



The REACTer

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***A tornado rakes an Oklahoma City suburb
during this Spring’s rash of
killer whirlwinds***

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From the President by Charles A. "Chuck" Thompson

Getting the Word to Uncle Charlie

REACT International is supporting positions on two separate matters currently before the Federal Communications Commission.

One is a petition asking for resumption of group GMRS licensing for nonprofit public service organizations, and additional privileges for grandfathered group licenses. There is an explanation of this petition by Executive Vice President Bob Leef elsewhere in this *REACTer* (see page 6). This is an important request that could be of great benefit to *REACT* Teams, and we strongly encourage all councils, Teams, and members to let the FCC know our your support. (Because of the timing of *the REACTer*, the original comment period may have expired – file a comment, or reply, anyway. It can still have an influence).

Perhaps even more important, though, to *REACT* and all public service radio organizations, is the ARRL's current campaign to limit the expansion of "Broadband over Power Lines" (BPL). Simply put, this is another means of bringing the Internet to users (others are DSL, cable, satellite, wireless over cell phones, perhaps more) by imposing the signal on ordinary electrical power lines.

Part 15 of FCC regulations currently authorizes this service, but the FCC has issued Notice of Inquiry 03-104, available at <<http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs/public/attachmatch/FCC-03-100A1.doc>>. This NOI asks how BPL should be regulated and says that the FCC wants to remove regulatory hurdles to deployment of BPL.

The problem is that ARRL and other studies show that increased use of BPL could literally wipe out many ham bands, and also the Citizens Band Radio Service. There are some permitted uses now which may interfere with a particular frequency or frequencies in a limited area, but BPL has the potential of interfering with entire frequency bands (2 to 3 MHz wide) in very large areas. In a nutshell, entire HF bands could be made unusable for everyone within 30 meters (about 100 feet) of an electric

power line being used for BPL.

And, guess what – electric power companies are among the leaders of those who want to decrease regulation, and increase their use, of BPL!

Many, perhaps most, *REACTers* will not have the technical expertise to understand the specific issues involved here. I urge those to read available materials on BPL, and to file comments with the FCC stating, at the very least "I support the positions of the ARRL and *REACT* International with respect to loosening regulation of BPL."

Those, however, who are technically qualified, I urge to file more complex comments, citing studies, experience, etc.

I recommend that comments to the FCC include several statements (slightly modified for use by *REACTers*):

- Amateur and CB radio are valuable resources that must be preserved.
- Describe the use you make of amateur and CB radio in public service.
- The present Part 15 limits can already allow very strong interference levels.
- BPL systems that radiate on wide swatches of spectrum and that occupy entire neighborhoods should have lower emission limits than those localized systems such as switch-mode power supplies or electric motors.
- There are alternatives to BPL that are available in urban and rural areas.
- The Commission should protect licensed users of Amateur radio and public service uses of CB radio.

Technical articles on BPL can be read at <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/files/C63NovPLC.pdf>>; or at <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/#Amateur_Interference_Studies>. There is also an interesting video at <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/loc/#Video>>.

Continued on page 15

From the Executive Vice-President

by R. K. Leef

An Award for US!

Since the first Radio Hero Award made by *REACT* and co-sponsors Cobra and *Popular Communications Magazine* in 2001, there has been no other person suggested. This was started as an annual award, but we need your continued tips about non-*REACT*ers who should be considered.

Those eligible are U.S. and Canadian citizens 18 years and older. There is also a junior category for ages 5 through 17. The latter class was established in response to numerous cases of important help rendered by young people using FRS radios.

The Radio Hero Award was established to recognize individuals who use two-way radios (CB, FRS, and GMRS) to save a life, prevent major injury or property damage, or give direct assistance in the apprehension of wanted criminals. All you need to do is inform *REACT* International with brief details. You will then be contacted for more information. A newspaper account is helpful, but not required.

Chuck Thompson, President of RI, has stated "This is an idea that is overdue, and *REACT* is very happy for the acceptance and generous support of our concept by the co-sponsors".

The first award was given to a person in recognition of having used his radio in the capture

of two suspected murderers. (They were subsequently convicted). The recipient received a new radio and antenna from Cobra, free subscription to *Popular Communications*, and plaque from RI.

Please keep your ears open, and antennas up, to give us tips.

The Radio Hero Award is for non-*REACT* members. How about an award for us *REACT*ers?

As you know, we already have the "REACTer of the Year" award, sponsored by K-40, given for overall performance. What we need is an award that focuses exactly on the best examples of our mission – the emergency calls we handle.

