

From: Stuart Rohre, K5KVH
To: Travis County ARES
Sent: Mon, November 8, 2010 5:17:12 PM
Subject: [traviscountyares] Re: Saturday Nov 6th SET in Austin.

It all started at 8:03 AM with Bob, WB5AOH setting off the ARES all call on AWACS pagers. Soon there was a QST/ CQ net call up on 146.94, the resources net.

Many Thanks to the ARES and HSMM group members who were at SET Sat. Glenn with Moby Dick, Brian Wood, KF5GAH assisting, and Rick NG5V with his mobile, Paul F. at Red Cross with Bob Morgan, and Stuart Rohre. were part of the HSMM side of the event.

If I have missed anyone who linked in, please update me. It was quite a juggling act just before 8am trying to replace a node on the Red Cross roof mast, re-aim a BBQ dish, rig a collinear tripod station on the lawn, another node in the conference room to get a signal outside thru a window in case roof transmission was attenuated, etc. A camera on Moby at Dells Children's Hospital parking lot, captured and transmitted video, while text was exchanged, and a first for an ARES SET in Austin was made, two way HSMM! Special thanks to Glenn Currie for nuturing this HSMM idea for some time, and loaning the Moby Dick van and pneumatic mast to make an actual deployment over a point to point off campus link happen. The link had to traverse the old Austin Airport with intervening trees, but did so with ease.

Sending via Winmor from West TX was Dave AD5OO, which added another notch to our success.

There was extra complexities this year, melding Williamson Co. ARES SET, TX TASK Forces, CCG, MARS Field Day, as well as Travis Co. ARES SET, & NVIS HF, all into one event! W5KA at Red Cross worked HF NVIS on 7285, a distance equal or greater than Austin to Corpus, one of the drill objectives. (To Beaumont, TX) Then WB5AOH, Bob, worked from his mobile with loop antenna, all the way to San Angelo on the 7290 net. Then, to show the versatility of NVIS, W5KA worked into the next county, Williamson, and South west to Bandera County, all on 40m with good signals, even as the band varied during the morning. On VHF, CETECC W5TQ and W5KA worked a MARS station in Carmine, 100 mis. East of Austin on two VHF repeaters.

Many thanks to all operators on UHF, & VHF FM, Winmor, Airmail, HF NVIS,

HSMM and those assisting with set ups, who achieved all communications links planned, plus some more. We wish more ARES members had checked in, but know that there were TRAVIS ARES members deployed to Tx. Task Forces, CCG, Williamson Co. ARES nets, and MARS Field Day. So far, I have identified 24 stations that W5KA logged on the resource net, as ANCS. I hope we deployed all those who wanted to be deployed. Not all could deploy, and that is understandable. A number were in background roles of setting up equipment, being safety back ups when roof top work was underway, monitoring nets, etc.

Special thanks to Don Dudley, EC and Joe Canfield, AEC, for doing yeoman work handling CETECC both on the air on two repeaters and managing the Airmail incoming, and other messaging. Even their getting to actually use CETECC was a joint effort of Don and Joe, for which I give my thanks. Part of an SET is learning to delegate, and then the delegates come through and take care of details that seemed very large before the event. We also thank Scott Swearingen of CETECC for providing access for this Saturday morning SET.

At Red Cross Bob Morgan was everywhere; on the roof, swapping nodes, furnishing a back up FM radio, operating NVIS mobile/ portable, and sometimes on the FM nets. Thanks always, Bob. Bob and Paul made HSMM happen at the Red Cross end, with both furnishing equipment, and Paul operating his laptop node, and providing extra antennas to ensure a mesh network could be demonstrated.

Thanks to all the other operators who checked into one or more Travis nets, or handled our calls on NVIS.

While Edsel Murphy tried his best to do things to equipment, block Airmail messages, hide instruction sheets, and set up aids, All major goals of the exercise plan were met by 11:45 AM and stations started being released. Right on our time plan, we closed both Resource and Tactical Nets at 11:55 AM.

We ask all participating to forward messages you handled to <k5KVH@arrl.net> for inclusion in the report. Look over your notes and bring them to the next General ARES meeting where we will hold a review of SET, listing what worked, and what ideas came up on how to improve the operations for next time. Remember in a time compressed exercise such as this, we often can't include actual travel to shelters, sites needing radio observers, etc. There were also the complications of intertwining the state ARES scenario into a local drill plan.

One thing I thought went very well, was to handle voice traffic off the Tac Net frequency on alternate repeaters or frequencies. Later in the

drill, we did simplify and do certain traffic intended for the NCS stations on their frequencies. But, normally, we want to use the Tactical Net as a command and control channel, and messages flow by other channels.

One idea has already surfaced: To have a pre SET group check of Go Kits at an ARES meeting well ahead of the SET, to allow kits to be updated, repaired, and improved. Things like repeater lists need to be up to date, and obsolete lists removed. Batteries need to be checked and refreshed. I luckily had reviewed my own Go Kit, and had a fresh flashlight to do some pre exercise last minute repairs in the station's darker area under the operating desk!

Thanks again to all, and congratulations on a job well done.

-Stuart Rohre
K5KVH,
AEC, Red Cross of Central TX