

Hurricane "Suiter" Exercise - June 2, 2009

On June 2nd, Sarasota County held their Hurricane "Suiter" exercise, as part of the Statewide Hurricane drill.

This exercise was designed as an EOC training opportunity for the folks who would be assigned there during an activation. This included training with the county's resource request and tracking system, EISMax, as well as shift change procedures.

There wasn't any ACS communications activity planned, but ACS was represented during the exercise as part of the ESF-2 (Communications) team. Alex, KJ4JCD, and Bob, KF4JRO, took the opportunity to get some "hands on" EOC training and got an idea of what happens at the EOC "behind the scenes" during an activation.

After the EISMax training was completed, the practice "exercise" began. Phone calls started coming in and information began passing between the ESF positions, and all this information was entered into the EISMax system. ACS received a call on the radio from a CERT team that was taking part in the exercise. Bob took down the information, and then he and Alex entered that information into the system.

As our part of the exercise, we planned to test our "alternate" communications methods - primarily Winlink and Echolink. The IT folks were working an issue on the computer in the radio room, which limited our access and we didn't get a chance to use that as much as we had hoped. We did receive Winlink messages from WA2JWL (and MARS call AAV4TM), K9SRQ, and W8GQ. On Echolink, K9SRQ and KA4BOB connected up to the EOC.

We also ran a test of the "Communicator" system, which automatically calls ACS members and alerts them of any ACS activities. As a result of the test, we discovered 2 bad phone numbers and an old e-mail address. The bad numbers have been deleted and the e-mail address has been updated.

We also received a lesson on using the Satellite phone in the radio room from the EOC Operations Chief, Rob, KG4MNR.

During the exercise, Florida Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp made a surprise visit to the EOC, and thanked the participants for their efforts.

When the exercise finished up, a wrap-up meeting was held and any questions answered. Most participants found the EISMax training helpful, and liked the interaction between the various ESF representatives being able to help each other out with problems and the situations that came up.

Thanks to the following for their help and participation:

Alex, KJ4JCD
Bob, KF4JRO
Bill, WA2JWL
Bob, K9SRQ
Wayne, W8GQ
Bob, KA4BOB

Ron, WD4AHZ
EC, Sarasota County ACS