

Metro Skywarn Newsletter

Editor: Dave Johnson, NØKBD
Fall 1993

SGT KOLAR "RETIRES" AS METRO SKYWARN COORDINATOR

By Dave Floyd, KB0CIE

Sgt Charlie Kolar, NØDCR, a long time participant and guiding force in the Skywarn program, announced he is resigning as Coordinator of Metro Skywarn. Charlie has served in that position since 1990.

Charlie has been quite active in amateur radio communications in the Twin Cities. As a police officer for the City of Bloomington, he became involved with the Bloomington Emergency Communications Group in 1982. In the early 1980s, the Skywarn program was just taking shape in the Twin Cities, and was under the auspices of the Bloomington Emergency Coordination Group. Main spotter activity at that time served the City of Bloomington and to some extent the western metro.

Since then, Charlie's involvement in Skywarn grew, as did the program. In his position as Director of Emergency Management for the City of Bloomington, Charlie has helped to ensure the survival of Skywarn for past several years. Today, Skywarn serves the seven county metro area and three counties in western Wisconsin, and involves several amateur radio communications groups. Members include 400 amateur radio spotters, as well as police, fire and other agencies.

Thanks Charlie, for all your hard work and time spent over the past ten years. Your commitment has helped the Twin Cities Skywarn program play an effective role in assisting the National Weather Service during times of severe weather.

New Coordinators and a New Structure for Metro Skywarn

Walt Marty, NØRCY from the Dakota County ARES/RACES group and Dave Johnson, NØKBD from the Anoka County Radio Club were elected co-coordinators for Metro Skywarn. Walt was active in the organization of the Skywarn effort in Dakota County ARES/RACES. Dave has been an active spotter for the past 5 years and a past president of the Twin Cities FM Club.

During the October meeting of Metro Skywarn, the organization began to take a new shape. Dave will coordinate the Administrative Division and will recruit committee chairs for a Weather Training, Public Information, and Development Committees. Walt is in charge of the Operations Division and is looking for able leadership for the Procedures, Resources, and Weather Service Amateur Operations committees. Other committees could emerge at anytime. The purpose of the reorganization is to clarify roles within the organization, to bring new leadership and to spread the load of work across

a greater number of people.

Not only are the two new Coordinators looking for committee chairs, there is also need for committee membership. Metro Skywarn is still a small organization. Many new people are needed to handle the work load, Amateur equipment during Skywarn nets and Operations Trainers to teach next years procedures to spotters. Most of all, we need new leadership to usher Skywarn into the next season of training and net coordination. Call Dave NØKBD at 434-0600 or Walt NØRCY at 423-6436.

SEVERE WEATHER REVIEW

By Jim Richardson, WMØX

Who would have thought that we would experience another near record cool summer! As I recall, I mentioned in one of the spring newsletters that there was a possibility that the effects of El Nino may linger into the summer. This would tend to direct major storm systems generally to the south of Minnesota. This indeed was the case for the late spring period and part of the early summer. As you know, the northern plains received numerous rounds of excessive rainfall in May and early June. Heavy rain for Minnesota usually means that the jet stream is either very close to us or just to the south. Parameters more favorable for severe weather would then be focused more to the south of Minnesota. Consequently, severe weather was not very common during the spring and early summer.

The SKYWARN net was activated a few times in early June but there was not much action. Lots of heavy rain of course! I was aware of some good reports on flooding reported by some of the spotters. Southwest Minnesota was almost a hot bed of activity. To date there is still a need for people willing to be certified by the State Emergency Coordinator to train Skywarn spotters in the basics of severe weather. Also needed is Emergency Operations Center volunteers and Weather Service volunteers to man the again. The Severe Storms Center placed southwest Minnesota in a high risk of severe weather a couple of times. One case was very near the anniversary of the June 16 outbreak a year ago. There were a few small tornadoes but nothing compared to a year ago. This system approached the Twin Cities but weakened.

During the week of major flooding on the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, the Minneapolis/St. Paul office issued a couple of severe thunderstorm warnings for the metro area. I believe these may have been the first warnings of the season. There was some minor tree damage.

The heavy rain pattern for Minnesota diminished by the first part of July and the severe weather picked up a bit. Probably the most significant system to affect the Twin Cities was the downburst that roared through the Cottage Grove area. I had a chance to listen to the net for a short time that night and some good reports were coming in. A few reports from Apple Valley included tree branch size. Excellent information!

Toward the end of July and into August there were a couple more severe weather events around the Twin Cities. These were during the morning hours. A bit unusual! There was

a fair amount of tree damage in localized areas.

Elsewhere around the state, the most unfortunate severe weather event of the summer was the tornado that took two lives south of International Falls. This occurred in August. Incidentally, late July or August is probably the peak time for severe weather in northern Minnesota.