Since last year we have been working on a plan to establish this kind of recognition for our members. Recently Midland Radio Corporation and *Popular Communications Magazine* also saw the concept as a way to promote personal communications, and have agreed to co-sponsor this award. Midland will donate a radio of the winner's choice from their consumer line, and *Popular Communications* will provide a year's free subscription to their great monthly magazine.

The "PopComm/Midland Listens Award" will be given to one member who has used his radio to handle the most impor-

tant single emergency reported to *REACT* International during the period covered. It is open to all members who monitor two-way radios of any type. The winning member must have answered the call and taken action that resulted in saving a life, prevented injury or major property damage, or given assistance in a significant way that is the best example of our mission statement. A newspaper account of the incident would be helpful, but is not required.

We are very pleased to announce that this award will be given twice yearly. Incidents need to be reported to RI from January 1 through June 30, and July 1 through December 31. The story will appear in *the REACTer*, and we plan to inform other media.

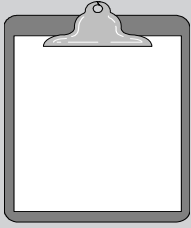
Now is the time to start on this! Think about a really important call you or another team member took since January 1, 2003, that may qualify, and send us the following information:

*Your name and address;
Team's name and address

*Name and address of the person who took the call

*Details of the call: When was it taken, what was the emergency, how was it handled?

Mail the information to *REACT* Headquarters, or e-mail it to <react@reactintl.org>.



Report from Headquarters

by Norman Kaplan,
Treasurer, *REACT* International

What You Did -- and Didn't Do -- Last Year

If you are reading this article, *REACT* International, Inc., and the postal service recognize this address as yours.

If on the other hand a member of your Team who should be reading this article did not receive their *REACTer*, the member has either an incorrect address at *REACT* International or the post office is not delivering their mail. Anyone who moves or a Team who knows of a member's new address should send *REACT* International the new address. Part of each member's yearly identification card has a place for change of address updates.

Each time a *REACTer* is returned for an incorrect address, one of two things happens: 1) the post office updates the address and returns the corrected address to *REACT*, the address gets updated in the data base, and the member misses one issue of *the REACTer*; or 2) the post office returns *the REACTer* with no change of the address and the member no longer receives *the REACTer* until their address gets corrected.

Each time the post office returns a *REACTer* it costs RI seventy cents. Last year it cost *REACT* International \$642.30,

which is paid out of your dues. Please forward any change of the address to *REACT* International headquarters in Suitland, Md. (The address is in the box on page 1 of every *REACTer*.)

Each year as *REACT* International sends the renewal forms, it also sends out a monitoring report for the previous year so we can keep track of the work done by the individual Teams. Thirty-seven of 258 renewing Teams out of 297 Teams at the end of last year have returned the monitoring information report form.

As of June 9, 2003, we received the 2002 Yearly Monitoring reports from the following Teams:

C053, C057, C109, C149, C204, C256, C273, C320, C324, C336, C412, C633, 2106, 2424, 2515, 2620, 2627, 2804, 3030, 3038, 4096, 4566, 4650, 4747, 4960, 4975, 4979, 4985, 4987, 6003, 6009, 6028, 6030, 6047, 6054, 6128 and 6264.

Please note, for the monitoring statistics turned in, *REACTers* monitored more hours on Citizens Band than any other radio service. The Teams monitored 112,881.55 hours on Citizen Band frequencies (mostly Channel 9); 66,512.50 hours on General Mobile Radio Service

frequencies; 18,215.60 hours on Amateur Radio frequencies; 5,725.20 hours on Other frequencies; and 2,114.25 hours on Undefined frequencies. Our members spent 14,850.70 hours on Community Events, 400.00 hours on Disaster Activities, 26,270.41 hours on non-*REACT* Group Activities, and 8,322.75 hours in Meetings and Training for a Total of 256,080.96 hours doing *REACT* activities.

You deserve to give yourself a hand for a job well done. Teams monitored from 74 to 39,980.50 hours depending on the size of the Team. Obviously, if *REACT* International heard from the rest of the Teams, these numbers would be significantly larger.

The reporting Teams handled 2,682 calls for help, including 583 accident calls (including 18 fatality accidents), 98 reckless drivers, 515 stalled vehicles, 362 traffic problems (including 109 traffic jams), 560 information calls, 34 car fires, 18 boating accidents or problems, 29 crime calls, 175 weather calls, 14 flooding, 28 medical, 50 non-car fires, 23 missing persons, 4 vandalism calls, 147 personal calls and 42 other calls not described.

Is *your* Team listed in this report?

'Floods' Test Team's Disaster Preparedness

by Carolyn Mosby
Blackberry (Calif.) *REACT*

January 25th, 2003, at 2:00 pm in Mountain View, California, while the San Francisco Peninsula was basking in warm sunshine, the call went out to activate the City Office of Emergency Services (OES) due to "widespread flooding from torrential rains." The exercise began...

