

SEC Bulletin 005 – 2/1/26

Recently a YouTube video was posted by RANT Strategies with the title “The Storm Proved It – ARES & RACES are DEAD.” The content creator never mentions his callsign, but it is obvious that he has a lot of knowledge about ARES and RACES at least across the eastern half of the United States. His point was that he monitored amateur repeaters in his area during the big snowstorm last week and didn’t hear about a single ARES district or RACES team being activated.

Further, he said that public safety agencies previously needed the communications capabilities that amateur radio could offer, but not anymore. His point was public safety agencies have expanded and hardened their communications, and they don’t need ARES operators. To support his point, he says the lack of ARES or RACES activations during the big storm proved it.

He is not completely wrong about this. It is true that twenty years ago public safety agencies had a greater need for the communications capabilities that amateur radio operators had to offer. However, capabilities like Winlink and Amateur Television are modes that public safety agencies don’t have and do need.

If you’re thinking that most offices of emergency management have Starlink these days, don’t forget when Elon turned his back on Ukrainian special forces who were depending on Starlink for operational communications during their failed harbor/costal attack in Crimea. One-man giveth Starlink, and one man can taketh away. With Winlink, we can provide email messaging services that aren’t dependent on the Internet.

EOCs are all about situational awareness. Trained ARES operators working in the EOC can provide improved situational awareness using both amateur and public safety frequencies. Digital amateur television can be a game changer when it comes to improving situational awareness. These are things that public safety agencies need.

Further, who else can provide background checked trained communication operators other than ARES? Amateur radio operators have been serving during emergencies and disasters since 1910. What makes us most valuable is our training and experience, along with our battery-operated equipment. The fact that our communications are not dependent on the commercial infrastructure means that when the power goes out, we can still communicate.

RANT Strategies’ YouTube video is thought provoking. He makes some valid points, and it is worth the time to view his video. However, ARES is not dead, and we can still be relevant in our modern times.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBll6o6YQ4U>

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