What Ham radio can do!

Our motto: When all else fails Amateur Radio is there!

Here are three examples of how members of (PRCA) Prairie Region Communication Association have helped in our region.

2007 Members of the PRCA participated in a Home Land Security drill in the badlands of ND. The drill simulated a terrorist attack using a plane crossing from Canada and crash landed in the badlands. In attendance was, Home land security, Boarder Patrol, FBI, US Army, National Guard, State Police, ND EOC, local police and fire departments.

PRCA roll was to be objective observers providing feedback on the drill. The drill was to start at 8am with a pre organization meeting at 6am. A problem soon developed, the location was so remote no cell phone or state radio worked in the area and with the wide arrange of agencies attending the different groups could not communicate with each other because their assigned frequency. The indent commander actually considered canceling the drill at 10 minutes to 8 to avoid a major failure. Charley Russell, Dickey County Emergency manager and a member of PRCA call sign (kc5zch) had everyone in the drill change their radios to a national fire channel. He then called us on his ham radio and we activated a portable repeater we had with us. We cross banded the fire channel to the repeater channel and the drill was on. PRCA was recognized nationally for their role in the drill.

During the 2009 Fargo ND Flood. The ND Governor requested help from the SD Governor. He asks if the SD Highway Patrol could help with the possible evacuation of Fargo. The problem was the SD patrol could not talk to ND patrol and they could not reach Pierre from Fargo. Members of PRCA were dispatched by SD EOC to Fargo and with help from ND hams set up a repeater / cross band system to connect the two agencies for local communication and set up a direct connection to Pierre using IRLP and HF frequencies. Luckily the flood did not require Fargo’s evacuation.

2011 Oaks ND AM radio station KDDR 1220 transmitting tower was destroyed by a thunder storm. KDDR is the main weather warning radio station for the Oaks area. The estimate time for a replacement tower was 6 months. Dickey County Emergency Manager requested assistance from any and all agency to get KDDR back on the air. SD State EOC called the PRCA and asked what we could do. Bryan Anderson (kc0myx) a member of PRCA took his portable tower and lots of antenna wire to Oaks. We used an antenna math formula and had the information run through a computer program to analyze the site. We set up a long wire antenna about 35 feet in the air and over 400 feet long to replace the vertical antenna tower that was destroyed. We had them on the air within 24 hours and the portable tower was on loan until the new tower was ready.