This was the first time Blackberry *REACT* had been directly involved with a government-initiated drill with ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services) and RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services). Blackberry *REACT* has worked bicycle events using amateur radio frequencies and has worked with amateur radio groups in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, but we were now officially in "emergency response mode."

Most Blackberry members have had a Disaster Service Workers card for Santa Clara County, which is a requirement to be called out for any type of emergency. Mountain View Emergency Coordinator Jerry Haag contacted Blackberry's emergency contact, Vice President Phil Henderson, who put the Team's phone tree into use and reported to the communication van garaged at Fire Station Four.

According to the exercise scenario, a strong winter storm had struck with high winds, lightning and extremely heavy rains. Trees had fallen, possibly affecting Steven's Creek and Permanente Creeks. Jerry chose sixteen potential flood locations and three population centers to check, and identified two available shelters to send possible evacuees. Since this was an localized incident, it was assumed telephone service remained operational.

Three Blackberry members reported to Mountain View OES within fifteen minutes. While one member stayed to work with Mountain View ARES, the other two reported to and activated the Blackberry Communication Van. Five more members reported to Blackberry Net Control at Fire Station Four within the next twenty minutes, some coming several miles.

At this point, Blackberry was asked by Mountain View OES to check out specific areas
July-August, 2003



Team President Jon Mosby and Dave Ellison discuss strategy while Vice Pres. Phil Henderson takes a message at the Blackberry comm van. (Photo: Frank Weiss)

where local creeks are known to have flood problems. Blackberry dispatched members to various locations that had been pre-planned by the OES.

When the members arrived at the correct location, they were to locate and read a message that had been posted at that point. Since Blackberry had the capability of using GMRS, it was used so as not to interfere with the Mountain View ARES amateur frequency communications. Blackberry Net Control communicated with Team members in the field using GMRS while communicating with Mountain View OES on amateur radio.

After about 90 minutes, Blackberry *REACT* was advised to stand down by Mountain View OES; the exercise was over. Several members went to the debriefing at the Mountain View EOC where lessons learned were shared.

Some of Blackberry's lessons were to speak more slowly when reporting and to give and receive messages verbatim. While we have always kept a log of our radio traffic, message handling needs to be concise and accurate in this type of situation or event.

Our GMRS radios worked well, but when Net Control determined that communications were weak or partially unreadable, the field person needed to be directed to another location to transmit their information.

REACT has a definite advantage in being able to communicate on many different radio frequencies. We often serve as the communications hub during exercises and events. *REACT* could promote this flexibility and ensure that as many options as possible are exercised so they are available and familiar to everyone when they are needed.

For now, Blackberry plans to expand sharing events and exercises with amateur groups in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The next time a winter storm strikes – whether it's real or another exercise – we'll be ready!

REACT Tries Again

by R. K. Leef

If at first you don't succeed...

President Bush and many other leaders have asked citizens to take part in volunteerism and homeland security, but groups that do this must have good communications to effectively carry out their activities. The purpose of our attached petition to the Federal Communications Commission is to permit licensing of volunteer emergency service organizations in the General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS), within the guidelines mentioned. It also asks to allow these and grandfathered organization licensees to use all available GMRS frequencies.

Everyone who reads the newspaper and watches television news knows about two recurring communications problems:

1. Difficulty of interoperability
2. Overloading of normal communications modes

Volunteer emergency service organizations, with members who have their own individual GMRS license and radio, have proved valuable at the September 11 disasters, the Oklahoma City bombing, and numerous other incidents of violent weather and emergency situations throughout the country for many years. Now, many more volunteers are coming forward to join organized groups.

However, the FCC's required \$75 fee for a GMRS license is a deterrent to many more people volunteering when they already have the expense of buying a radio to provide their service. In some cases, \$75 is more

than the cost of their radio.

A GMRS license issued to the organization to which they belong would allow more people to join and take part in organized activities to benefit the community and country without additional expense. Organizations typically also provide training that would be an asset to government agencies when volunteers are called for, or just to their neighborhood.

Four additional benefits of having more volunteers able to use GMRS radios through an organization license would be:

1. Better interoperability with other volunteer groups through their organization license
2. Another mode to lessen overload that always occurs on normal communications channels during major emergencies.
3. Better upward radio communications and coordination with agencies through the long-range capability of GMRS.

4. Better downward radio communications and coordination with the public through very short-range Family Radio Service (FRS) radios that share 7 GMRS frequencies.

