

Colorado ARES® District 24 – Douglas and Elbert Counties

After Action Report



Date of report: 8/8/09

Mission Coordinator: Perry Lundquist, W6AUN

Name and Date of activity: Operation Shady Brook, July 22 through July 24

Operational Period(s): 4

Served Agencies: Salvation Army, YMCA Camp Shady Brook

Number of ARES D24 Participants: 10

ARES D24 Participants (Name and Callsigns):

Eric Freund, KOEWF
Flint Gatrell, NOFHG
Jase Feichko, KD0EXJ
Rob Rude, KORAR
Dirk Malsch, N2PDQ
David Lowe, KCOKCE
Tom Lane, KOVKM
Peter Gallanis, KOPTG
Dave Cook, KCOMHT
Perry Lundquist, W6AUN

Person Hours of D24 Service: 122.5 hours (19.5 hours in travel)

Description/Objectives of the event:

On Wednesday July 22 at 1730, ARES D24 received a request from the Salvation Army (Gerry Singer, KC0CAT) to provide communications support in the Deckers area of the Rampart Range Mountains on the western edge of Douglas County. The prior Monday night had brought damaging winds and rain to the Denver Metro area and also caused a mudslide in the Deckers area that took out the kitchen at Camp Shady Brook YMCA camp with 260 youth campers.

Because the camp had no ability to prepare meals, the Salvation Army was called in to provide canteen and feeding services for the camp. Deckers is known to be a challenging location to provide communications for because it is surrounded by mountains and sits in the South Platt River Valley.

ARES District 24 deployed 2 operators that evening and assisted with the setup of the Salvation Army canteen vehicle as well as established communications via UHF repeater back to Mike Gelski, the Salvation Army's Emergency Manager for Colorado. District 24 continued to operate shifts of 2 deployed operators plus a net control for Thursday and Friday with operations ending on Friday afternoon.

How were the ARES D24 Objectives Met?

Salvation Army SATURN provided a 15 portable tower at the site and D24 members tried a variety of antennas finally finding that a 3-element Cushcraft dual-band beam worked better than a Diamond X50 for this purpose. We also found that in this situation more height wasn't necessarily better; at one point in the incident communications worked best when the tower was up 20 feet instead of 50 feet. D24 was able to achieve reliable communication to Denver, but sometimes had to switch repeaters and/or bands.

What went well?

Coordination of ARES D24 volunteers, willingness of those who volunteer to go the extra mile and our net procedures.

What needs improvement?

Need to review and improve District 24 activation notification procedures.

Suggestions for additional training:

Could use additional net control training.