In summary, this was not a particularly active severe weather season. That accompanies a particularly cool summer. I wouldn't want to make a temperature forecast for next summer but the odds are in favor of a warmer summer. All bets are off for rainfall!

The Greater St. Louis Metro Skywarn System

By Lynn E. DeLong, NØCVI

Editor: Sometimes it's nice to know how other people do the things that we do. Lynn DeLong, NØCVI shares a look at the Skywarn Program in a tornado prone area downriver from us.

The Skywarn Program in the St. Louis Missouri Metro Area covers 20 counties in two states. The National Weather Service (NWS) for that area is located in St. Charles County and as one of the Super Offices has Doppler Radar and covers a wide area.

The 146.67 MHz repeater is used as the coordinating repeater. When the Skywarn system is activated, 2-3 members of the St. Charles County Amateur Radio Club respond to the NWS and become net control at the Weather Service. They monitor the area-wide coordination repeater.

Adjacent counties set up their own independent nets at County Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) on local repeaters, and send out their own spotters. Net controls report to Weather Service operators on the 67 repeater. One or two operators with packet provide NWS info on 144.97 Packet to the net control operators of the local area nets.

County EMS provide the overall operational direction to the Skywarn System within their county. They activate local EOCs usually before NWS has activated. County Emergency Coordinators (ECs) have paging capabilities at their homes and in their vehicles. They also can serve as net control operators from their cars and talk directly to the weather service. Pagers are used for notifying the most active volunteers. These volunteers quickly check in with the local managers and are deployed where they are needed.

Non-ham SW Observers use the Civil Defense repeater on 155 MHz for coordination. Mutual aid agreements between local units of government control the operation. Local TV Stations help by supplying information usually via telephone.

The St. Louis System works with the philosophy the "Early detection means early warning means lives saved." Local ECs can sound the sirens, activate the cable TV shutout and announce on all cable channels. They can report to the Emergency Broadcast

System and to the NWS. Sharing information is the role of Skywarn in the St. Louis Metro Area. Professionals from NWS provide both basic and advanced Skywarn training for the Skywarn Spotters.

An interesting highlight of the system is that they also operate snow emergency nets based upon weather service information. If more than four inches of snow is expected, the nets are activated and hospitals are contacted. In addition to observation reporting, hams with four-wheel drive vehicles are activated and deployed to transport key medical personnel to hospitals.

Readers needing more information should contact Gary Schuchart, N0EZH, ARRL Emergency Coordinator, St. Charles County Emergency Management Agency, Office of Civil Defense, ARES/RACES, St. Charles Amateur Radio Club, 8 Cricklewood Ln, St. Peters MO 63376.

METRO SKYWARN DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

By Bill Hughes, NØQHP

Editor: Bill Hughes is the Planning and Operations Officer for Ramsey County. He has been an Amateur Radio Operator since December 1991. He has been involved in Skywarn as a spotter since 1980 and has been an Skywarn Instructor since 1988.

The Metropolitan Skywarn Committee is now in the process of expanding! After months of meetings and work in the winter of 1992 - 1993 and during the last severe weather season local hams, law enforcement, and National Weather Service professionals have worked hard to reorganize and restructure the Program.

The Metro Skywarn Committee which acts as the governing body of the Metro Skywarn program is in the process of developing a wider base for the program to stand on. This is being done to ensure the broadest range of representation of the Twin Cities Metro area Amateur Radio community in the Skywarn Program.

This is to be accomplished with the formation of several committees that will be used to refine and restructure the workings of the Metro Skywarn System. I have the honor of serving as chair of Development Sub-Committee. This sub-committee is charged with the formation and review of bylaws for the Committee, provide a means for research, and guide the Metro Skywarn Committee in its future development.

The exact meeting schedule has not been determined but will probably be in the evenings on a monthly basis. If you wish to become a part of this exciting aspect of public service and serve on the Development Sub-Committee, you may contact me at: Ramsey County Emergency Services 3383 North Rice Street Shoreview, MN 55126 Attention: Bill Hughes or call my office at (612) 482-5238.

Metro Skywarn needs you!

The Metro Skywarn Committee needs your help in coming weeks. Here are just a few ways you can contribute:

Be a Skywarn Net Operator!

Be a Skywarn Operations Trainer!

Be an Amateur Radio Operator at the National Weather Service during Severe Weather!

Receive advanced weather training and teach basic severe weather to Skywarn Spotters!

Join the Metro Skywarn Committee and serve on one of its committees and help shape Metro Skywarn's future!

Attend the 1994 Kick Off of Metro Skywarn on January 12, 1994 7pm in Council Chambers,
Golden Valley City Hall,
Winnetka and Golden Valley Road