

Nov. 22, 2020

Some Placer County ARES members are asking how to become more active. This is great news. Our team needs active participation to survive and provide help in times of need. We are a volunteer organization and you should feel comfortable doing as much, or as little as you desire. Here is a simple list of activities or skills to develop for becoming more active. Many of these items you will need to complete over time. We are not far from the beginning of a new year. Use this time to set your personal goals for next year.

1. Use your radio to check into the Placer County ARES net every Sunday night.
ARES members are familiar with radio net protocols and are comfortable talking during the net. Go beyond just checking in. Ask questions, make comments and suggestions. Share any key learning you have gained.
2. Practice using all the functions of your radio, like changing output power, using an unexpected repeater, using SIMPLEX, changing CTCSS tones, updating memories, listening on the repeater input frequency, talking on the repeater output frequency, etc.
3. Visit some neighboring ARES nets.
 - Yuba-Sutter (Thur 1900 on WD6AXM 146.085 + 127.3)
 - Nevada County (Thur 1930 on W6DD 147.285 + 151.4 or 136.5)
 - Butte (M 2000 on W6SCR 145.29 – 110.9)
 - Yolo (M 2000 on KE6YUV 146.97 – 123.0)
(M after 3rd Tue on backup N6QDY 147.255 + 123.0)
 - El Dorado (M 1930 on AG6AU 147.825 – 82.5)
 - Alpine (T 1930 on NV7CV 147.33 + 123.0)
4. Install EchoLink on your phone.
Discuss settings and usage. You should be able to check into the net without your radio. Set a personal goal to use EchoLink to check in twice each calendar year.
5. Check into the local SKYWARN net on Wednesday at 1900 local time on the K6MVR repeater (147.000 - 132.6). Consider becoming a storm spotter and installing a weather station at your home.
6. Build a radio “go kit”.
A “go kit” has all the components you need to set up a remote emergency radio station. Make sure you can pack it into your car quickly. Remember that there might be electric power, but not very likely. Set a personal goal to use your “go kit” to set up in your yard at least once each year. Check into the repeater. How long did it take you to get set up? Hopefully, 15 minutes or less.

Also include “paper” items like your ARES ID, a copy of your HAM license, blank ICS-213 forms, your radio owner’s manual, a repeater list, completed training certificates (like the FEMA training), spare paper, pens, and pencils. Include comfort items for yourself like food, water, medicine, spare clothes, etc.

ARES has standardized on Anderson Powerpoles. If you're not using these, consider adding them to all your 12v power cables.

7. Understand and practice both sending and receiving short messages using your radio.
ARES is all about communications during an emergency. Basically being able to pass messages for an emergency support group like a Red Cross shelter. Be familiar with the ICS-213 form. Set a personal goal to read 5 messages every year.
8. Be ready to act as a Net Control Station.
Every ARES member may be called on to run a net during an emergency. Practice being a net control operator for the Placer Sunday night net. Set a personal goal to be a net control operator 2 times per year.
9. Install WinLink on your laptop and be able send and receive messages using your emergency station and WinLink templates.
10. Understand what a Placer County ARES activation might look like, and what to expect during a deployment.
11. Training.
This is a huge topic. Basically identify any gaps or desires you have and get some help filling those gaps. Note that there are 4 specific FEMA classes that ARES recommends. They are IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800. Red Cross offers additional classes that are shorter and more fun too. Our Groups.IO web site has some outstanding training materials. Review the "Files" section for training materials.
12. Participate in ARES simulated exercises and in public service events.
Like the Great American Shakeout drill, marathon races, bike rides, horse rides, etc. We use these events as practice for a real ARES deployment.
13. Share your excitement with others in your area. All interested HAMs are welcome to become Placer ARES members and non-HAMs can be "Elmer'd" to become HAMs.

This is a "living" document, please provide feedback,

73, KM6RIW, Brad

Brad_w_stewart@hotmail.com