With reference to number 4, there are approximately 13 million of these unlicensed very short-range FRS units being sold annually. Although conceived as a family convenience item, the public is becoming aware that these small handheld battery operated radios are a tremendous resource. They are becoming a tool for coordination in the neighborhood during times of emergency, and also to disseminate useful information.

Volunteer networks have been formed around the country, with good examples in such diverse areas as Washington, DC, and Costa Mesa, California. However, only being able to realistically cover about one-half mile or less, they must depend on the licensed user of a GMRS radio to

with the FCC

give and receive information beyond that range. In the California example, there is a tiered level of radio integration from FRS to GMRS (and sometimes Amateur) to government agencies. Several magazine articles have been published about the successful system in California.

All *REACT* members should express their support *now* for this petition that was received at the FCC on May 15, 2003. This may be accomplished by mailing a letter to :

Federal Communications
Commission
Attn: Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
448 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554

Your letter should refer to the petition to amend GMRS license eligibility, received May 15, 2003. Even if your Team isn't presently using GMRS, and even if you have written in support of previous petitions on this issue, your support is needed. (Please send a copy of your letter of support to *REACT* Headquarters in Suitland, MD.)

The Petition

Before the Federal Communications Commission
Received at FCC May 15, 2003

Re: Petition for Rulemaking
In the matter of

Amendment of 47CFR Part 95, Regarding GMRS license eligibility.

BACKGROUND

The General Mobile Radio Service is a licensed two-way radio service utilized by a diverse group of individuals for communications relating to their activities. Since its inception, GMRS has undergone many changes by the Federal Communications

All organizational applicants are at an unfair disadvantage in the General Mobile Radio Service

Commission concerning who may use it, types of use, license fee, what frequencies, etc.

Until a few years ago, "businesses" were granted a GMRS license, as were individuals. Then in one of its numerous revisions, the FCC ruled to not accept applications from "businesses" any more. In the process of eliminating this type of user, organizations were categorized as a "business," and also disqualified from obtaining a new GMRS license. Many of these organizations were and are non-profit public service types.

In another ruling, existing non-business and non-organization licensees (individuals) were given use of all GMRS frequencies instead of one or two that all licensees had previously been restricted to. However, pre-existing businesses (including organizations) were still limited to one or two frequencies specified on their "grandfathered" license.

Although designed by name for "General" use, GMRS has lately been considered by FCC to be an individual/personal radio service by eliminating businesses and organizations from current licensing. (This in spite of another FCC decision that family and relatives are now included in a license for an individual). It is clear that with all the changes in GMRS rules made by the Commission, there has been a lot of uncertainty and flexibility over the years concerning the best use of these frequencies.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

1. "Individual" users are granted a license for \$75 that actually covers most members of the extended family, and are allowed to operate with the same call-sign on all GMRS frequencies. Their permitted communications can be personal and business/organiza-

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REACT TEAMS UP IN NEW MEXICO...



By Eric Hutchins, Unit 1
Rio Grande Valley RE-
ACT

The Torch Run is a series of torch relays in which law enforcement officers carry the Special Olympics "Flame of Hope" more than a thousand miles across New Mexico every year to the opening ceremonies of the State Summer Games.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run is the largest grassroots fund-raising program in our nation that benefits Special Olympics. What began in 1981 as a local event to enhance the image of the Wichita, Kansas, Police Department is now a series of relay runs involving law enforcement personnel from fifty states, the District of Columbia, and several foreign countries.

This year's New Mexico Law Enforcement Torch Run participants converged on Albuquerque from the four corners of the state on Friday, May 30th. Rio Grande Valley REACT was there to help coordinate the timing re-

quired by the several publicity events taking place as the runners made their way into the University of New Mexico Track and Field Stadium from the outskirts of Albuquerque. All runners are volunteers from law enforcement agencies within the state.

Escorted by various local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, and with a REACT unit shadowing, the runners had such detours as a jog through Albuquerque Stadium, during a baseball game. Steven Lindquist, Rio 2 and event coordinator for the third year, had the daunting task of coordinating with the Stadium Director when the run-through would take place. Using his eight years of experience as a REACTer, he got the runners there twenty minutes ahead of schedule and accordingly helped adjust the planning for the run-through. The runners received a standing ovation from the crowd

on hand to watch Albuquerque's AA baseball team, the Isotopes.

The next task was to have the participants stage in pre-determined order, and to ensure they proceeded into the stadium at the proper times and intervals, for the procession through UNM Track and Field Stadium for the lighting of the torch, which officially started the 2003 Summer season of Special Olympics in New Mexico.

Rio Grande Valley REACT would like to thank the following amateur radio operators for their invaluable assistance: Duane Schneider, KC8HDE, Tom Ellis, K5TEE from the Albuquerque Amateur Radio Club and Bob Lah, KD5HAW.

