www.arpesc.com>

Meeting Minutes for 7 May 2014

On 7 May 2014 at 7 pm, Jim Richards - AB8JR, Emergency Coordinator (EC) for the Oakland County ARPSC, called the meeting to order in the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The order of business included:

(I). Report from Steve Iannucci, Homeland Security Division – Oakland County:

Last Saturday, 3 May 2014, the Oakland County siren test was cancelled an hour before being set off. Incoming severe weather was the cause.

Oakland County notification system to citizens will have two separate systems. One will be for serious emergency situations by way of text and email notification. The second will be the Oakland County Digital Subscription Service for non-emergency information. Input from various municipalities will be included. Both services will require separate registration and hopes are that one or both will be ready by the end of June. Details and where to sign up will be given later. These notification systems require individuals to keep current their latest email or text addresses.

Steve asks the members to let him know if they are not receiving emails about the meetings.

(II). Report from Randy Love – WF5X, Report on District Two Activities:

Randy has stepped down as EC for District Two, due to work constraints. The new District Two EC is Shanon Herron – KA8SPW, who works part time at Homeland Security in Wayne County. Randy will become our ARPSC DEC for White Lake's National Weather Service (NWS) in place of Ted Davis – N8ZSA.

(III). Report from the Emergency Coordinator (EC), Jim Richards - AB8JR:

Various reports suggest the transmit power on our 2 meter repeater is set too low. Jim will get a group into the tower site to check settings. A Genesys Hospital radio volunteer noted radio reception there is barely on the edge of readability.

The siren test was cancelled last week end because County personnel determined the winds experienced that morning could possibly have caused the public to think the sirens were indicating severe weather. All adjacent counties tested their sirens.

Query from Marsha Fleming – N8FE: Can the Southfield Volunteers get credit for their part in last Saturday’s sirens? Answer: Yes.

Query: When the sirens go off, do they go off everywhere in the county or can certain sections be set off? Answer: County policy is to set off all the sirens at the same time. Otherwise, multiple calls about silent areas come in and cause confusion.

Query: Can the sirens be set off without sound; i.e. check for rotation, etc.? Answer: Yes, the County has the ability to “growl” the sirens which tests everything but sound.

Query: How often is our website updated on sirens? Answer: Once a month, so that the hot siren list can be current. Volunteers need to first check with their subnet operator in order to prevent 2 volunteers covering 1 siren. Occasionally, the EOC will receive a call complaining someone couldn’t hear a certain siren. Remember that the purpose of the siren is to warn those people outside their home, and not inside. Steve Iannucci adds that sirens will be set off when the NWS issues a tornado warning or from 2 to 3 sightings of the same tornado or funnel cloud by spotters. Sirens will also sound for winds 70+ mph. All the sirens have a 4 hour battery backup if power lines fail.

Query: Where do the Skywarn Nets operate? Answer: That depends on the nature of the storm. Sometimes, the storm comes on so suddenly that the net will begin from the Net control operator’s home and later moves to the EOC. The home site has the problem that net control operates by him/herself. Many of our storms seem to hit in the late afternoon. Pete Gladysz – K8PJG notes weather bulletins often come to his house suddenly, and if the storm quickly happens, one has no choice but start the net from home, ASAP.

It is also the EC’s policy to avoid having operators travel to the EOC once the storm has entered the County. This is for reasons of personal safety.

Query: Is there training available for Skywarn? Answer: Yes. Training will be set up once you volunteer. Best form of training is on-the-job Skywarn net operation. Our Skywarn training manuals are getting old and need to be revised. Some passages are

too “wordy.” Jim Richards – AB8JR comments that the first one or two Skywarn nets of the year do seem to be a “bit rough,” but quickly improve with practice.

(IV). Presentation of the New Macomb County EOC by Jim Richards – AB8JR – EC Oakland County ARPSC.

Last Saturday’s District 2 meeting took place at the new Macomb County Emergency Center in Mt. Clements. The upper level has the main conference room with long tables, multiple computer stations facing a long video screen, and two 90 inch TVs at each end. Each work station has a computer with the capability of placing images on the long screen. On the lower level, Sheriff’s dispatch operations are in one corner. Amateur radio operations are located along one side of the upper floor with a glass wall to reduce room noise.

(V). Presentation – Introduction of the New ARPSC website, by Ron Miotke, WD8MNX:

Our new website will be www.oc-arpesc.com and will require a user name and password to enter. At some point in time, the old address of www.arpesc.com will automatically transfer individuals to the new one. The web site allows certain members to upload information to it, such as secretarial minutes and siren information. The website will also better help us to determine which of our members are active. Members will be able to update their address, emails, phones, etc. It may possibly be ready in July.

Jim Richards – AB8JR mentions that there are two types of websites: (1) Static such as our current website and (2) one which builds with useful information such as with updated personal information. In another example, Jim can use the website to contact specialty AEC’s and officers. The latest on siren updates can be easily entered. Current protocols for using Skywarn should be there. Only certain individuals will have full access. These will include AEC’s and Specialty Officers with responsibility for posting information regarding their activity.

(VI). Skywarn Net Refresher by Jim Richards – AB8JR:

The following is the current operating procedure for our Skywarn nets.

