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MILAM COUNTY ARES NEWSLETTER

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MILAM COUNTY ARES NEWS



The Future in Emergency Communications *KD5WRO Commentary*

David Sumner, K1ZZ, wrote an interesting editorial recently in QST. He pointed out the dramatic improvements in information and communications technology such as cell phones, smart phones and tablets. But the communications equipment used by first responders and amateurs has not matched this progress in technology.

Many false starts have been made by Federal and State governments to improve and modernize first responder communications but little progress is evident. Almost no improvement in interoperability has been made since 9-11 when many first responders died in New York due to the inability to communicate up and down the chain of command.

Amateur radio operators will always be ready to fill in communications gaps in major disasters. Craig Fugate, head of FEMA, recently said "when you need Amateur Radio, you really need them."

Amateurs may not be needed very often but we must be ready when the time comes. We may want to use new technology such as the Internet and other devices but these may be the first to fail. David Sumner said it all when he stated "all we need is a radio, a battery, and a piece of wire." These items and our skills will allow us to supply vital communications. Lets be ready.

Milam ARES Digital Repeater

Our digital repeater, installed on the McLerran Hill Communication Tower, has now been in operation since August 7, 2013. This repeater can be used to send paper messages, including signatures. The State Emergency Manager mandates that all requests for aid in a disaster be signed by the County Judge or local Emergency Manager.

The repeater is tested weekly by Williamson County ARES and was recently used in a disaster exercise by ARES in Bryan/College Station.

Our thanks go out again to N5TW and NA5BD for their hours of work installing this repeater.

Amateur Testing Is Coming

A 2-day HAM Operators' class at HSR 7 headquarters, at **2408 S. 37th St. in Temple on Thursday and Friday, October 16-17** in our large conference room. The class will run from **8:00 until 5:00** both days ending with the licensing test being given at the end of day 2. The only cost of this class will be approximately \$25 for the class book and \$15 for the test at the end. All Technician holders should consider upgrading to General class. You can also use QRZ.com to study for the test. For Information contact Jacque Hagerty (KE5SVJ) at 254-771-6725.