As in past years, Rio Grande Valley REACT received praise from the Special Olympics, the Albuquerque Police Department, the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department and the New Mexico State Police. In addition, Rio Grande Valley REACT will be listed next year as an Official Sponsor, with Team information placed on literature and our logo on the event t-shirts.



WITH SPECIAL AND OKLAHOMA



OLYMPICS

By Dale Ellis,
Oklahoma County
REACT,
& Gayland Kitch,
University of Oklahoma
REACT

Where do you get over 8,100 athletes, 1,500 coaches, 2,500 volunteers, 1,250 families, and over 100 sponsors? If you said “The Olympics” you would be partly correct, if you said “The Oklahoma Special Olympics” you would be correct. With that number of athletes, Oklahoma ranks as the 23rd largest program in North America.

At the track and field event held recently in Norman, Oklahoma, the Central Oklahoma *REACT* Teams (University of Oklahoma *REACT* and Oklahoma County *REACT*) were there providing communications support to the events as they took place on the field. Members provided communications from the starting and finish lines to the main activity control point. They also provided basic safety and security for the athletes and attendees. With so many athletes wanting to participate in all the events it takes the cooperation and coordination of many volunteers and several communicators to make it a success. Oklahoma *REACT* Teams are a big part of this success.

The University of Okla-

homa *REACT* Team has worked the Area 1 (“Boomer Sooner Area”) track meet for over twenty years. In later years we’ve often been assisted by Oklahoma County *REACT*.

We typically use 8-10 people to assist the leaders of the meet. We’ll post one person in the press box with the PA announcer; have one or two shadowing key personnel; have one at the staging area; one in the softball throw area; and have two persons working each running area (start and finish lines on both sides of the track).

We’ve thought that with the advent of leaders bringing their own radios from their schools that perhaps our role might diminish; however, we’ve found that the leaders typically don’t want to actively listen and prefer to have someone else listening for them.

In fact, the head starter has stated that he doesn’t want a radio; instead, he wants a *REACT*er.

In the early years, we had a great reputation

for fixing problems. For instance, one year the PA system was locked and there was no hope of access. A local celebrity was scheduled to lead the Special Olympian Creed. With the PA system inaccessible, panic ensued among the meet directors. *REACT* came to the rescue, driving a member’s vehicle onto the field at the last minute and allowing the celebrity to use the PA system in the car.

Oklahoma *REACT* members team up to work the Special Olympics track meet, which sometimes means sitting at a controlled-access gate for hours at a time. (Photo: Austin Kitch)





Go **Commercial** for Better **Communications!**

**by Matt Anderson, KD5KNZ
President, Southeast Louisiana REACT**

Many REACT members are familiar with the General Mobile Radio Services (GMRS) and they have often relied on these frequencies as a means of communication for their Team's activities. When the FCC changed the GMRS rules to prohibit new (or modifications to) non-individual GMRS licenses, many groups were forced to look for alternatives.

The Private Land Mobile Radio Service (PLMRS) offers an alternative licensed communication service that would serve the needs of most Teams. Many businesses, government agencies, and other organizations are currently licensed under the PLMRS, which is covered by Part 90 of the FCC rules. From public safety to private contractors – these users rely on the business radio service every day. REACT Teams can be licensed for frequencies in the Business / Industrial Pool. These frequencies can be found in several bands – 30-50 MHz, 150-174 MHz, 450-470 MHz, and 800/900 MHz.

Equipment

New and used equipment can be purchased from many sources, from your local radio shop to E-Bay. Since many public safety agencies are moving to 800 MHz and many private users are switching to Nextel, Teams should be able to locate equipment at little or no cost.

Several years ago, Travis County (Tex.) REACT acquired the use of a repeater system at no cost; the owner had converted his fleet to a different radio system. The donated system provides county-wide coverage for their events and the system owner had a potential tax deduction for his donation.

Many GMRS radios are also certified for Part 90 operations. You can check the FCC Web site at <www.fcc.gov/oet> to determine whether your radio is approved. For future expansion, you may want to look at equipment that will support the new narrow-band channels (12.5KHz spacing.) The FCC is currently working to add more

channels by decreasing the amount of spectrum each channel can occupy.

Licensing

Before operating equipment in this radio service, users are required to obtain a radio station license. Some frequencies are available for wide-area use and must be coordinated before a license is issued. Coordination basically means that an organization appointed by the FCC is authorized to assign specific frequencies to different users, to avoid having everyone try to use the same frequency.

