

Michigan Section
ARES/RACES

Semi-Annual EC Meeting

October 27, 2007




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Welcome

- Too long since we've met
- Many changes







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Introductions

- New SEC
- New DEC's
- New ECs





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Necessaries

- Rest Rooms
- Phones
- Emergency Exit
- Bio break about halfway




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Agenda


10:30	Introductions and agenda
10:40	Certificates
10:50	SET Post-Mortem
11:35	New Guidelines Document
12:00	Communicating
12:30	Bio break
12:45	EM Summit
13:00	Why do we Measure?
13:25	Reporting
13:45	DRG Update





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SET Post-Mortem



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SET


- 10:30 SEOC
- 10:35 District 1
- 10:40 District 2
- 10:45 District 3
- 10:50 District 5
- 10:55 District 6
- 11:00 District 7
- 11:05 District 8
- 11:10 Summary



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SEOC


- CW worked well, phone didn't
- 145.76 was busy enough initially that packet was unuseable
- We had no planned VHF phone sessions



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To Improve

- More CW ops?
- Maybe other low-bandwidth modes, e.g. PSK-31
- Arrange VHF sessions with VHF nets
- Work on breaking up D1 packet into multiple frequencies



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Other Improvements

- Rotate date of SET w/ seasons
- Path of digipeater routes
- Incorporation of exercises in SET
- Interaction w/ various served agencies
- Acquiring personnel?
- Customize message scoring method
- HF relaying needs improvement
- Develop better relations with served agencies
- Familiarity with terms, protocol and limitations of served agencies and EmComm relationship
- Proper usage of 800 MHz MSPCS trunked system
- Informing served agencies that they were "served"
- Better promotion of SET?
- Confirmation of message being received by recipient
- Tabletop exercise of SET with EC's
- Training on packet operation
- Other methods of communication (runner, FRS/GMRS, 800 MHz, CB)
- Use WebEOC & E-team (& make more user-friendly)




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ARPSC Guidelines



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History


- Many guidelines/standards documents
- Last widely accepted written by Jim Wades
- After several attempts, Marty gave job to DEC's
- Ultimately, much of the work left to John Fleming and Bill Bond
- Final posting to mi-arp-sc-staff reflector in March
- MSP had many small modifications before signing



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Contents

- Mission/Objectives
- Structure
- Capabilities
- Annexes
 - Training
 - More detail on structure
 - Job descriptions
 - Technical standards
 - Program content




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Mission / Objectives

"Develop the Michigan Amateur Radio Public Service Corp (ARPSC) program into a fully integrated communications team, ready, willing and able to provide radio communications support to Public Service Agencies and the citizens of Michigan."


- Develop volunteer organization
- Document outlines preparedness standards
- Provide coordination of emcomm
- Develop organizational structure
- SKYWARN included in ARPSC
- Document provides standards and guidelines



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Organization


- Core document is short, containing basic standards and definitions
- Most of document consists of annexes, providing more detailed guidelines
 - Provides clear delineation between basics and details
 - Annexes more easily modified



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Annexes


- 1) Training Matrix
- 2) ARES / RACES / NTS / SKYWARN definitions
- 3) ARPSC Chain of command
- 4) Job descriptions
- 5) Administrative duties
- 6) Communication standards and equipment guidelines
- 7) Gateway station
- 8) Drills and exercises
- 9) DERTs
- 10)References



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Training


- Context
 - FEMA has identified ARES as a "professional" organization
 - Latest FEMA guidelines essentially require EMs to work with ARES
 - Within government, "require" takes a strange meaning
 - Recent incidents have reminded agencies that they may need us
 - The expectation that we will provide professional communications services is increasing every day



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Training


- **FEMA**
 - FEMA guidelines do not refer specifically to amateur roles
 - The section interprets the guidelines to mean:
 - 700 and 100 for everyone
 - 200 and 800 for EC
 - 300 for DEC
 - 400 for SEC, SM
 - IS-22 is already required in most programs



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Training


- **County Emergency Managers**
 - Many interpret FEMA matrix to imply 700, 100, 200 and 800 for all responders
 - Under pressure from FEMA and MSP to comply
 - Recognize that there are other priorities
 - Understand that in government-speak, “require” might not have normal English meaning
 - Recognize that too much, too soon may discourage volunteers



