

THE FOLLOWING NOTE IS FROM FRED LEIF (W6WTI) ABARC VICE PRESIDENT AND SONOMA COAST AUXILIARY COMMUNICATION SERVICE LEADER. PLEASE CONTACT FRED WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS AT fsleif@starband.net

Greetings ABARC Members

We have a number of new members and new hams who may be interested in registering to assist in emergency communications in our community. This note is to encourage our ABARC members to register.

To start out, ABARC is a club ... while many members are interested in emergency communications, club membership does not, by itself, identify you as being part of our organized emergency communications structure. The EmComm organizations that are active locally are two: Sonoma County Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) and the Mendocino County Amateur Radio Communications Service (MCARCS). These two organizations don't operate exactly the same, although the spirit and intent is very similar. Through the ABARC 'Elmer' program we have offered several sessions which cover the basics of emergency communications: emergency power, portable antennas, traffic handling, how repeaters work, programming your radios to work with the local repeaters, etc. These basic skills are important regardless of whether you register for Sonoma ACS or MCARCS.

The Sonoma County ACS program is organized by the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Service. Registering for ACS is offering your commitment to support government agencies in responding to disasters through radio communications. In order to register for this program an operator needs to have filled out and mailed in the applications for ACS volunteers and Disaster Service Worker available at: <http://sonoma-county-acs.org/> . Follow the link to 'Participate', download the two forms and mail them in. Please let the ACS Coast Unit Leader know when you send in your forms (W6WTI@arrl.net - Fred Leif 707-847-3134) Once your application is received you will be notified when a Level I class and photo ID registration session is scheduled. While these sessions are often offered in Santa Rosa, the ACS Leaders have come out to the coast to offer this training. The more local operators who submit their applications, the more likely it is that we can arrange for a class in our community. All ACS volunteers should complete the on-line FEMA Training Classes in the Incident Command System: IS 100 and IS 200. Links to these are available on www.abarc.net and at: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp> . When you have completed your registration you will be provided a photo ID card which identifies you as a Disaster Service Worker in Sonoma County and an ACS Volunteer. When you are activated for service, you will be covered by workers compensation insurance. Being registered allows the ACS program to assess available resources and to coordinate more effectively with our local clients. Sonoma ACS clients may include Volunteer Fire Departments, County Sheriffs, the Coast Life Support District and others who may require communications assistance in an emergency.

The Mendocino County Amateur Radio Communications Service is described on their web site http://mcarcs.org/mcarcs/index.php5?title=Main_Page . The local MCARCS leader is Ken (ke6wc@arrl.net). He has been working with the Mendocino County Sheriff for the identification as Disaster Service Workers by participating amateur radio operators ... a swearing in session was held recently in Gualala.

For practical purposes we know that whatever disaster should occur, it will likely impact our community both north and south of the Gualala River (the county line). As emergency communicators it is important for us to be able to help out where needed on either side of the river. To that end we encourage local licensees to register with both organizations. That way operators can be assigned to the locations needing communications assistance and not be impeded by the county boundary problem.

A word about our Tuesday evening Emergency Net on VHF. The net serves multiple purposes ... it functions as a club net ... as a weekly ACS Net ... and as a MCARCS Net. We have a very active group of participants. Our net check in totals are shared with the weekly Sonoma County-wide ACS net as well as MCARCS county-wide nets. Keeping track of who checks in to our net is the function of the Net Control Station ... it is good training to know who has checked in. For other functions of Net Control, please see the NCS tips on the www.abarc.net site or: http://www.abarc.net/files/NCS_Script_and_tips_12.30.08.pdf

In closing, I'd like to encourage all ABARC Members to consider registering with our active local EmComm organizations so that we can count on you to help support our community's emergency response. The Sonoma ACS program is trying to schedule a Level I Training/Registration session this month ... so please don't delay.

73

Fred Leif

W6WTI

Unit Leader - Sonoma ACS - Coast Unit