Other frequencies are designed for itinerant use. These are typically found on job sites and other temporary locations. They are generally limited to portable and mobile use and power is limited to 35 watts. Nationally there are over eight thousand licenses issued for one of the UHF itinerant frequencies. The following frequencies are designated for itinerant use – 151.625, 464.500, 464.550, 469.500 and 469.550

MHz. Other itinerant frequencies are available; however, they are not approved for nationwide use.

Licensing Process

The following steps are normally required to obtain a business band license. Each application is different. Teams may want to seek an experienced person to assist with the application.

- 1) **Gather Information**- Frequency, transmitter power, antenna gain, number of stations, etc.
- 2) **Obtain Frequency Coordination** - A frequency coordinator must approve applications for new frequency assignments and modifications. Coordination is not required for itinerant operations.
- 3) **File Your Application** - New applications are normally filed with the FCC through the frequency coordinator. Applications for the itinerant frequencies may be filed on-line with the FCC through the Universal Licensing System (ULS). You can learn more about ULS at www.fcc.gov/realaudio/ulsvideo.ram (RealPlayer™ is required; the basic player can be downloaded free from the Web site, www.real.com/realone/).
- 4) **Immediate Operation** –
 - a) **Conditional Authority** - You may begin operating your system 10 days after your application is filed with the FCC if you meet

certain conditions.

- b) **Special Temporary Authority** – The STA allows you to operate during an emergency or other urgent conditions without filing a license application. STA may be granted in emergency situations, such as natural disasters.
- 5) **Notification of Construction** – This may be required for some stations (for example, a system involving one or more repeaters and several fixed stations).
- 6) **Renewal of License** - Part 90 Licenses are good for 10 years. You should renew 90 days before the license expires.

Having a Part 90 license has many advantages:

1. The license applies to everyone on the Team and also includes temporary users (such as members from other Teams and non-member volunteers that are helping at an event, and the event sponsors).
2. The license fee is currently \$100 per call-sign and it is good for ten years. The fee can be reduced to \$50 by including a copy of your non-profit status letter. Additional fees apply for coordinated frequencies. The coordination cost averages about \$175. The current GMRS license is good for five years and costs \$75 per person.
3. Interoperability is a major issue in public safety communications. By using a common frequency, users can communicate directly with each other at events. You may also obtain permission

to use another agency's frequency during an event.

For example, if you are working an event with the city's Parks Department, you can give them permission to call you on your frequency and they can give you permission to call them on their frequency. (Licensees must make sure they do not exceed the total number of authorized units when they allow other users to operate under their call-sign.)

The addition of a business band license would be a great asset to most organizations. If you are applying for mobiles and portables on itinerant channels, you can probably complete the paperwork with little problem. If you are designing a wide-area repeater system, you should seek the assistance of a licensing professional. Check the FCC's Web site for the name of the coordinator for your area; they may be able to refer you to someone who can help you apply for your license.

**Is Your Team Planning a
REACT SAFETY BREAK
this summer? Don't
forget to send pictures
to *The REACTer* !**



Trying Again with the FCC

Continued from page 7

tional messages although if the latter, each member of the organization (outside the family) must obtain his/her own license at the current cost of \$75.

2. Grandfathered business licensees, including organizations and their members, can continue to use GMRS for their purposes but are restricted to the one or two frequencies they were originally given years ago. License applications from new businesses or organizations are denied.

THE PROBLEM

Having been categorized by FCC as a "business," all organization applicants are at an unfair disadvantage in the *General Mobile Radio Service*. Rules and regulations as currently written prevent use of all frequencies by grandfathered business and organization licensees, and deny new license applications by them. This eliminates the distinct advantage of organization members being able to contact and work with the public, other organizations, and certain agencies -- a real benefit of GMRS.

Use of frequencies other than GMRS for organization purposes is either not easily possible, is limited in public accessibility, is more costly to license, is too short range, and/or inadvisable for other reasons.

FCC should now reconsider their ruling and make the necessary changes in GMRS regulations. The President and many others have asked for citi-

zens to take part in volunteerism and homeland security. Citizens Corps, CERT, *REACT*, Neighborhood Watch, and other recognized volunteer organizations must have good communications to effectively carry on their activities. There must also be interoperability. This has been a serious need in recent emergency situations throughout the country. GMRS also has a demonstrated unique ability to communicate with FRS radios that are in common use by the public, and can pass information up and down the radio networks to and from them.

Those organizations that are classified 501(c)(3) by the Internal Revenue Service as non-profit public service are being denied a single license to cover their members because they are classified as a "business" by FCC. The only way members can get a GMRS license is if each one obtains his/her own for \$75. This is another expense that a volunteer is asked to pay in addition to possible membership dues, clothing, items of identification, training, radio equipment, etc. Many areas where organizations need most to function are communities where people are already limited in economic resources, and where another expense in volunteering could make the difference in whether or not the person becomes a member.

