

# DELAWARE CO. ARES-RACES HANDLES COMMUNICATIONS FOR SNS DRILL



**Bob Famiglio-K3RF handles NCS duties from Operations Center at Delaware County Intermediate Unit in Morton.**

MORTON - If a biological terrorist attack is made on the population of Delaware County, DelCo ARES-RACES is up to the task of providing communications. That was the conclusion of emergency management officials following the critically important Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) drill held June 21 and 22, 2010.

The SNS drill is an exercise designed to test the ability of county emergency management, local hospitals and municipal officials to respond to a widespread public health crisis. The scenario for this drill was a simulated terrorist attack exposing large segments of Delaware County's population to an aerosol anthrax agent.

The exercise, which began Monday, June 21 at 0800 and concluded on Tuesday, June 22 at 1300, involved all levels of government including federal, state, county and municipal agencies. Upon identification of the simulated biological agent, emergency management officials had 48 hours to acquire, distribute and dispense appropriate vaccines to the entire population of Delaware County.

Delaware County ARES-RACES was notified of the simulated attack and was activated by the Department of Emergency Services on Monday afternoon at 1249 hours. A resource net was immediately initiated on the KA3TWG 446.925 repeater and Response Team Alfa was placed in service. The unit deployed immediately and team members arrived at assigned sites within 20 minutes of activation.

An Incident Command Post, identified as the SNS Operations Center, was established at the Delaware County Intermediate Unit in Morton. A large communications station was set up there manned by Bob Famiglio, K3RF and Bob Wilson, W3BIG. The station included two VHF/UHF transceivers for primary voice, two D-Star dual-band transceivers for tactical voice and a portable packet station for sending and receiving radio email traffic via the Winlink 2000 system.

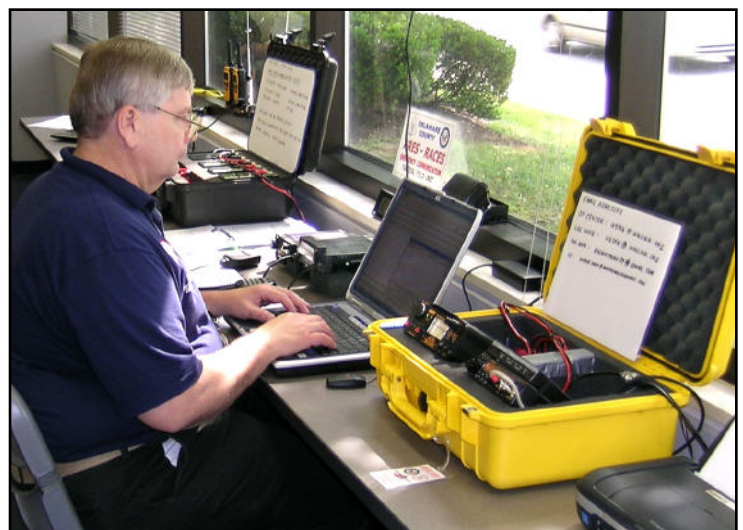
The Pennsylvania Department of Health and State EMS office also tasked Delaware County ARES-RACES with deploying and testing their 800 Mhz Open Sky Communications system. Bob Famiglio had the thrill of being one of the first Amateur Radio operators to actually use the statewide communications system.

A second communications post was established at the Local Logistical Node in the Materials Management office at the Fair Acres Geriatric Center in Lima. This important facility received simulated vaccine shipments from state and federal agencies and shipped required dosages to hospitals, Points of Distribution (PODs) and PUSH sites throughout the county. Fred Field, N3OFR, handled communications at this critically important facility. Working alone, Fred handled all message traffic including tactical voice and Winlink emails. The station at Fair Acres included a VHF/UHF transceiver, an ID-1 D-Star transceiver and a portable packet station for Winlink operations.

Our newest ARES-RACES team member, Ace Trexler, KB3ACE, was assigned to duty at Academy Park High School in Sharon Hill, the one dispensing POD operating in the drill. The POD is where vaccines are distributed to the public. Ace used a VHF/UHF transceiver at his post to relay critical tactical message traffic via the KA3TWG repeater. Despite this being his first ARES-RACES exercise, KB3ACE "aced" his assignment, handling the duties like a seasoned veteran.

The weekday drill was a challenge for DelCo ARES-RACES, as the pool of available volunteers is slim when most people are at work. Response Team Alfa was up to the task providing four operators to cover three communications posts. The team logged more than 36 man-hours of service and handled 20 pieces of official traffic including tactical voice and Winlink emails..

County emergency management officials and hospital administrators declared DelCo ARES-RACES' participation in the exercise a total success and were impressed with its performance.



**Bob Wilson-W3BIG sends Winlink emails from Operations Center at DCIU in Morton during SNS exercise June 21/22.**