



RESPONDER

CHRISTMAS PARTY

There will not be a December Newsletter

The 2006 RESPOND Christmas party will be held Dec 2nd at the Craighead County Office of Emergency Management in the basement of the

courthouse annex. Start time is 6:30. The club will supply a meat tray, members bring side dishes, drinks and desserts. We will have Pirates Christmas so bring a \$5:00 to \$10:00

gift. Bring a bag of candy for gift bags for the kids. Bring the family and enjoy good fellowship for one and all. I hope to see everyone there.

Congratulations to new ham:

KE5KZB

John Hampton

Paragould

We extend a invitation to you to visit us at the RESPOND meetings. Come see us and bring the family. We would love to see you at the Christmas Party. Welcome to the amateur community.

AWIN ONLINE

Craighead County is online on the AWIN system. Friday morning at 7:30 this official cutover was implemented. All systems are working

as predicted, the users are sending in good reports of coverage. We have testing and configuration to finish but the system is great.

American Red Cross Clarifies Background Check Policy

NEWINGTON, CT, Nov 10, 2006 - The American Red Cross (ARC) has attempted to clarify its policy to require background checks of its employees and volunteers, at least as far as the policy applies to possible credit checks. After the ARC announced the policy in July through regional and local chapters, Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) members who support Red Cross disaster relief and recovery efforts began expressing concerns to ARRL. In some past incidents -- most notably the 2001 World Trade

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

Center terror attacks and the 2005 Hurricane Katrina response -- ARES volunteers have had to badge in as Red Cross volunteers. In a statement to the ARRL November 9, Laura Howe, the ARC's director of response communication and marketing, stressed that, while background check applicants must give permission to conduct a credit check, the ARC has no intention of conducting them across the board.

"The Red Cross realizes some volunteers may have concerns about authorizing a credit check. Those concerns are understandable," Howe said. "But please rest assured that credit checks are only run in rare instances and are not a part of the routine minimum basic check the Red Cross performs on employees or volunteers."

Howe told the League that the 2005 hurricane season exposed her organization's weakness in the area of background checks, "as evidenced by publicized examples of fraud and waste." The "standard minimum check," she said, verifies the applicant's Social Security number and a search of the National Criminal File for the past seven years.

"While the Red Cross will never run a credit check on the vast majority of its employees and volunteers," she asserted, "it is important that this standard language is included in the consent form to protect our clients, volunteers and employees." Volunteers with questions about whether a chapter might need to delve further into an applicant's background should check with the unit administrator, she said.

The ARC has contracted with MyBackgroundCheck.com LLC (MBC) in Anderson, California, to handle the on-line background checks. Prospective

volunteers visit a secure Web site, click on the ARC logo and submit name, address, Social Security number (or other acceptable government ID), telephone number, and date of birth. MBC notifies the applicant's local Red Cross chapter whether or not the individual passed the background check, but it does not share any personal data.

In a statement October 24, ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, urged ARES and other ham radio volunteers to tread cautiously and read very carefully what they are giving MBC permission to collect on behalf of the Red Cross, especially given the wide net being cast. Howe acknowledged that by signing the consent form, applicants do give MBC permission to "conduct a credit check or other investigation into an individual's background." ARES members are not obliged to submit to a background check, however; the choice to do so is a personal one.

Several ARES leaders maintain that they and their volunteers represent ARES when supporting the ARC as a served agency. "Our issue is not the background checking, but the fact ARC considers ARES members ARC volunteers," one ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator told ARRL Headquarters. An ARES District Emergency Coordinator suggested the ARC policy is too arbitrary. "The unfortunate thing is that if a member decides not to submit to this check, then that will hamper our ability to serve the Red Cross in an emergency," he said.

ARRL Field and Educational Services Manager Dave Patton, NN1N -- whose department supports and oversees the ARRL Field Organization -- believes the Red Cross stands to lose a fair number of volunteers because of the

requirement -- and not necessarily just ARES volunteers. One national Red Cross official who asked not to be identified said the organization fears it's seeing "the beginning of a hemorrhage of hams" from supporting ARC operations.

The Statement of Understanding (SoU) between the ARC and the ARRL does not address the issue of background checks. It also is ambiguous on the subject of whether ARES volunteers automatically become ARC volunteers when supporting Red Cross operations and subject to a background check. The bottom line: The requirement extends to whomever the Red Cross says it does. While some Red Cross chapters will allow ARES member participation without requiring that they register as Red Cross volunteers, others will not. One West Coast Red Cross chapter official said the ARC considers ARES members as "non-registered volunteers" and, as such, they were not required to submit to background checks. In other locales, the same volunteers staff ARES and Red Cross organizations. The ARRL-ARC SoU is up for review in 2007.

