



On the Cover

Altamonte Springs (Florida) Police Department "Radio Volunteers" Dick Fess, K4FUY (left), and Bob Mahon, KG4HBO (right), examine a map in the radio room at the city's Alternate Emergency Operating Center, or AEOC. In Florida, explained Altamonte Springs ARES/RACES Coordinator Peter Meijers, AI4KM, there is only one designated EOC per county, and municipal facilities such as the one in his city are designated as AEOCs. This center is used for local emergencies and is in contact with the Seminole County EOC in Sanford during countywide callups, and when necessary, with the state EOC in Tallahassee, Florida.

The radio room is equipped for HF, VHF, and UHF analog voice communications as well as D-STAR, a WinLink packet station that is active all the time, a CB rig, and a Peet Brothers weather station connected to a 2-meter rig (public-safety officials also have access to the weather station data).

The police department's Radio Volunteers program has been in place for more than ten years, limited to six active members but supported by the city's larger ARES/RACES group. According to Meijers, the group's largest event every year is the city-sponsored "Red Hot Boom" each July 3, with fireworks and other activities. Some 25 to 30 ham volunteers act as extra eyes and ears for police and report any problems they may encounter.

The group is also prepared for weather emergencies. Fortunately, the area hasn't had a direct hit from a hurricane since 2004. In 2007, however, amateurs helped put up a temporary antenna tower for the county after a tornado took down its main 400-foot tower. Other examples of amateur radio emergency and public-service communications may be found throughout this "Emergency Communications Special" issue. *(Cover photo by Larry Mulvehill, WB2ZPI)*