

Date: January 9, 2019

To: Rod Blocksome K0DAS, Chairman, Programs and Service Committee

From: Public Services Enhancement Working Group (PSEWG)

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Subject: Year-End Report

Our charge: "... to conduct a pragmatic review of ARRL's public service program elements; identify opportunities as well as gaps that could benefit from improvement, modernization etc.; and finally, provide findings and suggestions to ARRL's Programs and Services Committee for consideration."

The PSEWG concentrated its efforts towards the completion of the ARES Strategic Plan in 2018.

To summarize, the existing ARES program has several severe shortfalls which over the past 30 months have been reviewed and evaluated by PSEWG. Those include but are not limited to the following:

1. Lack of uniform training standards.
2. No standards for qualifications to serve.
3. Inadequate credentialing.
4. No method of certifying and group's skill set
5. No method of establishing any group's capacity to handle a given load.
6. No method of determining any group's capabilities.
7. No complete method of registering ARES members.
8. Inadequate reporting of activities by ECs.

The Draft Plan was sent to a Peer Review Team of selected and experienced SMs and SECs for their review and evaluation. Their suggestions were included in the Plan.

In early 2018 four presentations were made to field Organization gatherings to introduce the planned restructuring of ARES. Those were held at the Ohio Section Conference in Columbus, the Washington State Communications Academy in Seattle, the Michigan Communications Interoperability Conference in Traverse City and the Dayton Hamvention. These were planned to give exposure to the proposed changes and gather response from the Field Organization. Using the feedback received, the PSEWG continued the review of the ARES strategic Plan and included several of the suggestions.

A completed draft of the ARES Strategic Plan was presented to the Programs and Service Committee in July and PSC offered its support for the Plan. At the request of the Board of Directors, the PSEWG was tasked with conducting a survey of the Field Organization to gather their comments on the new Plan and report at the January Board Meeting. Each Section Manager and Section Emergency Coordinator was provided with a copy of the proposed Strategic Plan and provided with the opportunity to offer comments, suggestions and recommendations. The process was begun in early August with a set completion date of October 31. This allowed the SMs and SECs to discuss the Plan with their staff members and local ECs.

PSEWG received comments from 51 of our 71 Sections and the compiled comments covered 125 pages. Each and every comment was reviewed by the Working Group and an action plan implemented. There were many duplicate suggestions, some offerings had received consideration early in the planning stages and a few ruled unworkable for various reasons. Some excellent editorial suggestions were presented to make the Plan language more readable. We were pleased that many offered favorable comments on the plan.

Of import, the planned requirement for training with FEMA IS 300 and 400 were determined to be too difficult for many regions of the country and too difficult to schedule and costly for attendance, so the FEMA no-cost Leadership Training Courses are to replace the IS 300/400 courses. Much note was taken of the costs of the ARRL provided IS-001 and IS-016 courses. In discussion with HQ staff and the Administration and Finance Committee, the cost of these courses was eliminated for registered ARES Participants, thus eliminating a very serious "Pay-to-Play" objection.

Reviewing shortcomings 7 & 8 during 2017, PSEWG conducted a search for suitable for suitable reporting methodologies that would solve these problems and several others:

1. Provide adequate information storage
2. Allow a full membership database to be developed
3. Allow remote field entry
4. Allow HQ access to database
5. Insure membership security
6. Allow automate reporting
7. Be Internet accessible
8. Allow database download and/or offline operation by local ECs
9. Provide adequate user training.

"ARES Connect" is the result of that effort and the systems was acquired and HQ Staff implemented the program during CY 2018. Administrator and user training continues at this writing.

Attached to this report are the completed ARES Strategic Plan as amended as well as an Executive Summary. The PSEWG asks for your review and endorsement of the Plan and a motion before the Board of Directors for their approval.

Respectfully submitted,



Dale R. Williams WA8EFK  
Chair

Public Service Enhancement Working Group

Encl: ARES Strategic Plan  
Executive Summary