

City of Santa Rosa COPE Program Communication Planning Meeting

City of Santa Rosa General Services Building
Wednesday, September 20, 2006

Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Roger Sigtermans (facilitator)	kf6rwe@hotmail.com
Holly Gleason (recorder)	hollyg@sonic.net
Ed Buonaccorsi	ebuonaccorsi@srcity.org
Ken Harrison	ken@kenharrison.com
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Lee Dibble	ke6eaq@aol.com
Bill Hillendahl	khgfv@arrl.org
Jim Walden	w6esj@arrl.net

Discussion:

Everyone present introduced themselves and the basic ground rules for the meeting were reviewed and agreed upon.

The six topic areas identified at the last meeting were labeled as “Opportunities” and it was explained that the goal of this meeting was review each area and clearly state the objective and identify how we “get there from here.” The areas identified are:

- Activation
- Staffing
- Resources
- Frequencies
- Identification & Legal issues
- Training & Exercises

After some discussion the group decided that the most useful approach would be to use this meeting to develop a “down & dirty” plan with the time allotted. That would entail quickly looking at each area (with the exception of Training & Exercises) and based upon the situation as it is now, come up with a working plan if something were to happen today. The following notes outline the discussion and decisions for each area.

Activation:

Based upon existing regulations and procedure, the City is the responsible party for formal activation of the plan and mobilization of volunteers. There are two possible ways in which a situation would unfold based upon the nature of the problem. The event could be self-evident, like in a large earthquake in which everyone can feel the shaking. An event could also be something that is large enough to activate the COPE plan, but not be of the nature that it is automatically known by the community at large.

For the self-evident event it was agreed upon that pre-identified ACS and ARES volunteers would follow the same procedure that City employees do. The employee response plan is to have all employees listen for instructions via the broadcast media (AM or FM radio) and if requested, report to their designated assignments or meeting locations. The event, followed by the broadcast instructions, will serve as official activation.

Events that are not self-evident will require a more specific procedure. Ed was very clear that he intends to follow the method he was comfortable with, which was to call County OES to initiate formal ACS activation and begin the process of staffing the City EOC. ACS would in turn be responsible for notifying ARES via the pre-established contacts. A concern was raised over the concept of ARES "activation" by ACS. It was agreed that the use of the term "notification" would be used to identify this process. (This is consistent with previous agreements between both organizations that state that ARES may be deployed to augment emergency communications for governmental agencies within the County of Sonoma when requested by ACS.)

ACS and ARES would use the designated leadership contacts and each group would then use their own phone trees to activate their respective volunteers. In the event there is no phone service, both groups have strategies for use of amateur radio to accomplish an orderly call-out. Both ACS and ARES would begin to monitor each others designated amateur radio frequencies to facilitate and coordinate communications with each other.

Summary: ACS and ARES have designated assignments and work areas - ACS in the City EOC; ARES at the City fire stations as part of the COPE program. In the event of a large self-evident disaster, any ACS or ARES volunteer that has a pre-designated role in the COPE plan will listen to the radio (KSRO 1350 AM or KZST 100.1 FM) for instructions to report to their work location. In an event that requires the City to make a formal notification, the City will contact County OES to activate ACS. ACS will in turn notify ARES leadership so they can mobilize their volunteers. Both ACS and ARES will monitor each others amateur frequencies.

Frequencies:

Local tactical frequencies to link City fire stations to the City EOC will be accomplished via simplex mode. There were questions about Oakmont being able to make it into the EOC, but Ken advised that that pathway was tested on 5 Watts and worked well.

Ken also advised that he reviewed ACS and MARA 2-Meter simplex frequencies and determined that are two frequencies that should serve the purpose. It was agreed that 147.555 is designated as the primary channel and 147.585 will be the secondary.

Questions were raised about three amateur radio repeaters that are on city property. These repeaters are already designated for ACS use. Ken explained that using an Operational Area resource, which is meant to serve not only the City but a wider community, for the COPE program did not make sense if simplex could handle the job. Ed agreed and stated that the City will use simplex for COPE communications.

There was a question about the ability of each fire station being able to talk to all the other fire stations. Jeff felt that fire station-to-fire station links were not the critical factor and each fire station could use simplex to complete the main task of communicating with the City EOC without any problems.

Summary: Simplex will be used for COPE communications. 147.555 will be the primary channel and 147.585 will be the secondary channel.

Resources (radio equipment locations):

There is a cache of Kenwood TK-780 radios that can be deployed to each of the fire stations. These radios are contained in Pelican cases and have antennas and power supplies. They are the property of the City Fire Department and are currently stored at their Department Headquarters.

There was a discussion about additional radio purchases and a possible business frequency for the City. Specifics will be worked out by Ed and Jeff.

The following locations have both VHF and UHF amateur radios with antennas and working emergency power supplies:

- MSC South (Public Works and Utilities) building
- MSC North (Utilities Department Operations Center)
- Finley Center (City EOC)
- Fire Department Headquarters
- Farmers & Sonoma, (Utilities shop)
- Police Department Headquarters (in SRPD communications van)

Summary: Key City facilities have communications capability. However, the fire stations that are to be used in the COPE plan are not currently equipped.

Action Items: In order to meet the communication needs of the COPE program, the City will need to take the following actions:

- Purchase and install antennas for each fire station
- Complete the frequency programming (simplex) of the EOC and cache radios
- Discuss the distribution of the cache radios to individual fire stations with SRFD

Staffing:

Following activation and mobilization, an assessment of staffing available will be done from the EOC by ACS conducting a roll call of the ARES operators at the fire stations.

The issue of access at the fire stations needs to be resolved. COPE community responders will be reporting to the fire stations and ARES operators providing communications will need to be visible, accessible and provided with an area that is safe from the weather and has a suitable work area for conducting their operations.

Action Items: Ed mentioned that ensuring access and suitable work space without compromising security or fire operations may be issues that will need to be resolved with the Fire Department. Ed will need to discuss it with the Fire Department.

Identification and Legal Issues:

ACS volunteers are already registered as Disaster Service Workers (DSW) through the County. This formal registration provides Workers Compensation insurance coverage in the event of an injury while performing official volunteer duties.

ARES will be operating in a volunteer capacity for the City and should be registered as DSWs by the City. Ed said that there was a recent City Counsel decision against DSW registration of COPE volunteers. This may not preclude DSW registration of ARES volunteers specifically designated to support this effort. DSW registration can be a complex issue and will need to be explored further.

The City will work on providing COPE ID cards with expiration dates for the volunteers that will be assigned to fire stations. Ed stated that the issue of COPE ID cards was to be worked on in October.

Action Items: Ed will follow up on COPE ID issue and ARES will need to provide the City a list of volunteers that are designated to take part in this plan. The City should get more information about the recent City Counsel DSW decision and follow up with County and State OES regarding DSW regulations and requirements.

Next Meeting:

Ed will follow up on the action items addressed above and update the group on progress at the next meeting.