**Michigan Section
ARES/RACES**

Michigan ARPSC

Region 7

**Presentation to 7th District Emergency Manager's Association Meeting,
April 3, 2008**
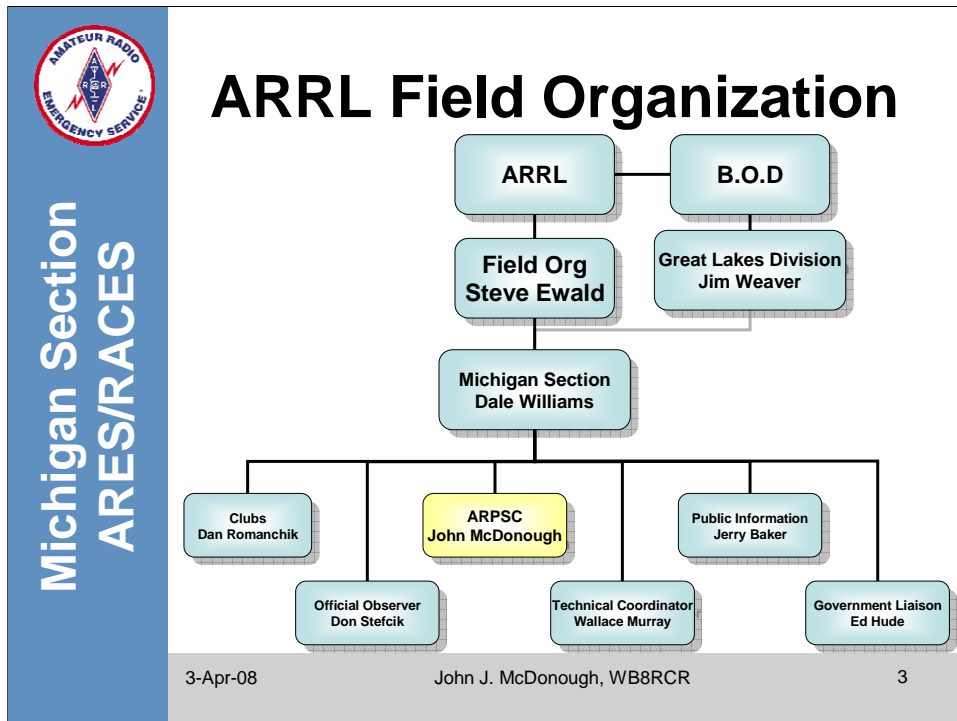
Today we want to talk about moving the region forward. To be sure we are all on the same page, especially with some of the newer Emergency Managers, I want to briefly review the ARPSC organization, nationally and here in Michigan, and discuss the roles of the various ARPSC branches.

Next, I want to take a look at the programs in Region 7 and their current health. That will lead to a discussion of specific local issues that seem to be causing the poor performance in some areas.

Finally, I want to discuss how we can move forward.

ARRL Field Organization

Michigan Section ARES/RACES

- ARRL
- B.O.D
- Field Org Steve Ewald
- Great Lakes Division Jim Weaver
- Michigan Section Dale Williams
- Clubs Dan Romanchik
- ARPSC John McDonough
- Public Information Jerry Baker
- Official Observer Don Stefcik
- Technical Coordinator Wallace Murray
- Government Liaison Ed Hude

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ARPSC is part of the ARRL Field organization. This is one of a number of services of the ARRL. The Field organization reports to Steve Ewald in Newington. ARRL Policy is set by the ARRL Board Of Directors. Our geographic area is represented on that board by Jim Weaver.

