



Oxford County ARES/CERT Comm

Meeting Agenda

November 3, 2025
7:00 p.m. local



I. Call to Order and Introductions:

II. Notes from EMA Director:

III. Notes from State EC:

IV. Old Business:

1. Comm Trailer – updates
2. EMA Office -Updates
3. Maine SET – Participants?
4. Inventory

V. New Business:

1. CERT reviews during the winter months
2. ARES reviews during the winter months
- 3.

VI. Other:

1. *Items not on the agenda brought by members to the meeting for discussion, demonstration, etc*
2. **2026 ARRL Foundation Scholarship Program is Now Accepting Applications**
 - i. **10/30/2025**
 - ii. *The ARRL Foundation Scholarship Program has opened the application window for 2026 scholarships. Applications will be accepted through December 30, 2025, at 12 PM EST. Students are encouraged to apply for more than 170 scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$25,000. All applicants must be active, FCC-licensed amateur radio operators.*
 - iii. *The scholarships were established by generous donors and are managed by the ARRL Foundation as a means to inspire youth to explore amateur radio and to pursue higher education and related career paths -- and especially in wireless communications.*
 - iv. *In 2025, the ARRL Foundation awarded 170 awards totaling \$800,000. More information and the online application are available www.arrl.org/scholarship-program.*
3. *From N1MRE Andy – email about VAR will be brought up in the meeting*

VII. Adjourn:

Appendix 1

Notes from Our Maine EC:

ARES SHARES HF radio Contact

Inbox:

Derrick Ouellette Oct 31, 2025, 10:32 AM (2 days ago)

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Hello all, I was put through the ringer with questions this morning on why ham radio is valuable for EmmComm. Particularly versus CB or GMRS. I mentioned the value of HF communications but other than local planned events like the Can-Am, Trek Across Maine, Canoe races, and others I have no solid example or stats I could provide.

So here comes some things I want to try, and I need your help.

1. I would like to put together a spreadsheet of examples to prove HF has helped in the past or going forward especially in our area but even if not.
This could be stuff from a disaster with comms down in town, county, or area where HF radio was used to pass messages successfully .
Or it could be something like the SET County A got ahold of County B with a welfare message.
2. If anyone has been able to get messages in and out of Jamacia.

If you folks have info that would help me with this, I would appreciate it.

Derrick P. Ouellette, AAS, AEMT, FF-II, I/C
Deputy Director - Aroostook County Emergency Management
Deputy Fire Chief - North Lakes Fire & Rescue
158 Sweden Street
Caribou, Maine 04736

One of many responses:

Steve Nov 1, 2025, 9:31 PM (23 hours ago)

to **Charles**, Damon, Derrick, n1wjo572@gmail.com, bobiswim@gmail.com, cfox@penobscot-county.net, kb1ypz@yahoo.com, Dale, Darren, dennisbosley143@gmail.com, Fred,

Hi Damon,

I'll comment on your last point:

One simple example of potential HF usage in Maine is for asynchronous radio-mail, accessible by anyone in Maine with HF capabilities. Using Winlink's Hybrid RMS servers (such as in Nova Scotia, New England, etc) operators can exchange radio email with (integration of ICS forms) completely independent of internet, email, or any commercial infrastructure.

Thanks for bringing up this subject. Spot on.

Such an arrangement is basically an open bulletin board system (BBS). Winlink's radio-only (hybrid) system can be very useful with a couple of cautions. First off, the system is not very robust for messages going well out of the originating region and second, since anyone can use a hybrid RMS, in an emergency the servers could get overloaded.

To make it work as well as possible, the users in a state should agree to one common primary message pick up station (MPS) and one common secondary MPS. This will minimize RMS to RMS relaying. (An MPS is simply the participating radio-only Winlink station.)

We did this with a few of the Weekly Maine Winlink sessions, most recently in early 2025. 6 operators used RO (including you, thank you) and it worked well. The selected RMSes were VE1YZ (Halifax) and K2FAM (NJ). (I think an upstate NY RMS was also tried.) But, the loading was very light. That said, with the noted coordination, it does represent an almost zero effort way to implement this type of thing.

A dedicated BBS using, for example, BPQ software offers the advantage of a defined user base (membership) and other customization features. For redundancy this requires a couple or three linked stations and volunteers who will manage the stations on a 24/7 basis with back up power and all that. Back 10 years or so ago I set up a BBS for Maine ARES that had (if I remember correctly) HF and VHF packet ports. It died for lack of interest. Likewise we have about 70 registered Winlink users in Maine and only about 1/3 of those participate and a fraction of those could be considered regulars. A BBS requires a commitment of time and money from the sysops and a lack of interest will lead to the death of the operation.

We do have a Region 1 BBS for SHARES members in New England. At this time, activity is mainly by SHARES AUX individuals but a couple of EMAs do participate, one (Waldo) very regularly. This should be a key gathering place for New England's emergency organizations since we have dedicated channels for operation – no competition from others - and comms are encrypted.

In line with your comments, we should look seriously at Amateur Service Winlink Radio Only (Hybrid) for situations where the commercial infrastructure is seriously compromised. Additionally, the SHARES Region 1 BBS is robust and available for EMAs that are SHARES members. (Remember, both Amateur and SHARES Winlink in the normal radio-email mode are reliant on the Amazon cloud.)

Winlink Express is also used as a client for the RRI Digital Traffic Network (KY2D's DTN hub in Maine) and Winlink also represents an entry point to the traffic system via the RRI forms that are included with Winlink Express (Standard Radiogram, ICS 213 Radiogram, Welfare Radiogram and Quick Welfare Message (Winlink to email/SMS).

So:

- We need more Winlink operators and Winlink capable EMAs. They need to be exercised frequently.
- Operators should learn the normal radio-email Winlink mode of operation as well as radio-only.
- All EMAs should be SHARES members. For Winlink and voice, there are no differences in equipment. At the present the county EMA membership is Waldo County 2 locations; Lincoln County; Aroostook County and York County. Additionally, there are 4 very active SHARES Auxiliary stations that are spread across Maine.
- Maine EMAs that have SHARES call signs but are not active include Androscoggin, Knox, Kennebec and Hancock. Knox is fully equipped.
- Other Maine EMAs include Piscataquis 2 locations (in set up) and Penobscot (SHARES membership in process).
- The Maine Weekly Winlink Message will continue to support the use of Winlink forms, Requests for Information, radio-only, radiogram format messages, etc.
- For information on the Region 1 SHARES BBS, please contact me.

Regards,

Steve KB1TCE