

It's time to wake up!!!

Perhaps one of the most valuable results of all education is the ability to make ourselves do the things we have to do, when it ought to be done, whether we like it or not. It is the first lesson that ought to be learned, and however early a man's or woman's training begins, it is probably the last lesson that they learn thoroughly.

We all seem to have problems with training. Some have trouble with obtaining quality training; some with holding regular training, and others with any training at all. These are all subjects that we address regularly and I believe we are gaining on appropriate resolution of those issues with the net, the ASTEN. We are not where we should be at this time, but we are gaining.

It is quite evident that far too many folks in Emergency Communications think of themselves as well trained and don't need to do anything towards improving their skills. Their advances in training have totally ceased! That's kind of a strong statement for me to make but its "True." How many ARES districts in ARKANSAS have more well trained people today than they did in 2003? How many RACES groups have a higher percentage of well trained people than in 2003? Answer to both is most likely none.

It would seem that if you pat someone on the back for making good progress in training they think that no further effort is needed and that is “TOTALLY” wrong! The primary problem is that the people who were well trained have found something else to do because they are not being listened to. The training that has been ongoing is simply bringing new people up to where the people leaving were at. To keep well trained people you need to listen to what they say, a.k.a. heed their council. You don't, they leave.

One of my main concerns is those people that believe Emergency Communication training is like riding a bicycle. You know, once you learn you never forget. We have all heard them. They whine about additional training or worse yet whine about skill maintenance. They usually start with one of a few plaintive cries:

- Been there done that so many times I wore out the shirt that proves it
- I've done that so many times I could teach it (but they never do)
- We never needed it before! We've always gotten the job done!

The last excuse is the single worst in that what was “good enough” years ago is no longer good enough now. 1970 technology is just that, 1970 technology. We now have Winlink 2000, APRS, Pactor, Packet, PSK31, ATV, the internet, lap-top computers that can fit in your pocket, we have the NIMS Incident Command System, and greatly improved communication techniques. The very best we could do thirty years ago is equal to mediocrity now. Why is that “good enough” for so many?

Perhaps I am being narrow-minded but I believe it is because virtually every one of us has worked an event, be it emergency or public service, where we were severely understaffed. The legacy of that under staffing is being perpetually apprehensive that we will not be able to support another event of that magnitude. **WAKE UP FOLK’S!** It is far worse to try and support an event with “just enough” people that are not properly trained, than to support an event with fewer well trained people than we want or need.

What I am about to say is something the big boys at the ARRL Headquarters and all of the SM’s and SEC’s would have to implement, but I think it is time to *slowly* evolve into an organization that **REQUIRES** both participation and training. We may not be in that position next week, or next month, but

we DO need to be making progress in that direction. If we do not evolve into an organization that requires training and participation, we will either have no organization at all, or we will have one that is mediocre at best.