

The Emergency Communications and Field Service Committee met 12 times by Zoom with two of those meetings being in person during 2024. In addition, our three sub-committees continued their responsibilities, and the results of their continuing efforts are contained within.

The Committee has moved into a largely collaborative mode in working with Field Services and Emergency Communications leadership at HQ. Ideas and innovations presented at EC-FSC meetings have been openly evaluated and discussed and are often implemented without the need for committee motions or further action.

This year EC-FSC welcomed Ed Wilson, N2XDD, Director, Hudson Division and John Litz, NZ6Q, Vice Director, Pacific Division as new committee members.

The committee operates under three dedicated sub-committees, each charged with specific responsibilities that align with the overarching goals of EC-FSC:

**1. ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service)**

- **Chair:** Director Famiglio
- **Focus:** Coordinating amateur radio operators for emergency response and public service communications.

**2. Clubs**

- **Chair:** Vice Director Hudgens
- **Focus:** Supporting and promoting amateur radio clubs to strengthen community ties and enhance member engagement.

**3. NTS (National Traffic System)**

- **Chair:** Director Kemmerer (ad hoc)
- **Focus:** Facilitating the efficient transmission of messages and traffic on behalf of the amateur radio community.

**Looking Forward**

As the EC-FSC continues to evolve, the committee's focus remains on empowering its sub-committees and leveraging the expertise of its members.

The strategic direction taken in 2024 encapsulates the committee's vision: to create a responsive, efficient, and collaborative environment that enhances emergency communications while also engaging the wider amateur radio community.

Notable team effort accomplishments this year included the following:

- **Revision of the Club Commission program** for Affiliated clubs recruiting ARRL members. A new, even higher Commission rate of twenty dollars is now being offered for new members. Renewals are still five dollars. This program offers clubs a reward for soliciting new and renewing ARRL members
- **Implementation of the long-awaited ARES Reporting Form 2** was accomplished in February 2024 with the first reports being generated to their respective Section Emergency Coordinators at the beginning of March

- **Created ARES Group Registration on-line form.** This new report form was rolled out to help those new folks with an interest in ARES as to where their local ARES groups are located. An additional feature to this form is currently under consideration. This new feature will be linked into a G.I.S. system for mapping locations, giving the user an actual map location
- **The update and modernization of NTS** is now in its third year with the addition of a monthly electronic newsletter “NTS News” that is now available to all ARRL members. Considerable effort has continued throughout the year to improve "Last Mile" for the delivery of message traffic as well as the creation of an on-line fillable Radiogram that can be completed by anyone with internet access. This now gives the general public the ability to “send” a Radiogram via Amateur Radio simply by completing the preformatted on-line form.
- **ARES EC-001/016 courses were discontinued** on April first with the implementation of new incremental courses: Basic and Intermediate came online April first. Due to the cyber-attack in early May, the Advanced and ARES Management courses have been delayed. The Advanced course is expected to come online in December with the ARES Management Course to follow sometime in mid-2025
- **Plant the Seed Program Implementation**  
The "Plant the Seed" program is a pioneering initiative designed to strengthen the relationship between clubs, libraries, and schools. Launched in mid-2024, the program aims to cultivate educational opportunities and community engagement by:
  - **Facilitating Collaboration:** Encouraging partnerships between local clubs and educational institutions to promote a culture of learning and resource sharing.
  - **Providing Resources:** Offering educational materials, workshops, and activities that can be integrated into libraries and school programs.
  - **Encouraging Volunteerism:** Motivating community members to participate actively in local educational initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and investment in the learning process.
- **Growth of the Speakers Bureau**  
In tandem with the "Plant the Seed" initiative, the Speakers Bureau has been on a trajectory of growth, further enhancing its repertoire with an expanded collection of videos and PowerPoint presentations.

As the Speakers Bureau continues to evolve, it plays a vital role in equipping communities with valuable educational tools and fostering discussions on critical topics.

- **Complete Rewrite of the ARRL Club Primer**  
A complete rewrite of the ARRL Club Primer, which serves as a foundational resource for amateur radio clubs across the nation, is currently being made. This update aims to reflect contemporary practices and challenges, ensuring that clubs have the most relevant information at their disposal. Key areas of focus include:
  - **Updated Guidelines:** Revising operational and administrative guidance to align with current best practices in club management.

