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Lee County ARES holds Communications Exercise

Lee County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) successfully completed an exercise in Precinct 1 on Saturday, Sept. 18. The objective was to test radio signals from different locations to identify areas with poor reception.

Six Lee County ARES members in four vehicles traveled to 20 locations from the Lincoln area to the county lines completing 75 contacts. The exercise was led by Calvin Burnham, who served as the Net Control operator at a base station located in downtown Giddings.

Mobile ham operators evaluated radio reception between the base station and from mobile unit to mobile unit. In several locations, communications proved to be too poor to be intelligible.

However, Operation Chief Jason Korb selected an excellent location for a base relay station. This allowed operators to relay communications successfully between all participants. In many locations, radio signals were robust in areas where phone reception was poor.

"I believe the exercise

shows those participating that the group can communicate accurately, even under the most unfavorable conditions. So that's a good lesson," stated Williamson County Safety Officer John Peek, who also participated in the exercise.

Lee County ARES Emergency Coordinator, Marida Favia del Core Borromeo, was also very satisfied with the results. "Fantastic exercise, professionally executed, and lots of fun, too. We are very appreciative of Pct. 1 Commissioner Mark Matthijetz for his support and for offering his assistance during the execution of the exercise," she stated during the final briefing.

"This exercise terminates the first round of signal reports throughout the county. This year, we have greatly improved our planning and execution of our exercises. Some of us drove in parts of the county we had never driven before, and we have learned to work closely together. Pct. 3 exercise consisted of five members. Lee County ARES has grown, so 11 members participated in the Pct. 1

exercise," stated Favia del Core Borromeo.

As Lee County ARES continues to grow, they are developing ways to better serve the county during a disaster, emergency or public event. They are currently working on a communication van with an antenna mast for mobile deployment, radio kits that can be used in the field, and training on the equipment.

Lee County ARES will install the first radio equipment and antenna for backup emergency communications at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) at the Lee County Sheriff's Office as soon as funding is available.

A weekly training is held every Monday night on the local repeater frequency of 147.22 Mhz at 7 p.m. All licensed ham operators are invited to participate. If you do not have a license, you may listen to the training via a scanner. Monthly meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month at Elm Creek Cafe. Meeting and repeater information can be verified at www.leeares.org.



RELAY STATION with an antenna on top of the 20-foot mast and flag at the intersection of FM 141 and FM 1697 are shown during

the Lee County ARES exercise in Precinct 1 on Saturday. The location of the relay station proved key to relay communications

to and from mobile units and Net Control. Six ARES members in four vehicles traveled to 20 locations, completing 75 contacts.