

After Action Report

DATE: July 7, 2011

SUBJECT: After Action Report – 2011 Bisbee Coaster Race

FROM: Robert Hollister

TO: Albert Echave, IC, Bisbee Police Department
Mike Evans, CC Emergency Services

CC: RACES Team

1. PURPOSE:

This report briefly describes the support provided by the Cochise County ARES/RACES Communications team to the 2011 Bisbee Coaster Race. It does not address any other agency specific operational issues.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The ARES/RACES unit was asked to provide communications support to the annual Bisbee Coaster held on the 4th of July in Bisbee Arizona. This event is sponsored by the Bisbee Coaster Race Committee and supported by several public safety agencies. The ARES/RACES unit typically provides “eyes-on” safety support of the race course as well as timing and progress reports of the coasters as they proceed from the Start Line at the top of Tombstone Canyon to the Finish Line at the Main Post Office. The unit uses portable base stations at the Start and Finish line and volunteers with portable radios at specific control points along the course. Any incidents or safety concerns are immediately reported to the Start and Finish line for relay to the Public Safety personnel.

The ARES/RACES unit provided 18 operators along the course. We provided a radio scanner to allow them to monitor our coaster race progress reports and a portable base station antenna and cable to the Incident Command Post located near the Start Line. Additionally, Bisbee PD requested use of the MCU cache of Hand-Held radios to ensure adequate coverage on the VTAC channels. They were checked out the night before and back in at the conclusion of the race.

This year the public safety supporters were being observed by a team from the AZ State Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Office for adherence to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and good interoperable communications practices as part of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) Goal II Evaluation.

3. LESSONS LEARNED/ISSUES –

Planning – The amount of additional planning and compliance with the NIMS process that went into the overall effort as a result of the Goal II evaluation paid off. The team put together by the Bisbee Police, Fire, City Staff, Race committee worked very hard over several months putting together the Incident Action Plan. Although we were not provided with specific results at the “Hotwash” after the race was complete, I feel confident that it was a success based on my past experience as an observer at other

events being evaluated around the state. The County will not get official results for this event for a couple months.

ICP Communications Support – The addition of the portable base station to the Incident Command Post provided them much better command and control communications to the Public Safety crew than previous years. They also appreciated the addition of the radio scanner to monitor the amateur radio communications in the CP as we announce coaster progress going down the course. The cache radios were used appropriately for zone operations by the LE Branch.

Race Amateur Staffing – We were fortunate in being able to add a few more volunteers to the crew and have 100 percent “eyes-on” coverage of the entire course this year. The Race Committee and Coordinators were very pleased at the level of support we were able to provide again this year. The continued practice of only have 4-5 “reporting stations” down the canyon seems to work well and balances the amount of information being broadcast down the canyon. We still have the ability to report emergencies from anywhere on the course but still not overload the channel.

X-Band Repeater - We originally hoped a X-Band repeater would be necessary to cover the bottom of the course. Unfortunately, coverage was a little spotty without it so it was turned on and improved coverage nicely. Thanks Chuck (N7DQS) for bringing it.

Mast Sections – I had planned to provide mast sections to the Command Post antenna but they were left in the garage. Fortunately, Charles (K4AFN) brought a spare set and we mounted the portable antenna on it. I did learn that there are at least two sizes of military mast sections. His were just a tad larger in diameter than mine and my antenna adapter did not slide over the top. That was a minor issue as the U-Bolts were quickly loosened and slid over the mast section quite nicely. You can never be too prepared. Thanks Charles.

Reminders -

First, all volunteers need to bring with them a high-visibility safety vest when working an event that is located on or next to a public roadway. This should be part of your standard deployment kit. Only a couple members forgot. Fortunately, there were a few extra vests brought by other team members to provide to those who did not bring one..

Second, please review any advance information concerning scheduling to ensure you arrive in adequate time to attend any mandatory safety or incident briefings. Under NIMS, all such events require a mandatory safety briefing before deploying to your duty assignment.

4. COMMENTS

Good job to all the volunteers for the extra effort you put forth this year. I hope you all had fun.

5. ACTION ITEMS:

Next year, provide a better antenna for the scanner and stick ALL of my antenna mast sections in the truck.

Appendix – Participants

Name/Callsign	ICS Position	Home Base/Assignment
Robert Hollister / N7INK	Radio Operator	Start – West Blvd / SR 80 Overpass
Fred Brown / K7LGN	Radio Operator	CP 1 – Wood Canyon
Cat Fix / KF7ITE	Radio Operator	CP 2 – Gentry Ave
Mike Arnold / N7ZGO Charles Campbell / K4AFN	Radio Operator Radio Operator	CP 3 – Spring Canyon
Bob Kappler / KE7LIY	Radio Operator	CP 4 – Cantner Ave
Wendell Carter / AB4LE	Radio Operator	CP 4A – 617 TCR
Rob Cass / AC7XA Ken Allen / KF7IYQ	Radio Operator Radio Operator	CP 5 – Warren Hill
Dale Chidester / NJ7C	Radio Operator	CP 6 – Brophy Ave
RB Rice / K7HVV	Radio Operator	CP 7 – Upper Garden Ave
Kurt Edelman / KF7PDV	Radio Operator	Ch 8 – Perley
Juanita Portz / KK7WA	Radio Operator	CP 9 – Art Ave – Circle K
Dave Bly / K7DTB	Radio Operator	CP 9A – 219 TCR
Chuck Morris / N7DQS Peggy Morris / KC7LCE	Radio Operator Radio Operator	CP 10 – Clawson Ave – Iron Man
Jeff Covert / KD7UOP	Radio Operator	CP 11 – Upper Castle Rock
Ranny Burke / KE5DJ	Radio Operator	CP 12 – 112 TCR – Lower Castle Rock
John Kramer / KA7LGF	Radio Operator	CP 13 – 88 Main St
Tom Huntoon / KC7WKT	Radio Operator	CP 14 – 40 Main St
E Wittig / WB7VNF Bill McNab / N7BIL	Radio Operator Radio Operator	Finish Line – Main Post Office