

Simulated Emergency Test 2013 Operation Sudden Spring

On the brisk morning of 19 October 2013, a severe weather front passed through St. Charles County. A hook echo in the radar indicated a tornado that touched down as an EF-4 in the cities of St. Peters and Weldon Springs Missouri. Damage in St. Peters and Weldon Springs was significant with injuries and several severely damaged buildings. Power lines were down and buildings moved from their foundations. St. Charles County ARES® support was requested by the County Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to support the cities of St. Peters and Weldon Spring for damage assessment and communications for CERT operations.



**Amateur operating position
In the County ICC**

St. Charles County ARES responded in force with the County DEM Interagency Command Center (ICC) as staging outside the St. Peters Justice Center (EOC).



ARES® Responders Outside County ICC

The County EOC and the Weldon Spring EOC were also activated for this exercise. An Incident Command System (ICS) was established with the ICC as staging and Logistics with a forward Command element.

The page went out at 0901 and the radio became active with responders enroute to staging. Weldon Spring CERT sent five of their best to work with County ARES® and took the relevant injects back to their EOC. After the scenario and safety briefings, the teams were deployed with a 3" x 5" card with a map coordinate and a damage report. The exercise had two primary purposes:

1. To familiarize participants with the Wunnenberg® Street Guide and deployment by map coordinate.
2. Proper damage assessment and reporting according to the standard automated forms.
3. Accurate and concise reporting of damages via radio.
4. Exercise County ESF-2 Communications Annex to the EOP.
5. Exercise County ARES® EOP.



Drive-on mount for erecting an antenna on a push-up pole

The Weldon Spring EOC had two damage assessment teams in the field and reported damage from their city EOC in City Hall.



Weldon Spring EOC logging damage assessment traffic

St. Charles County EOC was active with damage reports, traffic to and from entities like St. Peters EOC, the National Weather Service (simulated), the American Red Cross (simulated) and County Dispatch and Alarm as well as Staging.



Jeff (KB3HF) and John (N0RAG) at the County EOC

St. Peters EOC was staffed for the exercise and the lunch (provided by County DEM) and hot-wash after the exercise as well as being active with planned and additional injects. Ed Gilliam (K0ICS) is the Director of Emergency Management for the city of St. Peters and was a gracious host for the hot-wash and lunch. He and Lee Hilliard (K0MMT) did a fine job with the exercise from St. Peters and made ARES® personnel feel welcome in the EOC.



Bill (N0PNP) presenting the hot-wash in the St. Peters EOC

All objectives of the exercise were successfully accomplished and there were some lessons learned and some areas of improvement identified for future exercises. St. Peters EMA and St. Charles County DEM both

expressed their appreciation for the exercise and the planning effort that went into preparation for it. They also expressed how important ARES® is to their emergency operations as eyes in the field and boots on the ground.



Lunch provided by County DEM

Simulated Emergency Test (SET) is a very important exercise for ARES® to work with and build relationships with response agencies and demonstrate the capabilities of amateur radio in the disaster response scenario. SET 2013 – Operation Sudden Spring once again brought amateur radio to the forefront as a disaster response tool for Emergency Managers.

Special thanks to the St. Charles County Div. of Emergency Management and the St. Charles County Sheriff Department for providing the County ICC, lunch, valuable input on how to improve ARES® operations in our county and a highly valued on-going relationship with ARES® in St. Charles County.

Lessons Learned:

1. The Net Control Stations should be staffed with at least three individuals. Two to operate radios and one for logging as a minimum.
2. Logging software alone is inadequate for logging damage assessment information. This should be logged on the DA database.
3. Operators must learn to speak no faster than they can write when passing messages.
4. Modified ICS-213 forms do not work well in a tactical net and are best used in formal net ops.
5. A good briefing and comm. Check prior to releasing volunteers from staging is critical to avoid confusion if more than one frequency is in use.
6. All responding units should advise staging that they are enroute and of their ETA.

2013 EC SET Report

FORM A



PLEASE PRINT

Please fill out this report in triplicate (one copy to ARRL Headquarters, one copy to your SEC or DEC, one copy for your files). Attach newspaper clippings, photos, remarks, suggestions and any other material to be used in the write-up. Deadline for reporting is February 3, 2014.

ARRL Section: Missouri
Area of Jurisdiction: St. Charles County
DEC's or EC's Call sign: N0PNP
E-mail address: n0pnp-1@charter.net
Date of local SET: 19 October 2013

Computation of score:				Points
A	Number of amateurs who participated in the test	25	X 2	50
B	Number of new amateurs (licensed since 2009) participating	2	X 3	6
C	Number of formal 3rd party written traffic messages originated or delivered during the SET on behalf of served agencies	2	X 1	2
D	Were TACTICAL communications conducted on behalf of served agencies? (1 hour or more, score 20 points; 1/2 hour to 1 hour, score 10; less than 1/2 hour, score 5.)	3hrs	N/A	20
E	Number of stations on emergency power during the test	24	X 2	48
F	Number of emergency-powered repeaters used during the test • Give call signs of repeaters: W0ECA, WA0EMA, WA0FYA	3	X 10	30
G	Is <i>dual</i> membership in ARES and RACES actively encouraged? If YES, score 10 points.	Y		10
H	Was liaison maintained during the SET with an NTS section or local net? If YES, score 10 points. • Give call signs of station(s) performing liaison:	N		0
I	Were digital modes utilized at any time during the exercise? If YES, score 10 points • Name the digital modes utilized:	N		0
J	Number of different agencies for which communications were handled	3	X 5	15
K	Number of communities in which agencies were contacted. (If none, score MINUS 10) Name the community(ies) served: St. Charles County, Weldon Spring, St. Peters, Jefferson County, St. Louis County	5	X 10	50
L	Was a press release submitted? If YES, score 10 points, attach copy. See Attachment	Y		10
TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS				241

Deadline for reporting is February 3, 2014. Mail to: ARRL HQ, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111, or e-mail the form to sewald@arrl.org (CC: ARRL HQ, SEC/DEC)