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Training


- **There are other training opportunities**
 - Hazmat
 - Damage assessment
 - ARRL ARECC courses
 - Traffic handling
 - SKYWARN
 - Individual programs may have additional needs



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Background Checks


- **Background checks are suggested for RACES cards**
- **Not all programs require background checks**
- **In particular, if normal EOC employees do not require checks, it is difficult to demand checks for volunteers**
- **MSP consistently reminded us that different programs have different needs**



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EC / EM Relationship


- **It is critically important that the EC develop a good working relationship with the EM**
- **Ideally, the EC and EM should be able to have “frank and lively” discussions**
 - EC and EM have same goal, but need to represent different constituencies ... they should disagree
- **Once they open the door, they need to be singing from the same hymnal**



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What this means

- **In a perfect world**
 - EC and EM review these guidelines and balance
 - Pressures on EC and EM to comply
 - Effect on volunteers
 - Needs of the program
 - Jointly decide what RACES requirements will be for program
 - Suggested that ARES card issued according to ARRL requirements (amateur license and willingness to serve), but expect new members to begin working on RACES requirements
- **Ultimately, the RACES requirements are decided by the EM**
- **EC should use training requirements to build program**



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Futures


- Recognize that demands are only going to increase
- Even if it is unreasonable to meet all requirements now, you will need to move forward in the future
- Prepare your folks for ever increasing demands



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Futures

- We need to continually move this document forward
- We need more folks willing to apply brainpower
- We need to better articulate the range of individual program requirements, at the same time moving standardization forward



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To Do

- Decide with your EM what the program will look like in your jurisdiction
- Roll the document out to your folks
 - PowerPoint available on website to help
- Keep moving forward




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Communicating



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Problem


- For communicators, we do a poor job of communicating
- In spite of efforts to spread the word on multiple forums, many ECs are blindsided
- There is little that goes on at the section level that cannot be shared with ECs
- Is the problem over-communicating?
 - With too much noise maybe the important things get overlooked



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Current Circuits


- **ARPSC Net**
 - This is the quickest, most up to date, two way vehicle
- **ARPSC packet net**
 - For folks who don't have HF
- **Dale's Section Newsletter**
 - Is everyone signed up?
- **Direct email**
 - Many, many bad addresses
- **Email via DECs**
 - Sometimes DECs can't get messages forwarded promptly
 - DECs do have better email addresses (hopefully)
 - Communication to ECs should come from DECs
- **MIARPSC Yahoo group**
 - Apparently few people follow this in spite of fairly large membership
- **www.mi-arpesc.org**
 - It looks as if almost nobody sees this
 - One way
- **Direct telephone**
 - Not always feasible
 - Again much bad contact info
- **Face to face meetings**
 - Can't do often enough
 - Costly to attend



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Other Possibilities


- **Echolink**
 - Sounds good but hasn't worked out in the past
- **Webinar**
 - Might allow slides
 - Incurs some cost
 - Forces better preparation
- **Packet email**
 - Most of the state now covered
 - Would separate section communication from spam
 - Few folks currently equipped
- **ARPSC Newsletter**
 - Have had ARES column in Section newsletter
 - Might encourage folks to keep email addresses up too date
 - Might not always have useful content



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More Issues


- **Most of the vehicles provide a way to get section information to ECs**
- **Only the ARPSC net and Yahoo provide a reasonable way for ECs to share**



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What I will do


- **Post anything significant on www.mi-arpesc.org**
- **Post same information to MIARPSC Yahoo group**
- **Use MIARPSC Yahoo group for polls**
- **Send more information to DECs**
- **Try to maintain closer phone contact with DECs**



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Things we might do

- **Provide email notification of changes to www.mi-arpesc.org**
- **Provide way for districts and individual programs to post to www.mi-arpesc.org**
- **Provide EC's-only Yahoo group**



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What **Should** We Do?

- **Promote Yahoo groups for Districts**
- **Be aware of sensitive messages on reflectors (customize members)**
- **Promote nets/ newsletter**



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Why do we measure?

15-Jan-2005



Thou has ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight

Wisdom 11:21

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05
Why do we Measure

Definition

- Measuring is the act of assigning numbers to properties or characteristics

(from Oak Ridge Associated Universities)

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05
Why do we Measure

What do we Measure?

- Step 1: Decide what we want to improve
 - Often this is not as obvious as it sounds
 - Consider the NTS ... We are most interested in our preparedness to serve our agencies
 - We don't measure preparedness though..
 - We measure QNI, QTC, hours, etc.

