

Operation "North Wind"  
SET 2006

The Simulated Emergency Test will cover jurisdictions within the 40 county area covered by the Blacksburg office of the National Weather Service. We will also be looking for resources outside the coverage area. Any ham or agency that has an interest in participating please get in touch with W4GHS or W4BOT. A hot link for both contacts is listed above on this page.

The following are the events of "North Wind". A large storm system that is laden with huge amounts of moisture is beginning to move north out of the gulf on Wednesday, December 6th. There is also an approaching cold air mass moving down out of Canada and forecasters are projecting this to be in place prior to the moisture's arrival. This system is ideal for dropping a huge amount of frozen precipitation over the forecast area.

On Friday evening December 8th advisories will be issued by the NWS for this forecast area via the Skywarn repeater system. (This message will be prefaced with "This is a Test"). The repeater system and maps can be found at <http://www.wx4rnk.org/repeaters.html>

On Saturday morning, December 9th at 8:00 a.m. Skywarn will activate. The exercise will involve the passing of weather related conditions throughout the area.

At this point, snowfall will have accumulated to as much as 32" in elevations of 2000 to 3000 Ft. In elevations of over 4000 ft the snowfall has accumulated to depths of 3 feet and more. The Big Walker Mountain tunnel and the East River Mountain Tunnel on I-77 have both been closed due to snow accumulation. VDOT is unable to remove the snow on I-77 and I-81 within a 25-mile radius of Wytheville. This is due to the Interstate system being clogged with stranded traffic.

We have received word that a group of four hikers have undertake a backpack trip from Damascus VA to Troutdale. One of these was a ham and he was carrying a 2-meter HT. One of the Twin County ARES/RACES members was taking equipment up to a Whitetop shelter on Friday prior to the storm. Right before dark the ARES member heard a dead carrier on the "Wilderness Protocol" frequency. The ARES member ask the unknown station if he could copy. He dead keyed a letter "r" for Roger. ARES then ask the hiker if he was part of the backpacking group. He again sent an "r". The hiker was asked if all his group was OK. He sent a 'n' for negative.

It was now dark and the ARES member ask the hiker if he was going to be OK for the night and the hiker responded with "r". The hiker was told that a Search and Rescue" party would be sent for his group at first light. ARES/RACES begin to contact hams with APRS skills and equipment. Contact was also made with those that are skilled at direction finding.

The temperature was forecast to drop by mid-afternoon Saturday and wind speed was projected to increase to over 35 MPH with gust over 50 MPH by night fall on Saturday evening.

#### Weather to the South and East

This weather system has been projected to drop freezing rain and sleet in the elevations below 1800 feet. This includes areas east of the Blue Ridge such as parts of Patrick County, all of Henry, Pittsylvania, Franklin, and Roanoke. The Allegheny highlands are also contending with snowfall of 6 to 8". Areas east of Roanoke have been spared this narrow band of frozen participation. The SW mountains will be looking to these eastern areas for needed supplies and equipment. Ham operators will be needed for relief of those in the western mountains.

There is a high risk of highways being closed, power outages, phone service out, cell phone systems being overloaded and Internet services being out in the affected area.

As an aftermath of this system, it is very likely that shelters will be needed over a broad area. Resources will be required to transport stranded motorist to medical attention and shelters. Hospitals and other agencies that have vital workers will require transportation to and from hospitals and nursing homes. Mass care and feeding will be required.

"Heath and Welfare" will be outgoing from all these travelers when they reach shelters. All logistical traffic will be handed by using ICS 213 forms. All Heath and Welfare traffic going into the NTS will be written on Radiograms for tracking purposes. These H&W messages will use Winlink to move them from the affected area to liaisons stations. At this point they will be feed into the NTS via HF nets.