- **Enhanced Resources:** Incorporating new tools and strategies to help clubs attract and retain members by utilizing Best Practices.
- **Community-Building Strategies:** Emphasizing the importance of outreach and collaboration to strengthen club identity and community ties. By refreshing the ARRL Club Primer, the organization not only reaffirms its commitment to supporting amateur radio clubs but also enhances the overall impact of their initiatives.
- **New ARES and Field Service Promotional Banners**  
The ARRL National Convention that was held in Dayton Ohio this past year introduced several new marketing materials aimed at promoting the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and Field Services caught the attention of many of the attendees and exhibitors alike with new easy to display roll-up banners.
- **New Exhibit Flyers**  
Accompanying the roll-up banners were several new exhibit flyers that further emphasized the Field Service and ARES objectives.
- **Marketing campaign for ARES**  
To improve and strengthen its mission and outreach efforts, the Board of Directors approved a permanently themed marketing campaign during the January 2024 meeting (Minute 43). This program has been underway since the spring utilizing magazine space in QST and On The Air. Additional outside sources of media for advertising ARES are also being investigated.
- **Creation of a user fillable certificate** for recognition of Affiliated Clubs. This new form makes it possible to easily recognize Affiliated Clubs who in the Directors' view have reached a point for recognition.
- **Team-oriented video calls** are continuing for both Section Managers and ARES Leadership, as Mike Walters and Josh Johnston meet regularly with these groups individually to ensure information is effectively shared and innovative thoughts can be presented to enhance our Field Services and Emergency Communications efforts. One such enhancement was the creation of "Web Specialist" to the duties of the Technical Specialist's job description. This was a suggestion from one of the Section Manager meetings.
- **Club Grant program continues through the ARRL Foundation**  
As the amateur radio landscape continues to evolve, the ARRL Foundation remains committed to fostering innovation and growth within clubs through the Club Grant Program.

The importance of local clubs cannot be overstated; they are the lifeblood of the amateur radio community and play a pivotal role in introducing new technologies and training future operators. With the ongoing support of the ARRL Foundation, clubs can look forward to enhancing their contributions, ensuring that amateur radio remains a vibrant and essential aspect of communication in our increasingly interconnected world. The Club Grant Program is more than just a funding avenue; it is a lifeline for clubs aiming to grow, innovate, and share the joy of amateur radio with future generations.

The EC FSC is continuing to develop resources to help clubs attract new members and retain existing ones. By sharing best practices, hosting joint events, and encouraging cross-club collaboration, we are building a more interconnected amateur radio community.

Over this past year Amateur Radio and ARES have played a critical role in providing emergency communication capabilities around the country when the traditional systems failed or were just overwhelmed. During these times of crisis ARES members were often the first to respond, providing invaluable communication links that saved lives. Our committee recognizes the need for ongoing training, support, and resources to empower our ARES volunteers even more.

We recognize the need for enhanced networking among NTS operators across different regions. Our committee is facilitating virtual meetings and forums where operators can share experiences, success stories, and challenges. This collaborative effort is helping to create a stronger, more unified NTS that can adapt to changing circumstances and support those in need.

As we reflect on our activities and progress, it is clear that our commitment to advancing ARES, clubs, and the NTS is an ongoing process. Our efforts are not only aimed at immediate improvements but also at fostering a culture of preparedness and community among amateur radio operators.

Subcommittee reports are listed on the subsequent pages.

**For the Committee:  
Chairman**

Scott Yonally, N8SY  
Director, Great Lakes Division

**Members:**

Bob Famiglio K3RF  
Director, Atlantic Division

Lee H. Cooper W5LHC  
Vice Director, West Gulf Division

Ed Hudgens WB4RHQ  
Vice Director, Delta Division

John Litz, NZ6Q  
Vice Director, Pacific Division

John Robert Stratton N5AUS  
Director, West Gulf Division

Phil Temples, N9HI  
Vice Director, New England Division

Mark Tharp KB7HDX  
Director, Northwest Division

Ed Wilson, N2XDD  
Director, Hudson Division

**ARRL Headquarters Liaisons:**

Josh Johnson KE5MHV  
Director of Emergency Services

Mike Walters W8ZY  
Manager, Field Services

## EC FSC “Clubs” Subcommittee Report

The Clubs Subcommittee of the EC-FSC Committee has worked on the following initiatives throughout 2024:

1. Promotion of club affiliation and benefits
2. Mechanisms to aid club recruiting
3. Clubs to Libraries Program
4. Protocols, Procedures, and best practices for clubs at hamfests
5. Updating the “Clubs Primer”

The Clubs to libraries “Plant the Seed” book set program for 2024 is well underway with new digital brochures and web page updates up and functioning on the ARRL Website. The search functions are via a link to [www.usa.gov/libraries](http://www.usa.gov/libraries) with the web page being updated to include directions on the use of the link. The find a club web page has also been updated to include better instructions of how to use the page and drill down on selected clubs to see the full record of the club.

Field Services is working with a focus group of Section Managers for a pilot program on what it will take to get the SMs provided with what they need to have a professional looking hamfest display and booth. New banners have been developed for Div, District, and ARES groups to utilize at Hamfests and other meetings.

The “Clubs Primer” has been extensively rewritten to make it more inviting to the new club officers and to remove numerous lengthy duplications of content. The final draft of the document will be provided to HQ staff in January 2025 for final formatting and addition of applicable graphics.

Ed B. Hudgens – WB4RHQ  
Clubs Subcommittee Chairman

## EC FSC “NTS 2.0” Subcommittee Report

### Introduction

The “Future of NTS” subcommittee under EC-FSC (known as “NTS 2.0”) was formed in April 2022 to develop a vision and an execution plan to strengthen and improve ARRL support for the National Traffic System (NTS).

Initially, NTS 2.0 consisted of five working groups to address a variety of issues focused on strengthening and modernizing the National Traffic System. At present, Performance Standards and Recruitment/Training have coalesced into one working group that meets weekly. The Advanced Access & Delivery working group meets monthly; the EmComm and Digital working groups meet periodically.

The Steering Committee (S/C) consists primarily of the leaders of the various working groups. It has met weekly since its formation. The S/C reviews the working groups’ progress and coordinates the efforts that span the working groups. The group includes Josh Johnson, KE5MHV, from Headquarters.

### Progress in 2024

The NTS 2.0 subcommittee and its working groups have completed a number of projects and initiatives and continue their work on others.

- **The NTS Letter** — In collaboration with Headquarters, the monthly ARRL NTS Letter continues to promote the National Traffic System and the NTS 2.0 project by spotlighting people and activities that represent the great work being done by traffic handlers across the U.S. The publication is edited by NTS veteran Marcia Forde, KW1U.
- **NTS Treasure Hunt** — Half contest, half training exercise, the NTS Treasure Hunt has been a terrific success, encouraging traffic handlers to have fun handling traffic, learn about the ARRL’s history, and practice skills. It continues under the leadership of Dan Rinaman, AC8NP.
- **ARRL Net Directory 2.0** – A specification document for a new, more maintainable net directory tool was created last year, reviewed with the HQ team, and is currently on hold pending the completion of more important IT work.
- **The NTS Radiogram Portal** — Work on the portal began at the end of 2023. It was taken from “beta” to “live” in March 2024. The Portal enables members of the public and amateur radio operators who are not traffic handlers to introduce messages for origination via the web. It’s thought that the Portal may become an important tool for the EmComm community but much more marketing needs to be completed. The project is the brainchild of Jonathon Taylor, K1RFD, the inventor of EchoLink.
- **Bulk Radiogram “Best Practices” document** — Currently, the practice of originating bulk radiogram traffic is highly controversial. One of the working groups authored a “Best Practices” paper for review and feedback.

- **NTS 2.0 Website** – The <https://nts2.arri.org> site, created in early 2023, continues to be a source for documentation, training, tools, and information as part of the NTS 2.0 effort. The site will undergo additional enhancements in early 2025.
- **Recognition and Certificates** — Certificates to recognize both beginner and advanced traffic handlers have been designed, reviewed, and revised by HQ staff. Consistent with other recognition programs, the approach proposed relies on members of the Field Organization to administer the updated recognition vehicles. The project is ready for rollout.