The top ARRL official in Michigan is Dale Williams, the section manager. Dale actually has about 8 people on his staff, a couple of assistants besides the specific appointments shown.
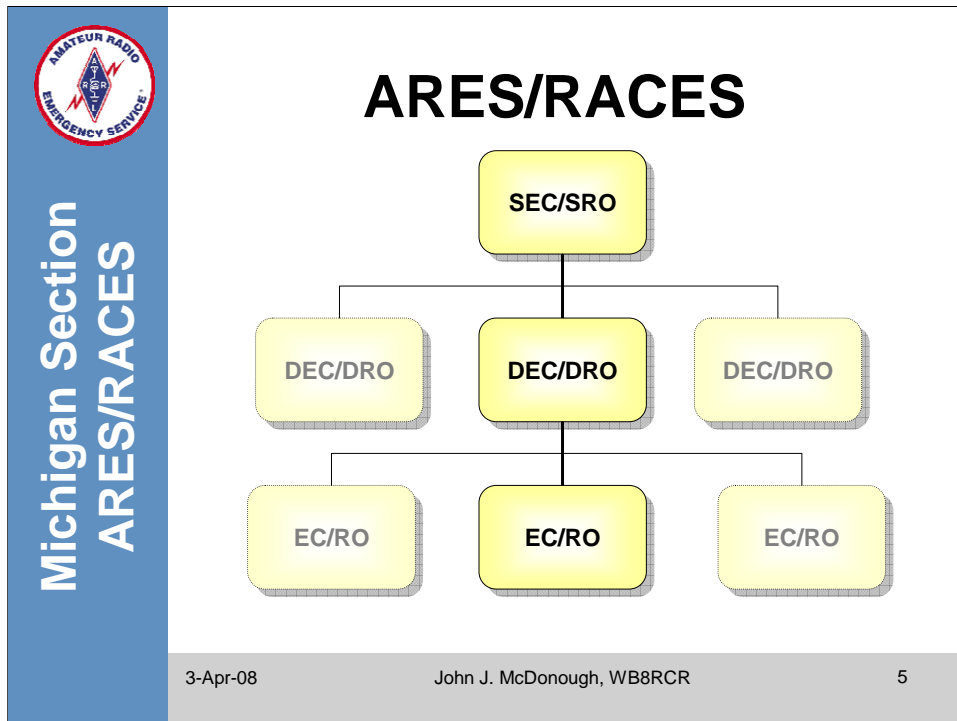
I actually hold two positions on Dale's staff; Section Traffic Manager and Section Emergency Coordinator/State Radio Officer. These two positions incorporate all the Amateur Radio Public Service Corps branches in Michigan.
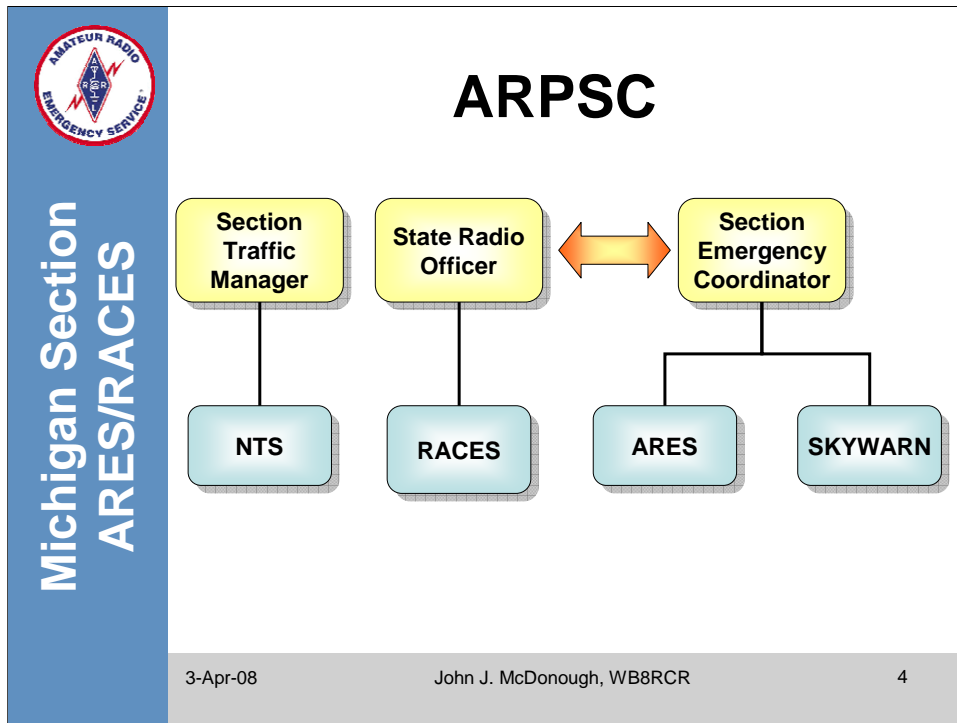
There are four branches to ARPSC; ARES, RACES, NTS and SKYWARN.