Existing non-profit organizations are also being denied use of all GMRS frequencies when in fact these should be available in order to make contact with the greatest amount of people and

agencies in time of need.

THE SOLUTION

Time after time President Bush has requested community involvement. In order to allow GMRS the potential it has for this public service, we recommend:

1. Allowing local chapters of parent non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations involved in safety communications to obtain a GMRS license. Some have even received The President's Volunteer Action Award, and should be recognized for their serious contribution to the country.
2. A 501(c)(3) parent non-profit organization founded previous to Sept. 11, 2002, would qualify for its chapters. Proof would be submitted with the license application.
3. All communications under the license would be limited to activities of the organization, and so stipulated on the license.
4. Allow existing grandfathered organizations, upon their request, the use of all GMRS frequencies on their valid license.
5. The quality of personal communications could actually be improved by having organizational use with attendant radio protocols. This could change the increasing trend of unlicensed and illegal use of GMRS.

Submitted May 9, 2003
Petitioners: Paul Amestoy, Alan Dixon, and R. K. Leef

REACTivities Team, Council, & Region News

Oklahoma County (Okla.) REACT

Mesocyclone, hook echo, wall cloud, gust front: these are all terms that most have never heard of. I know I hadn't, not until I moved to Oklahoma. Today I listen to all the news sources I can, because hearing any of these terms may mean the REACT Severe Weather Spotters will be activated.

May 8th, 2003, it was one of those days. Spotters were credited with the initial observation of a tornado on the ground.

Storm spotters and chasers are critical to tracking weather in Oklahoma. Unfortunately, radar, one of the biggest weather trackers, cannot see below a certain altitude; that is where the spotters eyes are important. The radar may show circulation in a cloud, but only a spotter can tell if the circulation is touching the ground, as in a tornado.

Spotters and chasers are not the same. A spotter is the field eyes and ears of an emergency manager. They are sent to a specific location by the Emergency Operations Center and report their observations to the EOC. A spotter will not move except to get a better view, to get out of danger, or as directed by the EOC. A chaser is more intent on getting pictures of a storm and may move at will.

I encourage all REACT

Teams to contact their local emergency managers and offer your services as organized, trained, and equipped spotters or chasers. Depending on their abilities and proper equipment, your members might begin as severe storm spotters, and expand to other areas as they gain experience and the trust of emergency managers.

Does the warning that the spotters provide make a difference? You bet! In the last two tornadoes that hit Oklahoma City and the surrounding areas, only one death was attributed to a tornado. (See cover photo.)

-Dale Ellis



Tri-County (Mo.) REACT

June 10, 2003, about 5:30 pm, Tri-County Team members Mark Redecker, Bill Durbin, and I were at Faust Park in St. Louis County to help the Park Rangers with traffic control at a concert scheduled at the park later in the evening when the Park Rangers decided to cancel the event due to an approaching severe thunderstorm.

Mark, Bill, and I left the park when the storm hit and started storm-spotting. Soon re-

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Mark Redecker of Tri-County REACT removes a highway sign blown down by microburst winds during a freak storm in Fenton, Mo.

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Continued from page 13

ports were coming over the scanner of major wind damage, traffic accidents, and a roof blown off a motel in Fenton, Mo., which is in St. Louis County. We headed to Fenton to see if we could help.

When we arrived, we found many of the roads blocked by debris, power lines, and construction signs. Police were busy with the power lines and accidents so Mark and I started removing the debris and construction signs from the road.

After we cleared all the roads, we headed over to the motel where the roof had been blown off. The fire department was already on the scene and there were a lot of passing motorists pulling into the motel parking lot to sight-see.

Bill saw that there were no police officers at the scene to take care of the traffic so he blocked the entrance and prevented people from getting in the way of the fire department. There were no injuries reported at the motel. The damage was caused by a microburst from the thunderstorm.

–Brian Fischer

Honolulu (Hawaii) *REACT*

It was 9:30 am; Rob Roberts, Honolulu *REACT* Unit 4, was riding on his black Honda Goldwing heading south on the I-405 Freeway in Orange County, Calif., en route to the Honda motorcycle dealer in Huntington Beach to meet some friends.

Suddenly, he saw ahead of him several cars in the #2 lane, another just ahead in the #1 lane, four or five more off to the right shoulder, no law enforcement or public safety agencies on scene, and people standing outside their vehicle in traffic.

He thought to himself, "This one could be bad." From his experience, he knew that seconds count in this situation. He needed help. Actually, *they* needed help. And they needed it now!

