



EDITORIAL

# Quiet Weeks Still Count

Readiness is not always visible. Sometimes the strongest sign that a relationship is working is how little friction there is when something happens.

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This past week was a good reminder that readiness does not always look like activity.

We had a hurricane in our backyard. It did not amount to much for us locally, but it certainly did for some of our neighbors. Around here, the radios stayed mostly quiet. We saw some rain. Nobody was rushing into the CEOC, and there was no obvious moment where you could point and say, *there - that's ARES doing something*.

It would be easy to come away from a week like that feeling like we did nothing.

**But we didn't.**

We were in contact with the CEOC. We were monitoring conditions and standing by alongside SKYWARN. We were in touch with RACES at the state level and available if additional resources were needed. We were watching, listening, communicating, and ready if the situation changed.

That is part of the job too. Not every event needs a deployment. Not every period of readiness ends with traffic on the radio. Sometimes the right thing to do is simply make sure the people we support know we are there.

A quiet message: *We're watching this too. If you need us, we're ready.*

Those moments matter because relationships are not built during the emergency. They are tested during the emergency.

We are fortunate in Brazos County that many of those relationships are already part of our normal routine. We are at the CEOC every Friday. We are at the American Red Cross every month. And the line between ARES and RACES locally is often thin because many of the same people are involved in both.

Coordination usually does not begin with introductions. It might be a text. A quick phone call. A conversation across the room. *What are you guys seeing? Anything you need from us? We're here if this turns into something.*

Mike Wisby (KA5HIA) has called it the "coffee-drinking relationship," and that may be the best description of it.

**A lot of trust gets built when nothing important is happening.**

You show up. You talk. You solve a small problem. You learn who knows what. You figure out who answers the phone. You become familiar enough that nobody has to wonder who you are when the weather turns bad.

Because those relationships are comfortable, they can sometimes feel insignificant.

**They are not.**

The fact that our coordination can be simple is not evidence that nothing is happening. It is evidence that we are doing some things right.

Not every ARES organization gets that opportunity. In some places, access to emergency management may be limited and the relationship may only become active after something has already gone wrong. That is a hard time to start figuring each other out.

If the first real conversation happens during the incident, introductions, capabilities, expectations, access, and procedures all have to be worked out while everyone already has something more important to do.

**We have the advantage of doing much of that work beforehand, one ordinary Friday at a time.**

There is a balance. Procedures matter. Documentation matters. Clear expectations matter. When the situation requires formality, we should be very good at it. But strong relationships keep every small interaction from needing to become a process.

Sometimes good interoperability looks like an ICS form. Sometimes it looks like two people drinking coffee and already knowing who to call.

Both matter.

And every time there is "something" nearby, even when it never becomes **SOMETHING** for Brazos County, we get another opportunity to reinforce the same message.

**We are paying attention.**  
**We are available.**

And through those small, repeated engagements - the check-ins, the Friday visits, the quick conversations, the offers to help - our partners get to see who we are before the pressure is on.

**PROFESSIONAL. TRAINED. CAPABLE. READY.**

That kind of confidence is not built during the incident. It is built long before it, one ordinary interaction at a time.