It is ARRL Policy, State of Michigan Policy, and FEMA guidance that the positions of Section Emergency Coordinator and State Radio Officer be held by the same individual whenever possible. The Section Manager makes the appointment of the Section Emergency Coordinator, and the Michigan State Police makes the appointment of the State Radio Officer. Due to the state policy, this then becomes a joint appointment by ARRL and MSP.

The Section Traffic Manager has traditionally been a separate position from the SEC/SRO. It is important that NTS be well integrated with ARES, and this became more evident following Katrina. Michigan has been fortunate in that it has historically had a good relationship between these two groups. Following the resignation of Martin Mendelson last year, the Section Manager seized the opportunity to provide even closer integration by appointing the then Section Traffic Manager to the additional role of SEC/SRO.

ARES/RACES

Michigan Section ARES/RACES

SEC/SRO

DEC/DRO — DEC/DRO — DEC/DRO

EC/RO — EC/RO — EC/RO

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Michigan's ARES organization is aligned with the Michigan State Police districts, with a District Emergency Coordinator for each MSP district. In addition, there are DECs for each of the four National Weather Service offices that serve Michigan.

Emergency Coordinators are appointed for each county. Like the SEC appointment, the section tries to make these joint appointments between the local Emergency Management Director and the DEC. There are, however, a few cases where this is difficult. In addition, there are a few situations where there are simply not enough volunteers, and a single individual covers multiple counties. In those cases, the EC is encouraged to appoint assistants for each of the counties and to try to develop, where possible, programs that could be separated. A similar situation sometimes occurs where a large city has a program separate from the county.

SKYWARN

- SKYWARN is the weather spotter program sponsored by the National Weather Service (NWS), a division of NOAA.

- Most ARES members are also SKYWARN members. Many SKYWARN members are not ARES members

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SKYWARN is a branch of ARPSC that many are familiar with. This program consists of trained spotters who make observations on behalf of the NWS. Although ARES membership is not a requirement for SKYWARN, ARES members to have a tendency to also be SKYWARN members.

NTS

- The National Traffic System (NTS) creates a structure for integrated traffic handling designed to achieve two principal objectives: rapid movement of traffic from its origin to its destination and training amateur operators to handle written traffic and participate in directed nets.
- Approx 200 volunteers in Michigan hold 71 nets <u>per week</u> handling about 900 messages per month

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The National Traffic System is responsible for moving messages around the state and the country. In smaller events, NTS tends not to get involved. However, when longer distances or greater traffic volume is required, NTS members provide the skills necessary for efficient movement of message traffic.

Most NTS members practice almost <u>every day</u>. The messages they pass day in and day out are almost in the nature of spam (but non-commercial; happy birthday, your license needs to be renewed, etc.) By passing many messages day in and day out, NTS members can provide efficient message handling without any interruptions; it is second nature.

ARES

- The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is an emergency communications organization sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). ARES events occur when communications needs of a non-commercial nature exist or when all other means of communications have been exhausted. Annually ARES groups assist organizations around the state in events such as parades, non-profit organization, and local government functions and have exercises which provide training for radio operators.
- Approximately 2200 ARES volunteers donate about 7000 hours per month for emergency and public service

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ARES is the bread and butter organization for emergency response communications. While NTS provides the message passing infrastructure, ARES provides the "feet on the ground". These folks serve not only emergency management, but other government and public service agencies.

Each county's ARES program reflects the needs of the county, and they can be quite different. However, the section, and the districts, have standards and guidelines to deliver some degree of consistency.

While each ARES program tends to view the local Emergency Management Director as the primary "customer", ARES program often also develop relationships with other organizations, especially those that might be present on an incident scene, such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.

ARES programs also frequently use public service events as training opportunities, and thus tend to provide communications for marathons, bicycle races, walks and similar events.

RACES

- The FCC created The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) after World War II to address the need for a group of amateur radio operators to act as an integral part of the Civil Defense organization in time of national emergency or war.
- It is the FEMA recommendation and State of Michigan Policy that ARES and RACES officials hold corresponding positions
- RACES operation in peacetime is severely limited by law

RACES is intended to provide communications to Civil Defense organizations in the event of "national peril".

Historically, Emergency Management Directors have abused RACES, and as a consequence, the laws governing RACES operation have become tighter over the years. ARRL policy, FEMA guidance, and State of Michigan policy have made the ARES and RACES organizations parallel, and have largely rendered the need for actual RACES activation almost nonexistent.

