

Lee County, Florida, ARES Hurricane IAN After-Action Report

Prepared by Stephen Smith W9GPI, ARES EC in Lee County

--- Time Line and Actions ---

Sunday, September 25

10am: Smith arrives at the Lee County EOC

Storm approaching, but landfall is predicted to be north of the Fort Myers area. Fort Myers and coastal communities should expect some storm surge, high winds and rain / flooding in low-lying areas. There is also some risk of tornados.

ARES Team is alerted via radio and e-mail and told to keep an eye on the track forecast.

1pm: Best info from Weather Service... Note that the "westward shift" of the track has ended. Hurricane will arrive on Wednesday. We should expect 5 to 10 inches of rain. The wind field of the hurricane is expect edto extend across the entire State once landfall occurs.

10pm. Secured for the night.

Monday, September 26

ARES Area Nets activated.

Approximately 9am: At the request of Emergency Management ARES Operators were assigned to provide communications at the following Shelters: East Lee County HS; Estero Recreation Center; Hertz Arena; Island Coast HS; Oak Hammock MS; South Fort Myers HS; Harns Marsh MS; Pottorf ES. [Note: Operators were also requested for Dunbar HS; Gateway MS and Veterans Park Recreation Center in Lehigh Acres. Those requests were not filled.]

ARES operators were also activated to the Cape Coral EOC.

4 pm: Rich Schnieders KR4PI joins Smith at the Lee County EOC.

4:07 pm: Jon Scharbrough AA4JS activates as Blue Area Net Control.

4:08 pm: Robert Griffin KJ4WPV reports he is on station at Harns March MS.

5 pm: Steven Clayton K4SJC reports that he is serving as Red Area Net Control from home.

5:07 pm: Tom Muye AC4TM reports that he will serve as Green Area Net Control from home.

Tom Provenzano KM4LPW is back up for Tom.

5:12 pm: Hamilton Agnew K4HKA reports on station at South Fort Myers HS

6:15 pm: Melodie Schroth KW4MEL offers to help at Island Coast HS

6:15 pm: Steven Clayton K4SJC reports that he is on station at the Cape Coral EOC.

7 pm: Rick Lawrence W4RIC reports that he is on station at the Cape Coral Hospital.

7:30 pm: Broadcast of 7pm EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater
7:56 pm: Don Domina KCØDE is reports that he is on station at Island Coast HS.
8:40 pm: Bulletin to all from Lee County EOC about latest weather report.
9 pm: Rich Schnieders leaves the EOC for home.
10 pm: All Nets and Stations secured for the night.

Tuesday, September 27

7:30 am: Broadcast of 7am EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater.
10 am: KR4PI returns to the EOC.
11am: Eric Chappel N3ZIP reports he is on station at East Lee HS
12:30 pm: Bulletin Announcement on weather situation. Repeated on all Area Nets by the EOC.
Storm will arrive about 1 – 2 pm on Wednesday and appears to be on a path similar to Hurricane Charlie. Storm surge can be expected as early as Wednesday morning and is expected to hit a peak of 15' late Wednesday. The surge should be clear by Thursday. Winds will be 130 plus mph. Fifteen Shelters have been opened plus one Special Needs Shelter. Law Enforcement strongly recommends that everyone be off the roads by 8 pm tonight. Health Services report that they are already struggling.
1:30 pm: Miscellaneous amateur operators testing their gear. Continues for about an hour.
3:30 pm: Bulletin to all stations – Evacuation Ordered and Weather Update.
3:35 pm: David Sheppard W2PAX reports that he is on station at Pottorf ES.
4:40 pm: Robert Griffin KJ4WPV reports that the Internet is down at Harns Marsh MS.
5:30 pm: David Porter K4DHP reports that he is on station at Hertz Arena.
7:30 pm: Broadcast of 7pm EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater
8pm: KR4PI leaves the EOC and returns home.
10 pm: Eric Chappel reports that he has left East Lee HS. He will not return, but did leave his radio equipment there.

Wednesday, September 28

7 am: Area Net Controls report operational...
Robert Griffin KJ4LPW – Green Area (South County)
Steven Clayton K4SJC – Red Area (Cape Coral)
David Penezic WG4K – Yellow Area (Lehigh Acres and vicinity)
Tony D'Angelo KJ4WXH is backup for Dave.
Jon Scharbrough AA4JS – Blue Area (Fort Myers & North Fort Myers)
7:30 am: Bulletin to all from Lee County EOC – Weather update.
IAN is now a Cat 4 Hurricane and off the coast of Florida. Heading more to the east. The center of the storm is about 55 miles south of Sanibel. The outer eye wall is only 20 miles off shore. Landfall is estimated to be near or south of Englewood. Surge is expected to reach 15 feet. Arrival on shore will be Wednesday afternoon. This is a Major Storm. Look for flash and urban flooding with up to 24 inches of rain in addition to high winds. The forecast confidence is high at this time!
8:10 am: BJ Lancaster KD5CMM has agreed to replace N3ZIP at East Lee HS per WG4K.

