SCCFD's ACES: Auxiliary Communications Emergency Service

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Updated: Original

CARES mission

The mission of Cupertino ARES is to maintain and train Amateur Radio volunteers capable of providing professional emergency communications, increasing the City's emergency response effectiveness, and speeding the recovery effort.

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Working with County Fire

- History

- Introduction to the Volunteer Communications Package

- Introduction to the Auxiliary Communications Emergency Service

- What's left to do

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History

- October 2000 – SCCFD and CARES signed an MOU to do…

3. *Methods of Cooperation*

1. *Whenever there is a disaster requiring amateur radio communications, the Department will request the assistance of CARES through the Operations Section of the City. This assistance may include:*

- *Dispatching CARES members to Department Fire Stations.*

- *Establishing and maintaining portable station emergency communications between the Department stations and the EOC to handle loss of telephone services, direct links to the EOC, and passing messages from the community walk-ins.*

- *Establishing and maintaining mobile station communications between Department officials and the EOC as required (Shadows).*

- *Maintaining the continuity of communications for the duration of the emergency period or until normal communications channels are substantially restored.*

History

- October 2000 – SCCFD & CARES signed an MOU to do what is being accomplished now

- 2013 – conversations started between SCCFD & CARES to upgrade all 3 Cupertino Fire Station amateur radio equipment.

- January 2014 – SCCFD leadership approved & funded the project...
  VCP: Volunteer Communications Package
  ACES: Auxiliary Communications Emergency Service

- December 2014 – Three Cupertino Fire Station packages are built.

- July 2015 – Antenna upgrades are started.

Background

County Fire recognizes that…

- Fire stations are natural locations for the community to go to after a disaster, but…

- The fire crews will not be there:
  - Especially after an earthquake, the crews will be in the field.
  - Fire crews will do windshield surveys of their assigned area and respond to emergencies; the stations will be vacant.

- Residents will expect some kind of services at fire stations
  - They may need help, perhaps urgently

What is ACES / VCP?

Goals

- Respond to the needs of the community after the disaster strikes more effectively.

- Be ready to interact with the public at key locations (fire stations) where we can expect residents to look for help.

- Make the best use of available SCCFD facilities post disaster with Cupertino Citizen Corps volunteers.

The Project

SCCFD will:

- Purchase and install amateur radio equipment in fire stations in Cupertino.

- Organize and train Cupertino volunteers to activate and operate these radio stations during a disaster response.

CARES will:

- Help with the design and build of the communications package.

- Identify CARES members eligible for Fire Station assignments.

VCP: Volunteer Communications Package

- Upgrade amateur radio equipment at three Cupertino fire stations.

  - Kenwood TM-V71 Dual Band VHF/UHF

  - Powerwerx DB-750 Dual Band VHF/UHF Commercial Radio

  - Alinco DR-235T + KPC3

  - Antenna upgrades at all stations

- Radio package design supports portable operation.

- Use power off the grid, supports battery backup.
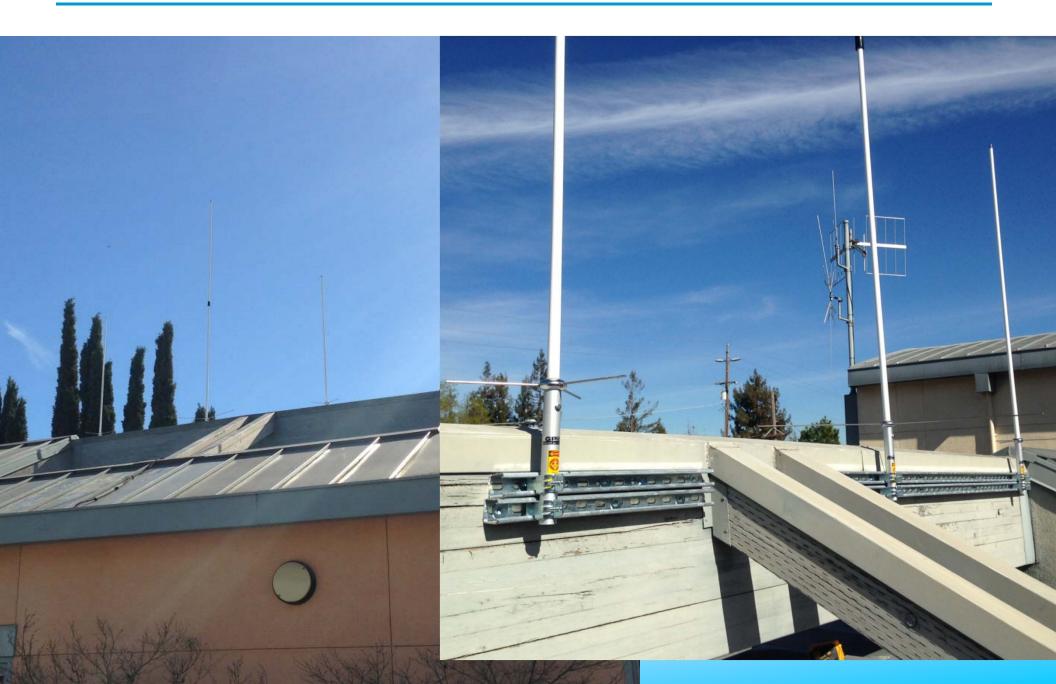
Communications Package

VCP: The Hardware

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Cupertino Station #71
VCP: The Hardware

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Seven Springs Station #72
VCP: The Hardware

Monta Vista Station #77
VCP: The Hardware

ACES: The Volunteer Program

- Organize and train CERT and RACES volunteers who will form a new and distinct volunteer group under the direction of the SCCFD *Auxiliary Communications Emergency Services (ACES).*

- Requires background check and fingerprinting of volunteers.

- Provides volunteers the means to enter and use SCCFD facilities when activated.

Considerations

- CARES and CERT are still Citizen Corps members.

- We are still operating under the authority of and responding under a City of Cupertino activation.

- ACES volunteers may be activated by County Fire (DSW details need to be worked out)

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Response Procedures
ACES: The Volunteer Program

- ACES volunteers will activate at the same time as SCCFD personnel and RACES volunteers.

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers will be part of this system.

- CERT volunteers will interact with people who come to the fire stations for help.

- RACES volunteers will manage voice and data communications equipment.

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Operating at a Fire Station

ACES: The Volunteer Program

- Fire Stations provide the volunteers a greater sense of security (we can close and lock the door if necessary).

- It's a good volunteer workplace if it's pouring down rain, cold, or hot weather.

- Other Fire Station responsibilities include (tentative):

  - Ensuring the generator is running
  - Ensuring the station is secure
  - Others?

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What's left to do

In Cupertino:

- Complete the Cupertino Fire Station antenna cabling.

- Complete the definition of the ACES Training Program.

- Recruit and train local volunteers on working in fire stations during a disaster response.

- Field Test: 21-November, CARES Communications Outage Exercise

In other SCCFD serviced cities:

- Installation of similar equipment in all SCCFD stations

    - It is now expanding to Los Altos

    - After work in those two cities is complete, the SCCFD will evaluate the project, and decide if it should be extended throughout all served cities

Thank you

Any Questions?

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