He was carrying a cell phone. If he could dial "9-1-1" he would have instant access to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). But it was turned off and besides, he couldn't use it because he was

wearing his safety helmet. So Rob, riding a motorcycle and 2500 miles from home, who had just arrived on the "mainland" several hours before, let his training kick in. He calmly reached over, depressed his PTT (push-to-talk) button of his two-way radio, and said, "Any *REACT* monitor, this is Honolulu *REACT* 4."

He knew the Los Angeles area has a "Traffic Watch" program and they have direct access to lots of resources. So he knew he was in good hands. Frank Burt, Unit 4 from San Gabriel *REACT*, heard the call and quickly answered. Frank dialed CHP and reported the incident, and then advised Rob that "CHP has the call."

All of which proves that no matter where you are or how far from home, if you can reach a *REACT* monitor, help is as close as your microphone.

–Wayne Barringer



Calendar

- July 21-24** *REACT* International Convention, Evansville, Indiana
- August 11** Deadline for submissions for September-October *REACTer*
- September 1** Labor Day (U.S.)
- October 3** Deadline for submissions for November-December *REACTer*
- October 9** Thanksgiving Day (Canada)
- November 11** Veterans' Day (U.S.); Remembrance Day (Canada)
- November 27** Thanksgiving Day (U.S.)

Getting the Word to Uncle Charlie

Continued from page 2

When you file comments, explain to the FCC why Amateur HF and VHF and/or CB are important to public service communications and to you. If you have degrees and/or professional electronics experience, be sure to include that in your comments. Those who can authoritatively address the FCC questions (see NOI) about testing and other aspects of this inquiry should do so.

The FCC accepts electronically filed comments via its Electronic Comment Filing System at < <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> — click on “Submit a filing” and in the “Proceeding Field” enter “03-104” and complete the

required fields. Comments may be typed into a field, attached in a file, or sent by Email (see ECFS instructions) For more information about filing a comment, see < <http://wireless.fcc.gov/csinfo/comments.html> > .

If you only make one filing with the FCC in your radio career, this may be the one that counts the most! (Again, the filing period may have expired by the time you receive this *REACTer* – file anyway!)



10-9?

A couple of errors crept into the last *REACTer*.

In the “Hundred Per Centers” list, **Lake Simcoe REACT** was slightly misplaced. The Team (at last report) was still in Ontario, Canada – not Florida.

Also, the Council Directory listing for the Southern California *REACT* Council was incorrect. Eric Hutchins is currently president of the Council. The correct address and other contact info is shown in the Directory in this issue.

Eric is also the founder and continues to be a member of Rio Grande Valley (N. Mex.) *REACT* and plans to move back this Fall. Check the next *REACTer* for updated information on the SoCal Council.

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Silent Mics

Joseph F. Connor, 85, a longtime member of the Lima, Ohio, *REACT* Team, passed away April 27, 2003, in Wapakoneta, Ohio.

M. Bill Vogenitz of Florida passed away May 26. She was a longtime *REACT* member and supporter.

Steve Selley, N6GMT, a member of Crest (Calif.) *REACT*, died unexpectedly May 28, 2003. Crest President Ed Greany wrote, "Steve was still in his prime and was well liked by all who knew him. His quick smile and pleasant demeanor was always an asset. He will be missed by us all." The Team has retired Steve's ID number, Unit 36.

100 Percenters!

The following Teams renewed at least the same number of members for 2003 as they had in 2002. (This list is in addition to the list in the last issue of *The REACTer*).

- 4990 - Barbour County, Ala.
- 2804 - Johnston County (N. Car.)
- 2106 - Prince George's County (Md.)
- 2418 - Ross County Radio Patrol Service (Ohio)
- 6028 - Redding (Calif.)
- 3252 - St. Mary's County (Md.)
- C057 - Blackberry (Calif.)
- 3265 - Nashua (N. H.)
- 4365 - Tri-City (Wis.)
- 4800 - Flagler County Assist (Fla.)
- C256 - Jackson County Wolverine (Mich.)

The next *REACTer* will include

***A Summary of RI Board of Directors Actions**

***Photos & Stories from the Evansville Convention**

***News from the ARRL National Convention in Arlington, Texas!**

About Your Subscription

All Regular, Junior, and Affiliate members in the U.S. and Canada automatically receive a subscription to *The REACTer*; the subscription price is included in the annual RI dues.

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Nonmembers may subscribe for \$7.50 per year.

Members may order an extra subscription for a family member at a different address, a friend, a local library, or anyone else, at the same rate as members' subscriptions: \$4 per year in the U.S., \$5 in Canada, or \$6 anywhere else.

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March, 2003

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Council Presidents: Please advise RI Headquarters of any errors or omissions in these listings. In particular, we would like to have an e-mail address and/or Web site URL for every Council.