8:40 am: BJ Lancaster KD5CMM reports that he is on station at East Lee HS.

9:15 – 11 am: Reports coming in from the Shelters.

11:15 am: Don Domina KCØDE reports that Island Coast has opened the third floor classrooms to handle their still-increasing inflow of Clients.

11:30 am: Robert LaRue KK4SER in Bonita Springs reports that he's lost power.

11:45 am: Tony D'Angelo KJ4WXH reports that he's lost power in Lehigh Acres.

12 noon: Dan Philgreen KO4GKO reports lost power for 1 hour at Shell Point, but it came back. He is now operating from the main shelter at Shell Point.

12:05 pm: Lost power at the Lee County EOC. Now on generators.

12:40 pm: Robert Ficarelli reports from his Condo building in east Bonita Springs (on Big Hickory Island) that cars in the parking lot are submerged.

12:50 – 3 pm: Reports of power outages throughout the area continue to come in to the EOC.

2:40 pm: Robert Ficarelli KM4OWA reports that there are cars floating in the parking lot at his condo building in east Bonita Springs.

3:30 pm: Ken WB3BNY portable reports that they've had to move to the 2nd floor of their home on Pine Crest Ct. in Cape Coral.

3:45 pm: Jon Scharbrough AA4JS reports that Oak Hammock MS has lost power. Now running on generator.

4:07 pm: Robert Griffin KJ4WPV reports via hand-held to WG4K that his Go Box transceiver was damaged by a power surge.

4:10 pm: David Sheppard W2PAX reports that he has moved out of the radio room at Pottorf ES. Says it is just not safe to remain there given the wind and debris in the air conditions.

4:15 pm: WINK News reports that the wind speed is dropping from a high of 150 mph to about 135 mph. The surge, however, is not showing signs of decreasing yet.

4:30 pm: David Sheppard W2PAX reports that Pottorf ES (the Special Needs Shelter) is without water and sanitary service.

5 pm: Arc Thames W4CPD, SARNET Net Control contacted W4LCO to report on a call to amateur radio from a cell phone and relayed to SARNET that there are a dozen citizens trapped in a residence on Sanibel. The info was passed to Fire / Search & Rescue. They were able to contact the original caller on their cell phone. (No other info on disposition.)
(Radio traffic to and from Shelters continued between 5 and 6 pm.)

6:15 pm: Steven Clayton K4SJC reports from the Cape Coral EOC that 75% of LCEC customers have no power. That roads in the Cape are unsafe because of debris and downed power lines. Traffic lights are out. The surge is expected to peak at high tide (about 7pm) and then begin to subside. There is a 6 pm curfew in effect as of today.

6:30 pm: A "boil water" order has been issued for all of Lee County.

7 pm: EOC Briefing relayed to the ARES Area Nets and all operators...
Winds are down to 130 mph and IAN is moving to the NNW at 8 mph. Heavy rain continues. The effects of the storm are expect to "clear out" by Thursday afternoon. The storm surge is expected to begin receding about 8pm.

8:30 pm: Don Domina KCØDE reports that Island Coast conditions continue to deteriorate. The generator does not power their A/C and it is getting warm in the building, given the "mass" of bodies now inside. Plans are being made to move Clients from the 3rd floor to the 1st and 2nd and open some doors / windows to try to get the air moving inside.

8:45 pm: Robert Ficarelli KM4OWA reports from east Bonita Springs that the water is receding.
9 pm: All Net Controls have secured. The Lee County EOC Radio Room is secured for the night.

Thursday, September 29

7:20 am: Received briefings from some of the ARES Team...

WG4K reports all OK

K4SJC at the Cape EOC reports all OK and they are securing as they are no longer needed.

K4HJK has left South Fort Myers HS and is reporting from home.

K4DHP is still on location at Hertz Arena.

W4RIC is securing from the Cape Hospital as they are no longer needed.

W2PAX is still on location at Pottorf and using an HT to communicate with the EOC.

7:30 am: Broadcast of 7am EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater.

7:55 am: KO4GKO reports from Shell Point that a lady has broken her hip and they need transportation to a hospital. (Passed this to the Fire Desk.)

Dan also reported that 90% of the homes at Shell Point are without power. And the Sanibel Causeway is closed to Sanibel Island.

8 am: Jon Scharbrough reports that he is leaving Oak Hammock and going home, as he is no longer needed there per the Shelter Manager.

8 am – 10am: Took reports from ARES members about their status at home. Some good, some not so good. The best news is that no one reports any injuries.

10 am: Jon Scharbrough AA4JS arrived to work with Smith at the Lee County EOC.

Noon: David Porter K4DHP has secured from Hertz Arena and returned home.

10 am – 6 pm: Continued to handle some radio traffic from ARES and non-ARES operators in our area. Also handled some HF traffic and some SARNET traffic with the State EOC.

8 pm: Very little radio traffic after 6 pm. All ARES Team members in Shelters have now returned to their homes.

