



Lee County ARES Targets Precinct 2 for Emergency Communications Exercise

June 23, 2021



Pct 2 Exercise Net Control and Deputy Ops Chief Calvin Burnham, WB5YYQ, is seen operating his radio equipment during an exercise conducted last Saturday by the Lee County Amateur Radio Emergency Service.

Lee County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, LeeCARES, successfully completed a field exercise on Saturday, June 19, 2021, to test emergency radio signals from different locations in Precinct 2. Eight LeeCARES members in four vehicles traveled to 28 locations from the Manheim area to the county lines of Bastrop, Fayette, and Washington counties, completing 70 contacts. The exercise was planned by Jason Korb, Operations Section Chief, and Calvin Burnham, Deputy Chief and Net Control Operator.

The operation was conducted from the Net Control operators' home located near downtown Giddings. The group hopes to have a permanent station installed at the Lee County Emergency Operations Center soon, pending funding.

The emergency communications group extensively tested their backup repeater (located near Lincoln) for coverage in the Southwest side of the County. Only one area was identified with poor to nonexistent coverage. Radio operators also tested the radio signals between mobile units without the repeater (simplex). A few locations were unreachable via simplex, but communications were maintained through relays by net control or other mobile units. Radio signals were robust even

in areas where phone reception was poor.

To complete the mapping process of Lee County, LeeCARES will evaluate Precinct 1 in the next exercise scheduled for this Fall. Precincts 3 and 4 have already been mapped over the past year.

Preparation for each of the field exercises includes many volunteer man-hours tabulating an accurate study of the terrain, impact of natural and man-made obstacles, and the distance between stations, to forecast the received signal strength for each location in the test.

LeeCARES is actively working with the County to install a permanent station at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) located at the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

"The installation of a radio and antenna for backup emergency communications is just the beginning of an exciting project at the EOC," says Marida Favia del Core Borromeo, ARES Emergency Coordinator. "Our vision is to eventually install multiple radios and antennas, with both voice and digital radio email capabilities to reach out to adjacent counties, states, and even overseas if needed. We want Lee County to become resilient in backup radio communications to better serve her residents no matter the emergency or disaster at hand."

The Lee County Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (LeeCARES) is a non-profit 501.c.3 organization and is a member of the American Radio Relay League. The purpose of LeeCARES is to furnish emergency communication when regular communication fails or is inadequate during natural or man-made disasters. LeeCARES consists of licensed radio amateur operators who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, to assist with communications when disaster strikes.

If you are a licensed operator or have a scanner, listen to our training nets on 147.22 MHz every Monday night at 7 p.m. We have monthly meetings on the third Sunday of each month at Elm Creek Café. For more information, go to our website at www.leecares.org.



Above are some of the people who helped test LeeCARES communications in Lee County last Saturday. They are, left to right, Tim Lee W5TRL, Radio Operator, Calvin Burnham WB5YYQ, Net Control and Operations Deputy, Lynn Rose Demartini KF5SSW, Radio Operator, Ken Malgren K7MAL, Radio Operator, Marida Favia del Core Borromeo K05BJ, ARES Emergency Coordinator and Planning Section Chief, (behind Marida) Jason Korb K1SAB, Operations Section Chief, Jeff Bullard K1SHH, Radio Operator, Julia K1SLNM and Mark Allison K1SMA, Radio Operators.