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05

Why do we Measure

What do we Measure?

- Can we measure it directly?
 - Sometimes direct measures are feasible
 - Often what we want to achieve can be difficult or impossible to measure:
 - Morale
 - Excitement
 - Interest
 - In these cases, we may need some proxy

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05

Why do we Measure

Why do we Measure?

- We measure to:
 - Quantify a situation
 - Understand what affects things we see
 - Regulate
 - Help understand and improve performance
 - Validate a hypothesis

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05

Why do we Measure

Quantify a Situation

- If we are having trouble with a path that used to work, we might ...
 - Measure transmitted power
 - Check SWR
 - Review solar numbers
- Our objective is to understand the situation so we can understand our ability to affect it.

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05

Why do we Measure

Understand what affects things we see

- If our output power was low, we may look to SWR to see if foldback engaged
- We may check emitted spectrum to be sure our capacity isn't being eaten by spurs
- We may measure voltages in PA to understand if we have a problem there

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Why do we Measure

Regulate and Improve

- Every month our EC's report drills and tests
- The act of measuring helps encourage the various counties to maintain some level of practice and training
- The results can help us understand opportunities for improvement
- Still, a proxy for preparedness

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05

Why do we Measure

Validate a Hypothesis

- You have probably seen the following video but didn't realize it was about measurement
- Want to validate a hypothesis but don't have a direct measure
- Analysis of the situation to identify a suitable proxy measure
- Engage expert to help identify appropriate proxy

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05

Why do we Measure



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Why do we Measure

Video Debrief

- Did you notice what the knight was doing when the villagers interrupted him?
- The knight required data to validate the hypothesis
- No direct measure since the village apparently didn't have a witch-o-meter
- What did you think of the chain of logic used to determine what to measure?

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Why do we Measure

Some Rules

- The more directly you can measure the better
 - While we can't always measure exactly what we want, the video gives some insight into the pitfalls
 - Just because you don't have a direct measure, don't give up. Often a reasonable proxy can be discovered

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Why do we Measure

Some Rules (cont'd)

- Define exactly how to collect the data for the indicator and how to make the computation. Then make sure everyone understands
 - This isn't as easy as it sounds. Look at PSHR

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Why do we Measure

Some Rules (cont'd)

- If you can't flowchart the process you want to improve, a performance measure will offer little insight into what you should improve.
 - This is in line with understanding what you want to measure.
 - Sometimes we entirely miss the process

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Why do we Measure

Causality

- Often, we want to understand relationships so we can understand causality
- The existence of a relationship does **not** prove cause and effect
- There may be other factors not studied

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Why do we Measure

**You can't improve what
you don't measure**

Robert F. Bruner

WB8RCR - 15 Jan 05

Why do we Measure

Measure!

- Measure wisely
- **Measure often**
- Understand the limitations
- **Understand changes**

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Why do we Measure

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Performance Reporting



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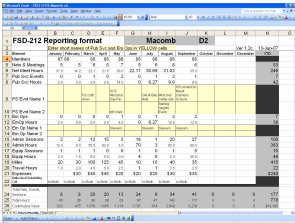
Basics

- We need to know how we are doing
- We need to be able to tell legislators what we are contributing
- This data helps us with legislation and with grants
- We want to improve, and you cannot improve what you don't measure
- **How can we make it less burdensome and more useful?**

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Current

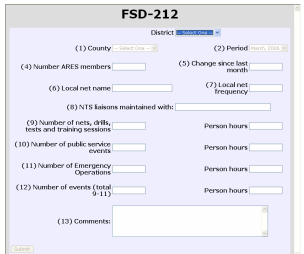
- We currently report by emailing a spreadsheet



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One Proposal

- Online system



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Comparison

- Not everyone has Excel
- Security issues with Office content
- Excel very easy, just fill in next column and email
- Online could add data to summary instantly
- Online might allow additional reporting
- With Excel, EC has all data at hand, easier to do own reporting
- Are there strong preferences?

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Reports?

- Are there reports that would be useful?
 - Data over longer time periods
 - Graphs
 - Comparison to other programs

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Current Web Report

- Can this be improved?



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Comments

- Longer term trend analysis
- Measure positive aspects of programs & activities
- Better measurement of other standards to better evaluate capabilities
- Monthly reports would include updated e-mail address and phone #



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