10:30 pm: W4LCO (Lee County EOC) shut down for the night.

Friday, September 30

7 am: Resume on Air at the Lee County EOC.

7:30 am: Broadcast of 7am EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater.

9 am: Smith left the EOC to go home and check out Condo. All OK. No power, no internet.

11 am: Smith returned to the EOC.

11:05: Back "on the air."

Info relayed via 147.165 Repeater: Some gas stations open, but they are only accepting cash because their Internet Credit Card links are down. We are told that Costco and BJs can process member's cards.

12:25 pm: Eric Chappel N3ZIP reports that he has picked up his radio gear from East Lee HS

12:50 pm: Tony D'Angelo KJ4WXH reports that in Lehigh Acres some have power. No phones or internet and cell service is spotty. He lost his tower, but it fell away from the house.

1 pm – 6 pm: Took reports from around the area. Mostly power outages; streets blocked with debris; flooding of homes (first floor); No traffic lights functioning.

4 pm: Andrew Blitz KO4FEY reports that the 145.170 repeater atop the Riva Condos in south Fort Myers is off the air. (Later we found that the antenna had been destroyed by IAN.)
7:30 pm: Reported via the 147.165 Repeater on EM's 7pm Briefing.
10 pm: EOC Radio Room W4LCO secured for the night.

Saturday, October 1st

7:30 am: Broadcast of 7am EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater.
7:50 am: SIT Report from KN4CPA
7:55 am: Joined ARES HF Net.
8:25 am: KJ4WXH reports OK in Lehigh Acres. On battery power.
8:27 am: K4HKA at home and monitoring on battery power
9:05 am: AC4ZM reports power back on at his location in Collier County.
9:10 am: KM4OWA reports that I-75 southbound is closed at the Myakka Bridge, MM 179.
Water over the bridge.
10:10 am: Checked into SWFTN.
Note: KCØDE reports that he will be leaving town for a few days.
11:10 am: KD7ADB reports that DOT has established Hwy 27 as detour for I-75
11:10 am: Concern was expressed about the status of Frank Raab K4FHR. Dave Sheppard's wife, Jennifer will check on Frank.
1:24 pm: W2PAX reports that both Frank K4FHR and John Liddell KK4QFP are OK.
5:10 pm: Comms with WB3BNY in central Pennsylvania about people needing help in Cape Coral. Info passed to Fire Desk.
5:35 pm: W2PAX reports that I-75 is now open in both directions.
7:30 pm: Broadcast of 7pm EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater
10:00 pm: EOC Radio Room W4LCO secured for the night.

Sunday, October 2nd

7:30 am: Broadcast of 7am EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater.
10:50 am: KK4SER in Bonita Springs...OK. River is not a threat.
11 am: Brian W4LOY Need a source of Bulk Propane. Try Balgas on Fowler
11:25 am: Jon AA4JS. All OK. Will arrive at the EOC later.
12:30 pm: N3NAI reports that Home Depot, Veterans & Skyline is flooded.
1:35 pm: Contact from Sanibel DPW - Kelsey. Need transport for Verizon Rep to inspect tower.
(See Don Domina's Article in the Modulator about Sanibel City using licensed amateur radio operators to provide communications.)
1:35 pm: KEØUMS wants to know status of Pelican Bay repeater. (On air, but limited range.)
2.25 pm: To Kelsey, Sanibel DPW... Verizon Rep is in boat and on the way.
2:30 pm: KB9RPY...Is FM City Marina available to land equipment? (No. Use 3000 Oasis Grand Blvd. landing. (Passed this info to the Fire Desk.)
3:30 pm: W4OPS via "Mentor@fmarc.net)...Mike Turner...Is there a source of 45Amp PowerPole connectors that anyone knows of? (Rick Black K4RAB has some. Mike and Rick were to work out the details.)

3:45 pm: KB4VU (no log of what this contact was about.)
7:30 pm: Broadcast of 7pm EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater
10:00 pm: EOC Radio Room W4LCO secured for the night.

Monday, October 3rd

7:30 am: Broadcast of 7am EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater.
7:45 am: WG4K, W2ARP, KK4SER, KN4CPA and KR4PI all report OK on available.
7:45 am: Checked into the HF ARES Net.
9:20 am: Leo Senus KC3RVY reports back in town. No water, No power.
9:30 am: Smith left EOC to check on Condo and the antenna at Riva. (The 145.170 repeater. The antenna was missing. Shut down the repeater.)
3:55 pm: Smith back at the EOC. W4LCO on the air.
4 pm: K4DIP... all OK? (Yes)
4:05 pm: AA4JS reports that FPL removed a large tree branch that was on his "power drop" to the house.
5 pm: Left EOC for home. W4LCO activation terminated.

7:30 pm: Broadcast of 7pm EM Briefing on 147.165 Repeater from W9GPI's home.

----End

NOTE: A separate report will detail "Lessons Learned" and "Suggestions for Improvement."