



Radio-Active!

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ARES and CERT Support Active Shooter Training Exercise in Soquel



providing responders with valuable experience in managing complex emergency situations. Santa Cruz County CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) and ARES volunteers played an important supporting role by monitoring access points and parking areas surrounding the controlled training site. Volunteers helped redirect unauthorized pedestrian and vehicle traffic, answered questions from community members, and reported any suspicious activity or concerns.

By the Numbers

- **37 volunteers** participated
- **522 volunteer hours** contributed
- **102 of 105 shifts filled**
- **97.1% staffing rate**, exceeding last year's participation
- **Six access points** staffed across two shifts each day



Effective Communications and Coordination

Communication was coordinated using MURS radios. An informal radio net operated throughout each shift, with regular health-and-welfare checks conducted by designated net control operators. Also, public safety radios provided by the Sheriff's Office allowed real-time situational awareness updates regarding scenario activities, including training start and stop notifications. The exercise provided an excellent opportunity for participants to practice radio procedures, tactical call signs, and communication protocols in a realistic operational environment. Continued on next page.



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Santa Cruz County ARES Purpose

- The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment with their local ARES leadership for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.
- We are not fire fighters or police or sheriff's officers. We are volunteers who care about our communities by using our emergency communication skills.
- Before volunteering in an emergency, we first take care of ourselves, our family, and our home.
- We value every member's contribution, irrespective of license class, years of experience, or the price tag of equipment.

Perimeter Monitoring - continued

Building Skills and Partnerships

The event successfully met several secondary objectives beyond perimeter security. Volunteers gained practical experience working alongside partner agencies, strengthened relationships between CERT and ARES members, and provided valuable mentoring opportunities for newer volunteers.

Preparation efforts contributed significantly to the success of the operation. Volunteers received briefing packets in advance containing incident information, maps, and assignment details.

Positive Feedback from Participants

An after-action review conducted on July 9 gathered feedback from volunteers and leadership. Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the experience and highlighted several key strengths:

- Strong enthusiasm, flexibility, and professionalism among volunteers
- Excellent collaboration between CERT, ARES, and the Sheriff's Office
- Effective use of radio communications and improved operating procedures
- Well-coordinated shift management and volunteer assignments
- Opportunities to rotate positions and gain varied experience
- Consistently high volunteer punctuality and commitment

Looking Ahead

While the exercise was widely regarded as a success, the after-action review identified several opportunities for improvement, including enhancing public awareness of campus closures during future events, improving distribution of briefing materials, and updating signage for greater visibility and durability.

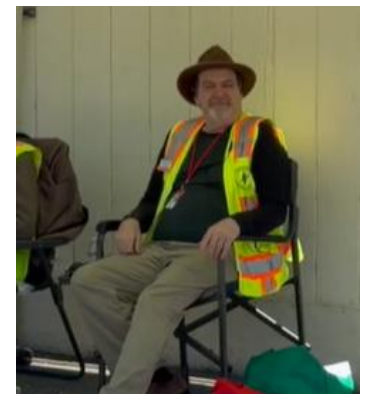
Overall, the 2026 Active Shooter Training exercise showcased the dedication, professionalism, and teamwork of Santa Cruz County's ARES and CERT volunteers. Their contributions helped create a safe and effective training environment for first responders while strengthening partnerships that will benefit the community during future emergencies.



Roberta – AJ6KN



Alan – WB6AQP



Mark – WA5TBK

Report your volunteer hours!

ARES volunteers reported **829.5 hours in June**, highlighting our continued commitment to training, preparedness, and community service. Wow, record reporting for the year.

Reporting your hours does more than track activity—it demonstrates to county public safety managers that ARES is active, dependable, and ready to serve when needed. Logged volunteer time helps maintain our visibility and reinforces the value of amateur radio in emergency response. Please remember to report all ARES and ham radio–related activities, no matter how small.

Enter your hours here: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>

Every hour tells our story. Let us keep it visible.

