

2006 SET

ARRL Sections are permitted to conduct their SET anytime between 1 September and 30 November as opposed to conducting the training exercise on a single nationwide date. The latitude in this time period has caused problems. First, the National Traffic System (NTS) cannot effectively participate because it cannot be reasonably brought up nationwide just to accommodate a few sections on a given weekend and do the same thing for different sections on other weekends. Secondly, this time period is right in the middle of hurricane season. It really doesn't make a lot of sense to have a SET immediately before/during/after after a hurricane.

During the eight years I have been SM, I have written up seven SET scenarios and was working with Louisiana and South Texas on an eighth one when Katrina came to town. The result has been that two of seven SETs had to be moved to a later date because of hurricanes. The date change was very complicated because three sections were involved and a multiplicity of arrangements were in place with served agencies as well as personal commitments. As you can imagine coordinating this date change was like trying to herd a bunch of cats. The net result was that SET participation on the delayed dates dropped off significantly.

Since the first of the year I have been conducting a campaign to get the SET Date changed to a single late Spring date in order to exercise before potential large area storm events and to provide the NTS with an opportunity to effectively exercise with ARES. The proposal to move the SET to a Spring Date is currently being considered by the ARRL Public Services Committee. Until a decision is rendered Mississippi will stand down. It just doesn't make sense to invest many people's time and resources into planning only to have the apple cart turned upside down by a real emergency event.

This is not to say that DEC/EC should not conduct a SET Exercise this year (see page 105 of the September QST). Please do and please keep me informed of your plans!

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