

Raytheon's ACU-M used by ARES Calgary for emergency response

In Canada and the United States, the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is a group of trained amateur radio operators who volunteer their skills and equipment to aid in community service. The Calgary division of ARES is no different.

ARES Calgary is made up of over forty members who regularly volunteer their time to assist the number of agencies in Calgary that need communications support during a disaster.

The group also frequently provides communication networks and coordination for local events and during fires, floods and similar occurrences.

User Profile:

ARES Calgary offers support to many agencies including the City of Calgary's fire department, police department and emergency medical service; the Canadian Red Cross; the Calgary Airport Authority; Emergency Management Alberta; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; the Canadian Pacific Railway; Parks Canada; Emergency Preparedness Canada; Environment Canada; Southern Region Search and Rescue; and several other municipal districts, towns and counties throughout the area.

ARES Calgary provides communications to these agencies when all normal communication systems are disabled due to storm damage or are busy due to overuse.

Business Driver:

When an emergency occurs and these agencies come on scene, they bring a multitude of radios and

communications equipment operating on different bands and frequencies. ARES Calgary wished to use their skills to not only provide agencies with a means to communicate through amateur radio but also to allow them to communicate with one another using their existing radio equipment.

ARES Calgary was establishing net control by monitoring multiple frequencies. However, there was an associated risk of missing incoming messages due to the number of radios being monitored. Messages were also being manually passed between these various radios and frequencies causing a delay in transmitting and receiving critical messages.

ARES Calgary had a limited number of radios of one type available to distribute among all of the emergency services mutual aid partners. Because of this, they needed an interoperability system that could be used to interconnect these agencies' existing equipment.

The Solution:

ARES Calgary chose Raytheon's ACU-M interoperability system, which allows these agencies to interconnect their various land mobile radio systems together.

The ACU-M is a lightweight interoperability system that meets ARES Calgary's need for a mobile solution that can be carried from scene to scene. The system provides interoperability between its four audio ports for radios or other devices, two voice over internet protocol channels and a headset port. The unit can interconnect radios in any band including HF, VHF, UHF, P25, 800 MHz and Nextel iDEN phones.

"Through this technology, we are now capable of



ARES Calgary's mobile communications and command vehicle

linking our emergency partners and allowing these partners to use their own radios as well as additional equipment provided by us," said Gerry Leach, president and emergency coordinator for ARES Calgary.

Benefits:

The ACU-M has provided the organization with better control of their radio control nets and the ability to provide additional radios which will work with their emergency partners' existing equipment.

It is used by ARES Calgary to connect UHF, VHF, 800 MHz and air band radios. The ACU-M has been implemented during various large scale events including the Alberta 2008 World Cup in Canmore, Alberta and

during the Cochrane, Alberta radio network change from a trunked radio communications network to a conventional UHF system.

"This equipment has provided ARES Calgary with the tools to be a major asset and the ability to be an invaluable service to our emergency partners," added Leach. "We are very satisfied with Raytheon's ACU-M and the sales support we have received."

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