## The Future

What does the future hold? The NTS 2.0 Project will kick off a recruitment program in 2025 for more volunteers with a “Callout” meeting in early February. Already, nearly 100 amateurs nationwide have signed up to become “Radiogrammers,” the term applied to those who take radiogram traffic off the portal for origination. We believe that many of these individuals will want to play an even greater role in contributing to the NTS 2.0 project.

We intend to make significant progress with an online Performance Evaluation Tool. The specifications are complete, and beta testing is anticipated to begin in the January/February timeframe.

We will also continue design work on a Digital Traffic Net 2.0 (DTN), a point-to-point, self-discovering and self-configuring digital network.

Going forward, we will re-evaluate our standing working groups and, where necessary, sunset or merge them. We also intend to create ad hoc groups to address specific projects.

The NTS 2.0 Community has many “balls in the air” and we’re just getting started!

Fred Kemmerer, AB1OC and Phil Temples, K9HI  
NTS 2.0 Subcommittee Chairmen

## **EC FSC “ARES” Subcommittee Report**

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (**ARES**) Subcommittee is a selected “break-out” group of the Emergency Communications and Field Services Committee (**ECFSC**). It is tasked with addressing specific issues related to our League’s ARES program referred either by the **ECFSC** or undertaken on the Subcommittee’s own initiative. If deemed appropriate the Subcommittee would present recommendations for and/or draft motions to be discussed and considered by the full **ECFSC** on identified issues related to the **ARES** program.

For the year 2024, the committee held teleconference meetings using the Zoom platform. Meetings were held April 10, June 12, and October 30, 2024. The meetings typically lasted about 2 hours with good participation by committee members and other interested ECFSC members visiting to listen and participate in the discussions.

For this year, there were no recommendations forwarded to the parent committee for consideration, nor any draft motions presented. However, the ARES committee addressed various relevant subjects holding robust discussions on the state of ARES and its current issues and effectiveness of the program. Other major group discussion surrounded the development of new ARES training materials being generated, lessons learned from the 2024 Hurricane season including notably Hurricane Helen with its well-publicized and effective amateur radio response to the resulting Appalachian mountain floods. Considerable discussions involved how to appeal to radio operators to participate in ARES whether a present League member or not.

Such discussions also dwelled on developing possible programs to include non-amateur licensees to train with or cooperate in ARES deployments. Specifically, General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) Licensees (FCC Part 95) might be a resource to develop. Training ARES members in other radio services could be useful, such as FCC Part 90 Public Safety Radio systems. In communications emergencies rural Public Safety agencies have occasionally issued their radios to authorized and qualified amateurs to liaison and interoperate between deployed Amateur groups with their own part 97 systems and designated contact points within the public safety agency.

Other areas of discussion involved reporting of ARES activities with the new reporting forms being developed by our Emergency Management Director Josh Johnson at HQ. Typically, discussion involved what to do for more advanced training of ARES operators and the new ARES course being completed now.

### **Recommendation Topics for the Committee to Consider in 2025**

The following are some suggestions for additional work for the committee in 2025. These suggestions comprise only a few matters which were subject to considerable discussion time with the committee and are certainly not meant to be exhaustive.

- 1.** Continue to explore development of an ARES “Auxiliary” style program to foster interoperability and/or mutual aid in communications emergencies with GMRS operators and amateur radio operators. This could be of benefit to the public and expose GMRS enthusiasts to ham radio.



- 2.** Develop participation with the FEMA sponsored Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG). Some regional groups encourage selected radio amateur officials to participate in the monthly video conference meeting to report on regional activities of radio amateurs. The undersigned has participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> FEMA region group meetings and was eventually invited to present in-person before a live quarterly meeting at FEMA regional headquarters before the agency department heads in that RECCWG. ARES should find and prepare suitable ARES representatives for the various FEMA RECCWGs and inquire about participation.
- 3.** Continue to review and improve ARES training materials.
- 4.** Standardization of ARES credentialing for suitably trained and accomplished ARES members. This might include standardized and recommended working uniforms clothing such as other volunteer emergency response groups use to project greater organization of ARES and assist in recognition of ARES teams by other agencies during an event on a given response scene.

Robert B. Famiglio, K3RF  
ARES Subcommittee Chairman