The ARC's new policy "is a positive action," Howe told ARRL, and aimed at raising public confidence and trust in the organization's volunteers and workers. "The Red Cross certainly values its employees and volunteers, and our background check process is not intended to be a burden to those who play a vital role in our relief efforts," she said. "We believe that in order to maintain the trust of the American people and provide them with the best quality service, all Red Cross employees and volunteers must undergo background checks according to standards being implemented across the entire organization."

CERT CLASSES

We are trying to locate people interested in being a part of the CERT program. We have a local CERT train the trainer class in progress of being formed. If you are interested in the CERT program or would like to help teach the classes please contact me. David Moore N5MOT.

The Train the trainer class will most likely be on a Friday afternoon and Saturday and Sunday.

Initially, CERT programs were developed to assist communities in taken care of themselves in the aftermath of a major disaster when first responders are overwhelmed or unable to respond because of communication or transportation difficulties. As the CERT concept has taken hold across the country, however, CERTs have become much more than originally envisioned. CERTs have proven themselves to be an active and vital part of their communities' preparedness and response capability. For example, CERTs have been used to:

- 1 Distribute and/or install smoke alarms and batteries to the elderly and disabled.
- 2 Assist with evacuations and traffic control.
- 3 Promote community awareness of potential hazards and preparedness measures.
- 4 Supplement staffing at special events, such as parades.
- 5 Act as victims in training exercises.

CERTs are an investment of local government's time and resources.

To capitalize on this investment, program sponsors can view CERT members as a volunteer resource that can assist with public safety activities. Such an approach will actively involve members in serving their communities beyond disaster response and add value to the CERT program.

The best source of help in an emergency or disaster is the paid or volunteer professional responder. But, if they are not available to address immediate life-saving needs or to protect property, CERT members can help. CERTs are not intended to replace a community's response capability, but rather, to serve as an important supplement to it.

The agency sponsoring the CERT program is creating a volunteer resource that is part of the community's operational capability following a disaster. That agency should develop training standards for CERT personnel and protocols for their activation and use.

CERT members must keep their safety in mind as their first priority. CERT volunteers must know their capabilities and the limitations of their training and equipment and work within those limitations.

CERTs do NOT:

- 1 Suppress large fires.
- 2 Enter structures that they consider heavily damaged and dangerous (e.g., leaning or moved from

foundation).

3 Perform hazardous materials cleanup or respond to incidents involving radiological, chemical, or biological agents.

4 Perform medical, fire, or search and rescue operations beyond their level of training.

5 Activate or deploy unless called for in their procedures.

CERTs are considered "Good Samaritans" and covered under the Volunteer Protection Act. CERT volunteers do not have any authority beyond serving as "Good Samaritan" when helping others.

When deployed appropriately, however, CERTs can complement and enhance first-response capability in neighborhoods and workplaces by ensuring the safety of themselves and their families working outward to the neighborhood or office and beyond until first responders arrive. CERTs can then assist first-response personnel as directed.

David Moore N5MOT

Craighead County OEM

933-4575

dmoore@craigheadcounty.org



Check out our listing offers and Online Store Features at hosting.academicsolutions.com
store.academicsolutions.com

"Your Information Technology Department"
Business Technology Consulting
Server/System Sales & Service
Web Design & Hosting

J. Kevin Watkins, owner
1014 University Road
Jensville, AR 72491
Voice: 870-822-2176
Fax: 870-822-7144
jkv@academicsolutions.com
<http://www.academicsolutions.com>



RESPOND of Arkansas, Inc.
PO Box 1672
State University, AR 72467



THE RESPOND WEB PAGE IS LOCATED AT
WWW.NELSONPRINTING.ORG/-RESPOND



MEETING PLACE: EOC 511 UNION NOV 20th 7:00 PM

Christmas Party December 2nd 511 Union

The Amateur Creed The Radio Amateur is...

CONSIDERATE...never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

LOYAL...offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, and the American Radio League, through which Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally and internationally.

PROGRESSIVE...with knowledge abreast of science, a well-built and efficient station and operating above reproach.

FRIENDLY...slow and patient operating when requested; friendly advice and counsel to the beginner; kindly assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the hallmarks of the amateur spirit.

BALANCED...radio is a avocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school, or community.

PATRIOTIC...station and skill always ready for service to country and community

What's Happening

Time & Temp Plus Recorded Community News Items
Dial 935-6100
Personalized Children's Books
Great Gifts For Your Favorite Little Boy or Girl
N.E. Ark. Message Service - K15FC
Phone 935-5242 or 1-800-264-1105

Business Solutions
by iWork

Check out our hosting offers and Online Store Features at:
hosting.usbizsolutions.com
store.usbizsolutions.com

"Your Information Technology Department"
Business Technology Consulting
Server/System Sales & Service
Web Design & Hosting

J. Kevin Watkins, owner
1014 Barkership Road
Jonesboro, AR 72401
Voice 870-332-2198
Fax 870-331-7141
kevin@usbizsolutions.com
<http://usbizsolutions.com>

Microsoft
CERTIFIED
partner

