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## **American Radio Relay League Simulated Emergency Test for Benton County October 10, 2020**

Members of the Benton County ARES (BC ARES) will be participating in the ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (SET) exercise, October 10 at 10 am local time, at 1231 Hirsch Pkwy Warsaw, MO 65355.

This exercise, a local offshoot of the national ARRL SET taking place on October 3-4, “is designed to assess the skills and preparedness of Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®) volunteers, as well as those affiliated with other organizations involved with emergency and disaster response.” ~ARRL and will be used to test the real-time response and skills of amateur radio operators in Benton County.

In our county, the BC ARES pairs up each year with the Benton County Emergency Management Agency (BC MO EM call sign WB0EM) and the Benton County Community Emergency Response Team (BC MO CERT) to further test the redundant communications systems, equipment, and guidelines set in place to help provide resources during large-scale emergencies by deploying to locations in Warsaw, Lincoln, and Cole Camp. The exercise allows the EMA to gather information on weaknesses in the plan and equipment which may exist.

In 2020, members of the Camden County CERT will also join in and observe the exercise. Camden County CERT and ARES would like to run a SET in Camden County as early as 2021 and they feel observing the exercise first in a neighboring county will be a valuable learning experience.

During the SET, personnel, mobile, portable, and handheld radios, and Benton County’s Emergency Communications trailer, are deployed throughout the county to test coverage of the county’s amateur radio repeater (146.925 (-) PL 107.2). Knowing actual time it takes personnel to traverse the county and areas in it lets the EMA know how response will be if teams are needed.

This year, digital communications will also be tested for the first time during a Benton County SET. Sometimes, during large-scale emergencies, more information needs to be sent than the operator can transmit quickly over the airwaves, so access to digital communications allows an ICS-213 form to be passed via computer and radio (NOT UTILIZING THE INTERNET). On this form, long lists of supplies needed can be transferred from a shelter or other staging area back to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and those relief supplies can be deployed. This allows for easy tracking of resources for the government and amateur radio operators can provide a valuable service by passing the message!

The SET is always open to the public and the BC ARES welcomes anyone and everyone who is interested to observe the exercise! For questions, please contact Emergency Coordinator Sam Henley at 573-569-3673.