

RACES Notes for 05/27/2009

News and Announcements

1) Upcoming Events:

5/30 Prescott Hamfest
6/2-4 DICE 2009
6/6 Showlow Hamfest
6/27-28 Field Day
7/4 Bisbee Coaster Race
7/17-18 Williams Hamfest
9/5-7 Paradise Trip

2) Pager Problem – The pager problem I reported earlier this week is still there. The system owner is still experiencing line problems with Qwest and still has no time of service return from Qwest. I am basically convinced we need look for an alternative solution. I have considered using the Long Tone Zero or LTZ that sends a tone out over the air and turns off the squelch to alert members. There are several disadvantages to that system. I spoke to Sgt Noland of the SAR unit and there may be some Alpha-Numeric pagers available through the County but we can not verify that until next week. I have also considered using a combination of cell texting and email alerting. There are a couple advantages and disadvantages to that but will keep working the issue. To test the cell texting method I need some information from you. After the net this evening, please send me your cell number and the name of the carrier company you are using. For example, mine is Verizon 520-508-5636. I can send and receive text directly from my cell to my email address and vice versa.

In the mean time, please leave your 2-meter radios on and monitor the 147.02 (RACES) channel more consistently until we can come up with another solution.

3) DICE – The DoD Interoperability Communications Exercise kicks off on Monday with setup. The actual exercise will run from Tuesday morning until Thursday afternoon at the JITC facility on Fort Huachuca. I am looking for volunteers to come out and work in the MCU from about 7:30 – 13:00 each day. We are closing down at 13:00 daily because the Command Post we are supporting is actually on the east coast and the 3 hour time difference. We will receive scenario injects and practice using our HF and satellite in the MCU and the operational protocols working with AZ state Emergency Operations Center, FEMA, and a Joint Task Force. There will be components in Texas and the east coast. If you can work any 3-5 hour shift at the MCU please let me know. This is a great training experience. I will also need some help Monday afternoon for setup at the JITC facility and tear down Thursday afternoon.

4) Bisbee Coaster Race – Just a little over a month away from the annual Bisbee Coaster Race held on the 4th of July. We need approximately 15 folks to assist in this annual event. Please contact RB Rice (K7HVV) if you can assist. If you have a particularly favorite spot on the course, please contact him early to ensure you can get that assignment. If you have never supported this event, come on down. You only need a Handheld VHF radio. You should have one of the RACES T-Shirts or Vests to help identify you to the public and law enforcement personnel. We are usually set up about 7:30 and finished by about 10:30. Plenty of time to go over to the Warren District and watch the oldest, continuing 4th of July Parade in Arizona.

TRAINING – On our last net we discussed a few of the prerequisites of attending the COM-L course to be held in September. One of those pre-requisites was an understanding of current public safety communications systems and acronyms. Tonight I want to discuss a few of those items and throw out some acronyms that we should all be familiar with. And by the way, if you have not started compiling yourself a glossary of acronyms, this would be a good time to start as we are going to be throwing a lot of them around over the next few months. I recommend you start a computer file and add to it as we cover these items.

I am going to start with something called AIRS – the Arizona Interagency Radio System (AIRS). First, what is it? AIRS is designed to provide interoperable communications capability to first responders of police, fire, and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) agencies, as well as other personnel of municipal, county, state, tribal, federal agencies and approved non-governmental organizations (NGO's) performing public safety or public service activities. This system operates on designated VHF, UHF, and 800 MHz designated interoperability frequencies. These radio frequencies are to be used in the event of a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional operation requiring the use of the common state radio channel(s), specifically for the use of coordinating activities during identified incidents. AIRS frequencies or channels are not to be used by a single agency for routine public safety operations. They are reserved for situations that require interoperable communications to coordinate multiple public safety entities and/or activities across two or more separate radio systems. Some "rules of use" apply to these channels:

- **National Incident Management System** – Use an Incident Command System (ICS) compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) when using any regional interoperability resource.
- **Plain Language** – All interoperable communications during multi-agency, multi-discipline incidents will be in plain language. Avoid using radio codes, acronyms, and abbreviations as they may cause confusion between agencies. Ensure that all verbal requests for assistance or backup specify the reason for the request.
- **Unit Identification** – Announce your home agency prior to announcing your unit identifier during interoperable communication situations. Example: This is Cochise County Mobile Communications Unit or This is Cochise County Search and Rescue Command Post.

Many of you are familiar with the National VHF and UHF Mutual Aid Tactical Channels referred to as VTAC / UTAC and ITAC (800 MHz) channels. These are not the same frequencies as the AIRS channels but still channels or frequencies that you should be familiar with. The same rules apply for any interagency operations. We have the VTAC/UTAC channels already programmed into the appropriate radios in the MCU. If you were not aware of this, interoperability operations in Cochise, Graham or Greenlee County should use VTAC2 and/or AIRS Channel 5.

Our neighbors to the west (Pima and Santa Cruz Counties) are assigned AIRS Channel 2 and VTAC 3. At the moment, I do not know what Hidalgo County NM has been assigned in the VTAC/UTAC arena.

That's it for tonight's training, now let's go down the net for questions and/or comments.

Bob

Robert L Hollister

Thought for the day:

"Don't forget. In a years time you could be dead. Don't postpone a life for tomorrow that you can start today."

Nick Kinsella