Standby Condition or Mode is established when the potential for severe weather is possible but nothing is occurring in or near the county. This is typically occurs with the National Weather Service (NWS) calls for a “severe weather watch.” “Standby” can also be used after a weather event if the NWS is not certain about more incoming severe weather. The Standby mode does not have check-ins and other hams can use the repeater. For these other users, allow a little extra time between speakers so that a Skywarn net operator can break in if necessary. However, feel free to call net control for updates and information during this time. Net control will also issue periodic

announcements indicating Standby Condition and the current state of nearby storm activity.

Condition Green is established when NWS issues a severe weather or a Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Watch. Condition Green may be used when a warning has been issued but radar indicates the cell or storm is not yet in the county. Net conditions will be determined by net control. Check-ins are welcomed during Condition Green. What to report: funnel clouds, winds 40+ mph, pea size or larger hail, tornadoes.

Condition Yellow is when NWS issues a Severe Thunderstorm Warning or Tornado Watch. Under Condition Yellow check-in's are usually not accepted. Net control may, at its discretion choose to accept check-ins if the storm has not yet entered the County. Net control will end each transmission with "W8OAK – Condition Yellow – Accepting or not accepting check-ins at this time".

What to report: funnel clouds, winds 55+ mph, hail 1 inch in size or larger, damage to chimneys and TV antennas, winds pushes over rooted trees, or worse. Notice that the minimum hail size and wind speeds change here. Any station observing at least one of the above is to call net control with the report. That station will be logged in with their report.

Condition Red is established when the NWS issues a Tornado Warning. Somewhere in the vicinity, a tornado has been reported. Check-in's are not accepted unless reporting one of the key weather items. What to report: funnel clouds, winds 55+ mph, tornadoes, downed power lines, downed trees or broken branches. This is where the spotter is at his best by telling what they see. This is very useful to the NWS in confirming on the ground conditions with their radar indications.

When reporting, Use the T – E – L rule, Time, Event and Location. (1) report the time the event occurred, (2) report the specifics of the event, (3), report the exact location of the event. For example, did a 2 inch or 24 inch tree go down, the kind of winds (whether wind speed was estimated or measured), size of hail, if shingles are flying off roofs, etc.

Net Etiquette: Listen for the net condition before transmitting. It should be announced about every five minutes when the conditions are yellow or red and about every 15 minutes under Condition Green. To report a severe weather problem, check-in with your call sign, name, city, and nearest major intersection. Restrict your comments to the requested weather items and not other things. State only the reportable conditions previously mentioned and keep your "traffic information" short and to the point. For example - report: N8ZZZ, John Smith, 3:45 pm, West Bloomfield, Orchard Lake Road at Walnut Lake Road, six inch trees down. Sometimes, Skywarn net control will ask for someone in a certain area to report back weather conditions.

Query: What about people checking from outside the county. Answer: If they have something to really report – do it! Those individuals simply checking in from another county (i.e. Macomb) will be directed to that other county’s Skywarn Net.

Query: What if a HT can’t make contact and one has useful information?
Answer. A net control operator has the option to give out a mobile phone number to call. Jim Richards – AB8JR would rather see such information as a text message rather than voice phone. Reason is that during a major event, too many things are happening all at once. If a text, remember to identify yourself, give the event time, location, and then the report.

(VI). AEC-Management Team Reports:

(1). Report from Mike Vander Veer – KD8ATK, Net Operations:

The W8OAK nets are held weekly on Thursday evening at 8 pm. More net control operators are needed. If something happens, multiple nets may be needed to run at the same time. Net control is a lot of fun. If interested, please contact Mike Vander Veer. Email to Mike is wd8atk@wowway.com. He will help with your training. Near the end of the meeting, Mike reported two individuals came forward to volunteer.

(2). Report from Ron Miotke – WD8MNX, Technology Systems/Membership:

We have several new applicants for membership. Total membership is around 260, but the actual active numbers needs to be determined, hopefully better identified when our new website is in place. Estimates of active participants are less than 100.

(VII). Specialty Officer/Coordinator Reports:

(1). Report from Maurice Davidson – K8SJD, National Weather Service Liaison:

El Nino is coming this year with a lot of hot warm weather postulated. Snow for last winter was 94.9 inches, setting the all time record.

(VIII). Other Items of Business:

1 - Gerry Treas – K8GT presented to the ARPSC a 2013 Michigan QSO Party plaque for being 1st in overall score in total points as well as in their specialty EOC category.

2 – The Oak Apple Run is Saturday, 31 May 2014. Volunteers are needed and can contact Mike at wd8s@arrl.net. Race starts at 7:30 am and all hams need to be at their posts by 6:45 to 7 am for roll call. On Wednesday, 28 May 2014, there is a pre-

meeting at the Royal Oak United Methodist Church, 320 West 7th Street, Royal Oak at 6:30 pm with free pizza, sodas, and t-shirt to ham volunteers.

3 – Jim Richards – AB8JR warns that phone callers are scamming Oakland County individuals by calling them and stating their computer is sending out messages with a virus or malware. They indicate they are with Microsoft or a Microsoft Partner and they encourage you to download a certain program to rid this, which actually takes over the computer and provides them with unrestricted to your computer. Their activity includes planting keylogging programs among other things and they even delete your system restore files to make removing their items much more difficult. It's a real mess. Beware!

Respectfully submitted,
James R. Murphy, N8SML
Secretary, Oakland County, ARPSC
8 May 2014
Minutes read and approved by Jim Richards, EC, AB8JR