Because the laws have become so burdensome, almost all amateur radio emergency response in Michigan is held under the banner of ARES. RACES operation is mostly reserved for presidential declaration.

Michigan ARPSC Guidelines

Michigan Section ARES/RACES

- **Adopted in 2007 by the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division, and the Michigan Section of the ARRL**

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Over the years, ARPSC has developed a good working relationship with the Michigan State Police. Last year, a set of guidelines was jointly agreed to which describe the ARPSC organization and the relationship with state government.

It is worth noting that, although the document was originally authored by radio amateurs, it was heavily edited by the State Police before the Director was willing to sign it. It is anything but a rubber stamp document, but truly a meeting of the minds between the two organizations.

RACES

- **Not so much of an organization as a service**
- **Becoming more and more limited**
  - Drills 1 hour/week max 47CFR1§97.407(e)(4)
  - 2 - 72 hour drills per year <u>with Captain Washington's</u> approval 47CFR1§97.407(e)(4)
  - Not at all clear that an actual activation is possible short of a section 706 declaration 47CFR2§214
  - Interaction with other hams limited 47CFR1§97.407(d)(2)(ii)
  - Probably should authorize drills and exercises in writing 47CFR1§97.407(e)
- **Because of these limitations, FEMA, the State of Michigan, and the ARRL recommend parallel ARES and RACES organizations**
  - Most operations conducted under ARES
  - In the event of a declaration under 47USC606, RACES operators simply switch hats
- **RACES is mostly a way to allow EMDs to control access to sensitive areas**

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The current state of the laws regarding RACES would seem to indicate that actual use of RACES should be limited to time of "national peril" as defined by the War Powers Act (which was recently amended to allow a peacetime declaration.) However, trained operators should be available in case of such an eventuality, and maintaining that capability falls on the EMDs.

Most of you are probably aware that you cannot hold more than a one hour drill per week, not can you hold more than two longer drills per year. What you may not be aware of is that those longer drills require the authorization of the Director of EM&HSD.

In any activation, RACES operators are severely limited in communicating with hams who are not RACES members; Thus, a RACES activation can significantly limit the number of volunteers available.

Given the vagueness of the law (and the direction in which it is heading), I would strongly suggest that ANY action taken to activate RACES be well documented.

Here in Michigan, we have generally strong ARES programs, and RACES is largely a vehicle by which EMDs can control access to sensitive facilities.

Volunteers

Michigan Section ARES/RACES

- **Basis and Purpose** 47CFR1§97.1(a):
  - Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.
- **Issues** (esp. D7)
  - Often older – "paid my dues"
  - Limited Resources – even limited travel is often a large burden
  - "Nerd Factor"
  - Primmadonnas
  - Distrust of government
  - Distrust of ARRL
  - Not "Northern Ohio"
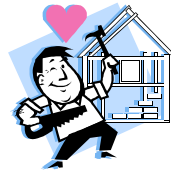
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Amateurs are volunteers, most volunteer to fulfill the very first paragraph of the amateur radio regulations. Many amateurs became amateurs because of the opportunity it provided to exercise their technical skills in support of their community.

However, as volunteers, there are issues, especially in Northern Michigan.

▪Many amateurs are older, and feel they have "paid their dues"

▪Many amateurs up here are retired, or in this economy, may not have the best jobs. Even limited travel can be a burden for them.

▪As technical individuals, there is a certain "nerdiness" that is perhaps expected. However, this can interfere with smooth coordination with police, fire and other emergency response professionals

▪Technical pursuits seem to attract more than their share of primmadonnas – northern Michigan is no exception

▪Many folks in northern Michigan distrust the government and the ARRL

▪Many folks want nothing to do with "northern Ohio" which starts somewhere around Gladwin

The EC/RO

Michigan Section
ARES/RACES

- **Is your point man**
- **Should be "joined at the hip"**
- **Should be able to have "frank and open" conversations**
  - You have different goals/constituencies, should disagree
  - When the door opens, should be singing from the same hymnal
- **Often dealing with additional disciplines**
  - Red Cross
  - Salvation Army
  - Etc.
- **Is the hardest job in ARPSC**

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As Emergency Management Directors, the ARES Emergency Coordinator is your point man for dealing with amateurs.

I have told ECs many times, that since they have slightly different constituencies than the EMDs, and a slightly different focus, they should expect to disagree with their EMD. They should work to develop the sort of relationship where the two of you can have "frank and open" discussions. However, once they come out from behind closed doors, they need to be saying exactly the same thing.