NEP Comms exercise returning

Looking ahead, the next Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness (NEP) communications exercise is scheduled for **Monday, August 3rd at 7:00 PM**. The exercise will be run the same as the one in May. Bulletins are issued several times at the beginning of the exercise on the three repeaters – WR6AOK, K6BJ and W6TUW, clearly distributing the test message. Ham radio operators will then check in solely to report neighborhood tallies, streamlining operations and improving the experience for everyone involved.

Santa Cruz County Field Day 2026

Amateur Radio operators and friends gathered June 27–28 at the former Par 3 Golf Course in Aptos for the annual ARRL Field Day exercise, joining thousands of amateur radio operators across North America in demonstrating emergency communications capabilities.

The event attracted **71 attendees**, including **28 local ARES members**, who worked together throughout the weekend to set up stations, operate radios, and showcase the value of amateur radio during emergencies.

Weather and operating conditions were favorable, leading to an outstanding weekend of radio activity. Operators successfully made contacts with **all 50 U.S. states** and several international locations, demonstrating both the reach and reliability of amateur radio communications.

The team achieved a **Field Day score of 4,879 points**, reflecting strong participation, effective station operations, and excellent teamwork among volunteers. Also, testing was offered and nine passed their exam. New generals and amateur extras are now among us.

Beyond the contacts and score, Field Day provided valuable hands-on experience in deploying equipment, operating under field conditions, and strengthening relationships among local amateur radio operators. The event also offered an opportunity to engage community members and highlight the vital role amateur radio can play when traditional communication systems are unavailable.

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who participated, volunteered, and helped make Field Day 2026 a successful and enjoyable event. More details can be found here: https://www.slvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/K6MMM_FD2026.pdf and an automated contact map: https://www.slvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/K6MMM_FD2026.mp4

Resources

- Website: <https://xczcomm.com/>
- Reporting volunteer hours: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ARES-of-Santa-Cruz-County-Ca-296232310799866>
- Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/431308973875528>
- PIO Articles: <https://arrlsantaclara.org/news/> or <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/news/>
- Submitting personal information such as DSW application, personal data update, education certificates, PDFs of deployment documents: email to EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov
- Santa Cruz Communications Support offers four loaner kits for ham operators: two for vehicle deployment (mobile dual-band radio, mag mount antenna, battery, kneeboard) and two for stationary outdoor use (vehicle kit plus tripod antenna, lighting, and pop-up). To borrow a kit, contact John (N6QX), Roberta (AJ6KN), Stephen (KM6NEP), or Dan (N6RJX).

ARES Supports Sheriff's Office at Aptos Fourth of July Parade

Santa Cruz County ARES was activated once again to support the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office during the annual Aptos Fourth of July Parade. Sixteen dedicated volunteers staffed nine positions along the parade route, serving as extra eyes and ears for public safety personnel while helping monitor crowds and roadway conditions throughout the event.

This year's celebration carried special significance as the nation marked its 250th birthday, making for a slightly longer parade than usual. Many spectators of all ages lined the route to enjoy the festivities, creating a vibrant and patriotic atmosphere.

In addition to volunteer monitoring, large protective buses were strategically positioned at both ends of the parade route to clearly mark road closures and provide an added layer of protection against unauthorized vehicle traffic entering crowded areas. ARES volunteers maintained communications using handheld radios operating through a cross-band repeater system, while Net Control operators simultaneously monitored the Sheriff's Office "Red" channel to maintain situational awareness throughout the event.

The parade was a tremendous success. No lost/found children were reported, and the event proceeded safely from start to finish. As in previous years, the most challenging period came after the parade ended, when volunteers assisted with monitoring the increased vehicle and pedestrian traffic as the area reopened. Despite the congestion, many operators remarked that the event appeared especially well organized this year.

While the activation lasts only a few hours, it provides a rewarding opportunity for ARES volunteers to support the Sheriff's Office, strengthen community partnerships, and contribute to a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July celebration for everyone in Aptos.



