

CAMHAM

A Newsletter for Amateur Radio in Cambria County
Winter 2007-2008, Volume 1, Issue 3

ICS TRAINING DATES SET

One of the most important components of RACES is training. The Incident Command System (ICS) Training assures that all participants in emergency and disaster are on the same page and speak the same language.

As mentioned in earlier issues of CAMHAM, the Cambria County Department of Emergency Services planned to sponsor an ICS training for those wishing to become RACES operators. The training schedule is

March 27, 2008 at 1830 hours for ICS 100.

March 29, 2008 at 0830 hours for ICS 700.

Due to the unexpected closure of the IEOC on Broad Street, the courses will be taught at the Richland Municipal Building, 322 Schoolhouse Road in the Community Room.

Taking this pair of courses will certify the operator for first year membership in RACES. (An in-depth look at this topic in the next article on RACES handbook updated)

At the conclusion of the 700 course, RACES identification cards and related information will be distributed.

RACES HANDBOOK UPDATED

Before discussing revisions, I must first acknowledge Blanche Bender and other persons that assembled the 1995 version of the Cambria County Amateur Radio Communications Plan. This handbook served us well and many of the ideas were incorporated in the draft of the RACES Handbook. The new draft reflects many changes in the DES and in Amateur radio including a handbook devoted exclusively to RACES and new modes, operator classifications, etc. Much has changed.

Some of the major changes in emergency communication are the introduction of the Department of Homeland Security, the re-organization of FEMA and the use of ICS. It is now a must that amateurs, as well as other volunteers, receive ICS training and work towards National Incident Management System (NIMS) certification.

As with any trained and skilled volunteers, one must walk a fine line, assuring that volunteers receive the proper training, while realizing that overdoing it will frustrate and turn away good people.

The RACES training being proposed consists of a two-year, two sets of trainings. In year one, ICS 100 and ICS 700 is required. Those completing these courses will be first year members. The second year consists of ICS 200 and ICS

800. Once this is completed, the member is NIMS certified. Of course, members may take the initiative and take the courses on the FEMA website. A certificate of completion will suffice to satisfy the RACES requirements.

145.210 REPEATER CHANGES

You might be having a more difficult than usual time accessing the county repeater. You might also notice a change in signal strength or a fluctuation in signal strength. The repeater might even go off the air for a short period of time. No it is not a lack of maintenance or someone fooling around, but the county needed to borrow the amateur repeater antenna.

Last week I received word the county EMS radio site at New Germany suffered a catastrophic antenna problem. The repair of the antenna system would be expensive and within weeks a new system was going live anyway, which would render the repair obsolete. The amateur antenna was borrowed for EMS use until the new system is up and running. So please excuse any difficulties experienced. As an old PENNDOT slogan once stated, "temporary inconvenience, permanent improvement."

HAMFEST SEASON IS HERE

As of this writing I had attended one ham fest and am gearing up for another. The fest at the Castle Shannon fire department was a pleasant trip and even though I did not buy much of anything, it was nice to get out.

Greensburg's ham fest is Sunday 3/9/08 and I am looking forward to it. Hope to see you there.

The Cambria RACES web page will have the pdf of ham fest brochures I happen to get. I will attempt to keep it updated. The web URL is:
<http://www.cambriaraces.org>

Click the 'news and updates' link.

ONCE MORE, A REMINDER...

Mark your calendar for the following important trainings:

March 27, 2008 at 1830 hours for ICS 100.

March 29, 2008 at 0830 hours for ICS 700.

The training location is

**Richland Municipal Building
Community Room
322 Schoolhouse Road
Johnstown, PA 15904.**

Advance registration is preferred by calling me at 814-241-8564 and leaving a message or by email at
n3yfo@atlanticbb.net.

I will confirm your reservation by telephone or email. Changes and notifications about the training will be by group email. If you aren't on the list, send along an email and I will put you on board.

Hope to see you there.
73.