The EC often deals with additional disciplines besides Emergency Management. These additional disciplines are required on many incident scenes, but tend to be outside the EMD's view.

The EC has to deal most directly with all the various personalities, but he also has to be prepared to operate very autonomously, a position the EMD rarely helps him prepare for.

ARES membership is easy, RACES membership not so much.

This region agreed some time back on standard requirements for RACES membership. Most other regions have not done this.

It can be helpful to look at ARES membership as a training opportunity for RACES membership.

Some ARES members may never become RACES members, and that really isn't all that much of a problem, as long as there are sufficient RACES members. In an event, there are many roles that need to be filled that do not require access to sensitive areas or the skills one might expect of a RACES member. Again, the EMD and the EC should frequently review their team and be on the same page as to the appropriate use of each member.
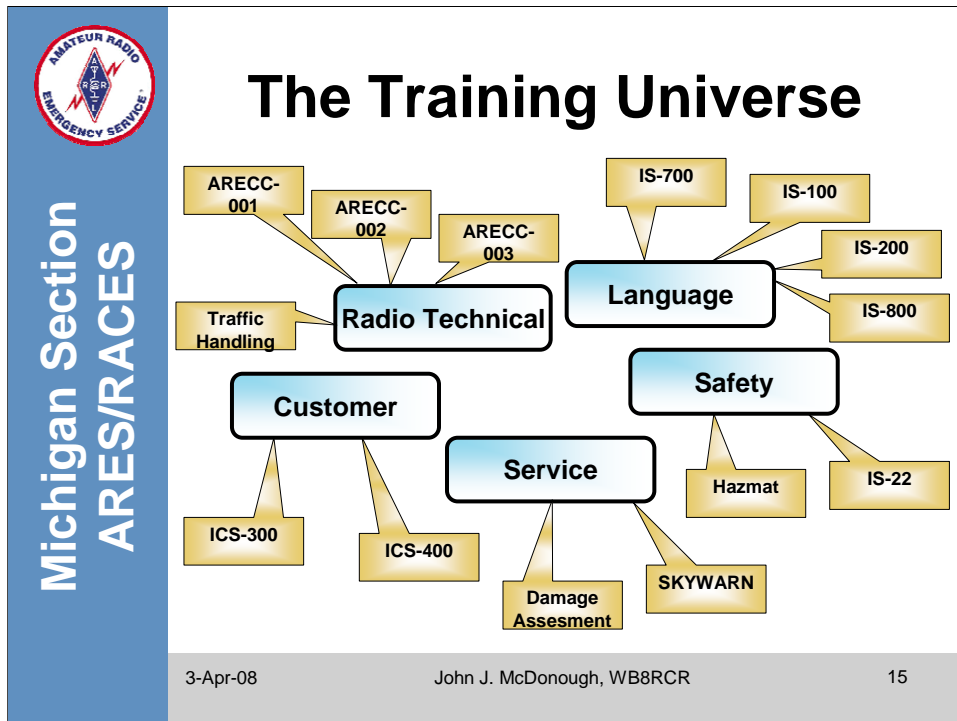
Section wide, we recommend a lot of training, and it is useful to understand how this training fits into the general scheme of things.

We recommend a number of courses from the ARRL as some of the basic technical training for emergency communications. In addition, many programs frequently present traffic handling training.

As communicators, understanding the customer's language is paramount. For us, the basic IS courses are all about understanding government-speak.

The IS-22 course, and in some jurisdictions, hazmat awareness, help our folks stay safe on the job.

Training in SKYWARN, and in some cases, damage assessment, provide additional services we can offer our served agencies that integrate well with our communications mission.

Finally, ICS-300 and 400, which we only recommend for leaders, help us get into our customer's head.

