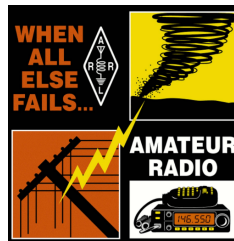


Amateurs in Action

Recounts of ham radio operators who have used their time and skills to help others in a time of need



Preparing for Field Day with an actual emergency

By Wednesday 19 June 2013, it had already been raining hard in an around Calgary, Canmore, and High River, Alberta, and forecasters were calling for at least four more inches in the next 36 hours. Scott VE6OBL and Vince VE6LK had been training prospective Field Day participants on procedures that day, and planning everything it takes for a successful event.

The next morning, the Trans-Canada Highway was closed in Canmore, having been washed out by Cougar Creek. Landslides and flooding were reported imminent for Calgary and High Water. By Thursday afternoon, the Province of Alberta had asked the ARES teams to activate the POC (Provincial Operations Centre) in Edmonton, and soon Curtis VE6AEW had all the repeaters in southern



It took a village, L to R: Vince VE6LK, Tammy VA6TSS, Dann VE6TD, and Ian VA6IAB

Alberta linked, to provide a communication net for the effort soon to follow. By mid-afternoon, the POC had lost all cell and other contact with the High Water EOC, and Dann VE6TD and Ian VA6IAB set up an amateur network at the High River EOC, and re-established contact with the POC through the linked repeaters.



Much of the cellular, landline, electric power, and other services between Canmore and High River had stopped working, and the town of High River and much of Calgary were given evacuation orders. Due to the rising waters, the High River EOC had to be moved out-of-town, ironically near the site where the Foothills Amateur Radio Society had been planning to set up their Field Day operations.

Scott quickly organized a round-the-clock crew to run net control, message-passing, and logistics. Relays for POC officials, local [Alberta Health Services](#) workers, work crews, city and county utilities, and many others were all coordinated through the EOCs established and staffed by volunteer radio amateurs. Relief, movement, shelters, weather, injuries, plus goods such as food, water, and medicine were coordinated through all of the folks who ran the radios and logged the information. Vince said it was “organized chaos” through all of Friday and into the night.

Soon, it was Saturday, and the sun came out and started drying out the roads, even though some of the town was still under feet of water. As it drew closer to noon, one person mentioned that it was almost time for Field Day. The others in the EOC just smiled, and Tammy VA6TSS remarked that she thought they had just finished up with a Field Day of sorts.

You can read this story on the [FARS website](#), in the [Alberta Global News](#), and even [Wikipedia](#).