ATV Play



Windi AK6NI & Bruce KN6DBR

Moses KN6TXF, John, N6QX & Mark WA5TBK



Jeff KN6PAA, Alan WB6AQP, Rob KN6DBL

Activities – Save the dates

2026 SCC ARES Events

Date	Event	Approx. or confirmed date?	Description
8/16/2026	Race through the Redwoods	Confirmed	Race through the Redwoods is a 10K foot race that starts and finishes at Roaring Camp but the majority traverses the redwoods in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. It is promoted by the Felton Business and Community Association. ARES provides monitoring of runners positions and safety for the organizers. https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4DA9A822A4F4CE9-36539434-race .
9/20/2026 (est)	Santa Cruz Triathlon	Approximate	Santa Cruz Triathlon is a non-profit that donates proceeds to various athletic programs in the county. ARES provides monitoring of participants positions and safety for the organizers.
October 30, 2026 (est) 1530 - 2030	Halloween Trunk or Treat 5200 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz	Approximate	Trunk of Treat is organized by the Santa Cruz Sheriffs. ARES provides monitoring of participants along with closed road staffing and shuttle parking location.

2026 Other Radio Events for Ham Operator Participation

Date	Event	Approx. or confirmed date?	Description
Each Wednesday 10am - 12pm	Loft Coffee 2701 Cabrillo College Dr, Aptos		Gathering of general interest, sharing of ideas, getting some elmer help
2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month 10am	C.A.K.E. @ Loft Coffee 2701 Cabrillo College Dr, Aptos		C.A.K.E. = Coffee/Caffeine Assisted Knowledge Exchange. Gathering of general interest, sharing of ideas, getting some elmer help
1st Saturday of each month 10am - 2pm	POTA	Approximate	Play radio at a scenic park near by. Not formal and any mode can be used. Emails sent prior to event to indicate the specific park.

Let us grow our hobby and include others!



FREE Ham Radio Class – Starts 10/15/26

Get Your FCC Amateur Radio License in Just 7 Weeks – No Experience Needed!

Our ham radio Technician's license class will cover the basics—from how radios work, to making your first contact, and understanding licensing requirements. This family-friendly course combines engaging presentations, hands-on equipment demonstrations, practical learning, and opportunities to connect with local amateur radio operators.

- **Instructors:** Bob Fike, KO6XX, Dan N6RJX, Kathi KE6VTY, Roberta AJ6KN
- **Date:** weekly on Thursdays, 10/15/26 – 11/19/26 followed by "Now What Do I do" class on 12/10/26
- **Time:** 7:00 to 9:00 pm
- **Location:** Santa Cruz County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), 5200 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz
- **Testing:** Saturday, 12/5/26, 1:00-3:00 pm at the EOC

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Gordon West Ham Radio License Manual – Technician: <http://tiny.cc/GWTechnicianManual2026>
- A free online study tool: <https://hamstudy.org/>
- Enthusiasm and curiosity – no electronics knowledge needed – we start from scratch!

WHY TAKE AN IN-PERSON CLASS?

- **Learn the Local Ham Radio Landscape:** Explore Santa Cruz County repeaters, radio clubs, emergency communications resources, and opportunities to get involved.
- **Get Hands-On Experience**
- **Considerations for Your Own Home Station:** Learn the essentials of selecting equipment and setting up a station for reliable communication.
- **Discover Amateur Radio's Community Impact:** Learn about the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and how local operators support public service and emergency communications.
- **Learn from Experienced Operators:** Ask questions, gain practical insights, and benefit from the real-world experience of local amateur radio enthusiasts.

HOW TO REGISTER

Limited to 25 students so register early!

Scan the QR code below or visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/hamfallclass2026>



Questions? Email Roberta Roberts, AJ6KN, Admin for Bob at roberta@slvares.org
Bob's email: bob.ko6xx@gmail.com