

H. ARES AND PUBLIC SERVICE

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VCARA HAS AN AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICES GROUP

- ARES operates under the umbrella of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) with Section Emergency Coordinators (in our case, New Mexico) appointed by the Section Manager. The SEC appoints local District Emergency Coordinators (DEC) (in NM a district is usually a county). Our ARES DEC recruits ARES operators and coordinates our activities.
 - ARES operators must have an Amateur Radio license.
 - ARES operators do not need to be ARRL members.
- Our Valencia County DEC coordinates with the served first responder agency(ies) (in our case the Valencia County Emergency Manager) to coordinate our role in assisting with emergency communications. The county's Emergency Management Plan assigns specific duties and activities to our ARES group. Our ARES group can only be activated by the County Emergency Manager.
 - Our ARES DEC information is provided on our web page.

YOU ARE INVITED TO BECOME AN ARES OPERATOR

- Procedure and Requirements:
 - Must hold an Amateur Radio license and be a VCARA member.
 - Submit application to DEC.
 - With DEC's approval you will become a limited Valencia County ARES operator.
 - Due to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations you cannot be assigned to an Emergency Operations Center or other secure sites.
 - The County Emergency Manager cannot issue you a badge.
 - Complete several on-line DHS courses, i.e., IS-100*, 200* & 700*
 - Our DEC will then submit your information to the Emergency Manager who will:
 - Have a background check run on you.
 - Issue a county identification badge.

PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

- GENERAL
 - Club members are encouraged to assist with communications for public events for the service aspect, but also to practice and develop their emergency communications skills and to test and exercise their equipment.
 - Don't let a lack of experience or minimal equipment keep you from volunteering to help with these events. Just let the event communications coordinator know you are a new and they will assign you to work with an experienced operator.
 - In addition to Tour of the Rio Grande Valley Bike Ride mentioned below there are a LOT of bike rides, runs and other events that rely on Amateur Radio for event and emergency communications.
 - To get on the email list of these events and solicitation of volunteers, contact VCARES Net Manager
- GOOD FRIDAY TOME HILL EVENT
 - This event attracts about 8,000 who walk from all over the county to climb the hill. Others will drive to the base of the hill to begin their climb.
 - Under the direction of the county Emergency Manager, all (all, not just county) emergency responding agencies in the county assist with all safety, traffic and medical emergency aspects for the event. Our ARES group activates to provide supplemental emergency communications.
 - This is also Valencia County's annual large-scale/multi-agency/large-area, emergency training exercise.
 - Many of our ARES operators turn out to assist with this event along with some club members.
 - Non ARES club members are encouraged to participate. If you are not yet comfortable in taking on a primary role, you will be paired with someone who has done it before.

- TOUR OF THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY BIKE RIDE
 - The 100 mile route starts in Albuquerque and circles through the full length of Valencia County.
 - Typically 300 to 400 riders.
 - Usually in September.
 - Event coordination/management/emergency communications are via Amateur Radio.
 - Our ARES operators along with VCARA members have 'worked' this event for many years. Assignments vary from providing communications at rest stops to patrolling segments of the route to provide communications and arrange for transportation of participants who are not able to continue.