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Amateur radio adds spark to local events

Members of the Sussex County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) will be all eyes and ears during two popular area events in the coming days.

The group of amateur radio operators will volunteer their services during Return Day Thursday, Nov. 4, and again during Punkin' Chunkin' from Friday through Sunday, Nov. 5-7.

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"Sussex County Emergency Operations Center Director Joe Thomas has asked the county's RACES unit to offer 'feet on the ground' observations directly to the EOC during these events," RACES Radio Officer John Ferguson said.

"Our members will be tasked to keep an eye toward public safety and to offer up-to-the-minute condition reports as thousands of spectators gather at these popular local events."

Thomas said the additional manpower will give the EOC real-time observations, which helps emergency responders manage resources and staff, such as police, medics, and road crews working the events.

"They provide the EOC the right information, at the right time, so we can make the right decisions," Thomas said.

Sussex County RACES is a corps of volunteers assigned to aid the Emergency Operations Center during special events and major disasters, providing a critical communications link when conventional radio, telephones or other forms of communication might be overloaded or down.

RACES members have volunteered thousands of hours by contributing amateur radio communications support during the blizzards of 2010, the Sea Colony Make-A-Wish Triathlon and the Apple-Scrapple Festival.

For more information on the RACES program, visit sussexcountyraces.com or contact RACES radio officer John Ferguson at 858-5310 or k3pfw@arrl.net.



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