

While we never forget that "Emergency Communications" is our middle name, we are by no means a one dimensional organization. WECA conducts educational classes, free of charge, to anyone interested in Amateur Radio and we regularly provide speakers to community groups. Our members are active in bringing radio science and technology to both students and adults in Westchester. WECA members



regularly offer assembly programs at area schools and teach radio courses to students and adults.

The Mayor of Rye Brook selected WECA to provide radio communications between the students of Blind Brook High School and Astronauts aboard the NASA Shuttle while in orbit. Most NASA astronauts are Amateur Radio Operators. The event was



broadcast over the WECA radio system enabling it to be heard on any scanner. In this way the event was made available to school and community groups throughout the New York tri-state area. Our system was augmented for this event by equipment donated to WECA by the New York Power Authority. That equipment is now a permanent part of our system.

In support of its activities, WECA maintains radio repeater facilities for FM voice communications in the 144 Megahertz (MHz), 222 MHz, and 440 MHz Amateur Radio bands. There are a total of six voice systems on two sites. Auxiliary receivers are placed in and around Westchester County to insure good reception from small handheld radios.

WECA also operates an extensive packet radio digital repeater system for the transmission of text data that is independent of all landline and cellular telephone systems. Packet radio provides a fast and efficient means of transmitting computer generated, error free text and data worldwide. In emergencies it is used to move health and welfare messages to and from disaster areas. WECA's packet radio system also provides an independent wireless network for the transmission of automatic vehicle location information. This subsystem



is used to track vehicles engaged in charitable events, disaster drills and emergencies. The total value of WECA's radio plant is over \$75,000. This extensive and complex system is equipped, operated and maintained by WECA's all volunteer engineering team.

WECA prides itself on being a voluntary community service organization that provides services which are free of charge. WECA is a non-profit corporation of the State of New York and qualifies under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. As such, the quality of our service depends on the skill and dedication of our members as well as on the good will of the organizations that we serve. The number of man-hours donated yearly is staggering. We have invested countless hours in radio system construction and maintenance, emergency preparedness exercises, special event communications, education and daily operations all without cost to the communities and organizations served.

WECA finances its activities through membership dues and donations from corporations and benefactors.

WECA is managed by an Executive Board of 18 people. They meet monthly to plan and direct the myriad of events that make WECA one of the top organizations of its type in country.

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*Westchester Emergency  
Communications Association*



*Organization  
Overview*

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*In service to the community  
through Amateur Radio since 1972*

## Public Service Through Amateur Radio

The Westchester Emergency Communications Association is an all volunteer organization whose members are dedicated to providing two-way radio communications for public service and emergency communications in Westchester County, New York and the surrounding area. Its membership consists of over 250 Amateur Radio Operators (hams) who live in the greater Westchester County area. WECA provides special event communications services, via two-way radio, free of charge, to various organizations in the Westchester County, and New York City areas. WECA is also active in providing educational and informational services to its members, the amateur community and the public at large.



WECA is affiliated with the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national organization of Amateur Radio Operators. WECA has been awarded the status of an ARRL Special Service Club. Such status is awarded to groups that are recognized as outstanding service to the public including education, training, recruiting, and the administration of FCC sponsored Licensing Exams.



The ARRL sponsors the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) a service that provides trained two-way radio operators to civil organizations. WECA provides emergency communications personnel and equipment to the American Red Cross (ARC) under the auspices of the ARES system. WECA and the American Red Cross of Westchester County have an agreement under which WECA makes its two highly specialized communications vehicles available during disasters. WECA trained ARES personnel respond to disasters providing communications for Red Cross personnel. WECA members are trained in Red Cross procedures, first aid and disaster assessment techniques.



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sponsors the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) that serves government agencies. In Westchester County,



RACES is administered by The Westchester County, Office of Emergency Management (OEM). OEM uses specially trained Amateur Radio operators and equipment to supply communications support in emergency situations. In its agreement with OEM, WECA provides communications equipment, training and support through the RACES program. The RACES system has specific responsibilities as part of the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) mandated disaster plan covering the Indian Point power plant in Buchanan and WECA is the designated organization to fulfill those responsibilities.

Under the leadership of OEM, WECA members regularly participate in such events as the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant emergency preparedness drills and Emergency Medical Service Mass Casualty Incident Drills. WECA also provides communications services for OEM during natural disasters and other emergency situations. OEM provides radio systems for WECA's use and allocates space for WECA's radio control systems on the tower at the site of the Westchester County Jail.

WECA also provides communications for special events sponsored by the Westchester County Parks and Recreation Department organizations. Each year WECA provides voice and data communications to such Parks events as the Empire State Games, and Independent's Day celebrations.

In addition, WECA provides communications services for charitable events such as the American Diabetes Association Bike-a-Thon, the March of Dimes Walk America, the Multiple Sclerosis Super Cities Walk, the Mamaroneck Turkey Trot the Golden Apple Bike tour and New York City Marathon. WECA participates in ten to fifteen such events each year as a free public service.

WECA members participate in many other radio oriented activities for fun and training. They search for hidden radio transmitters, build antennas, radios and accessories, all to sharpen their technical skills.

Each year, WECA conducts a 24 hour emergency communications drill known as Field Day. WECA's Field Day exercise is held at Harbor Island Park in Mamaroneck, New York. The object of this event is to test our ability to set up and operate radio stations using temporary shelters and emergency power. Such training is put to use in many areas when flood, earthquake, fire or other disasters disrupt normal communications. This exercise is conducted as



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Personnel from the Westchester County Office of Emergency Management, the American Red Cross and the Civil Air Patrol participate in this event. The local media are notified and a public information booth is maintained for tours and information.

WECA's proudest event each year occurs when members of the Association bring Santa Claus to the children of the Blythedale Children's Hospital. Each child in the hospital speaks individually to Santa via two-way radio. Through the work of his elves, Santa discusses specific and personal facts with each child. Santa's helpers then give each child a gift selected especially for him or her. This event is funded entirely by individual member donations to WECA's Blythedale Children's Fund.