Region 7

- **What is happening locally?**
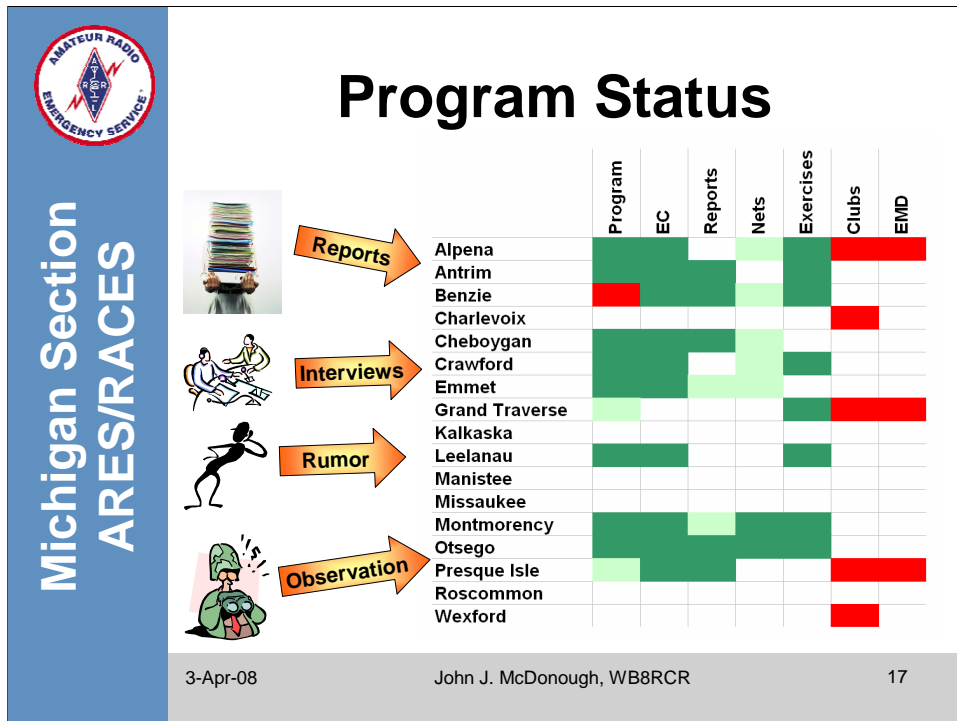 - This is the part you're not going to like
  - More work for you

OK, I know you all spend half your day sitting around your office looking for things to do, well, I'm here to help!

We collect data on various aspects of the program. Over the past few weeks I've spoken with a lot of people, EMDs, ECs, AEC, etc., and put together my perspective of where the various programs are.

Lets talk about these in detail.

What can we do?

Michigan Section ARES/RACES

- **More proactive**
  - Push from both the government and ARES side
- **Suck up to the clubs**
  - Combined ARES and government contact with the clubs may defuse resistance
- **Government owned infrastructure**
  - In some places, having non club owned equipment might be a significant help
- **More access to EMD, EOC**

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We in the ARES organization have a lot of work to do, but if we want to be truly effective, we need your help.

Overall, we both need to be more proactive.

There are cases where the clubs are interfering with our programs. In some cases we may need to "stroke" some of these clubs to reduce the pushback. We have to be judicious, however. This probably won't help in all cases.

There are places where we may need non club owned infrastructure to get some traction.

In many (most) cases, we need the EC and EMD to work more closely, and in many cases, we need to arrange more access to equipment in the EOC or other facility.

What can we do?

- **Support the ARES leadership**
  - *Policies and procedures posted*
- **Integrate your ARES group**
  - *Get police, sheriff, dispatch, etc. familiar with hams*
- **Focus on your county**
  - *Many amateurs want to solve the world's problems and forget about their own back yard*
- **Let your EC do his job**
  - *In a real incident, you won't have time to micromanage*
  - *You need to know you can rely on your guy*

Michigan Section ARES/RACES

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In some cases EMDs feel they should operate a RACES only program, without ARES interference. We have already spoken about the legal issues around this approach. We need to work together more closely, and all involved should familiarize themselves with the district policies and procedures available on the district web site.

One challenge that must fall on the EMDs is arranging an environment to help the ARES organization work more smoothly with other responders. This takes time and planning. Hams need to be slowly eased into the organization. Your own folks are likely to push back if you move too quickly, but with a well thought out plan, your responders will see the hams as a valuable resource.

Many amateurs seem to want to solve everyone's problem but their own. We need your help guiding your folks to look after their own counties first, and at the same time, be a little flexible in understanding the value of standardization.

This is probably the hardest. As EMD, you have many disciplines to deal with, and you cannot be an expert in any of them. When an incident occurs, you will need each of your disciplines to be able to work independently, and you will need to have total trust in them. This is harder with volunteers than with professionals, but without planning, you will never reach the place you need to be. On the other hand, since they interact with all disciplines, your hams might turn into a significant leadership asset.

Questions / Discussion