



Community Emergency Radio Association

Reflections & The Year Ahead

Winter 2023



CONTENTS

President's Message

Neighborhood Radio Watch Highlights

El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club Highlights

Donor Recognition

Support CERA



www.cerafund.org | [donate](#)

President's Message

Bob Hess, CERA President & Chair



Hello to our El Dorado County Neighborhood Radio Watch and our El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club friends!

In 2022, both the [Neighborhood Radio Watch](#) (NRW) and the [El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club](#) (EDCARC) have grown tremendously and we thank all of our radio users for getting the message out.

The [Community Emergency Radio Association](#) (CERA) is our new non-profit organization, which was formed with a [mission](#) to support both NRW and EDCARC. In the following pages, we highlight the phenomenal achievements of both programs and shine a spotlight on key contributors who went above and beyond to make CERA's programs successful in 2022. For 2023, we want to continue to grow our member base, expand CERA's infrastructure footprint, programs and create a dedicated NRW Board. CERA's Board has set the following goals for the coming year:

1. **Migrate NRW repeaters to business-band frequencies** to make our NRW program affordable to everyone. CERA will cover the FCC license costs and NRW members will no longer need to pay for [GMRS licenses](#). If you are using a CERA recommended radio, your radio will continue to work on the new frequencies which will also be more secure and interference-free.
2. **Expand radio communications coverage** in areas with spotty to no coverage by interconnecting our repeaters for interoperability and to optimize reliability and signal performance.
3. **Build up our infrastructure resiliency** by adding more repeater sites, replacing old equipment, and equipping the remaining repeater sites with generator backup power (power is often the first service lost during wildfires or disaster events).
4. **Install a high-power, single paging transmitter** to cover EDC's Western Slope during widespread emergency situations. Localized alerts will be sent to just those communities under threat. Alerts can also be sent to individual pocket pagers (costs \$15-\$25 each) to help ensure members receive alerts.
5. **Improve and eventually replace [EDCARC ARES's](#) radio trailer** which is used for dispatching emergency messages to field operators during disaster events like Caldor Fire animal rescue and last winter's snow emergency. The trailer and its equipment are aging and needs upgrading to reliably help with emergencies.

All of CERA's radio infrastructure, programs, and services are free to the public. CERA's Board and volunteer staff lend their time and skills for free. These hard-earned skills are acquired through decades of professional and amateur radio training to understand emergency communications, electronics, hardware and software programming, antenna tuning and performance, terrain analysis, radio equipment set up and propagation to maximize radio signals and communications.

We rely on donations and grants to set up and maintain one of the most extensive and robust [radio repeater networks](#) in California. We hope and appreciate that you might **please consider [donating to CERA](#)** to offset our expenses. All donations are tax deductible and we'll email you a receipt for any dollars you can spare.

Last, but not least, I'd like to wish everyone well and to stay safe and be prepared. If you're reading this, you are one of those who have made our two remarkable organizations what they are today, and I can't thank you enough.

Thank you for supporting CERA!

Bob Hess, President & Chair and on behalf of CERA's Board

Neighborhood Radio Watch

Year at a Glance

CERA founded the [Neighborhood Radio Watch](#) groups in El Dorado County and help advise surrounding counties on creating similar programs to educate and promote safety in our communities by using radios to communicate.

The [Caldor Fire](#) in 2021 and this year's [Mosquito Fire](#) drove home the devastation and helplessness that communities feel when they are displaced or when their lives and property are threatened by natural disasters like the recent wildfires in California. The fire that destroyed [Paradise](#) exposed that cell and internet services are not always available or reliable when you need it the most to receive emergency communications or to reach 911. The [Mercury News](#) said the FCC reported 874 cell sites were down in California due to lack of backup power when PG&E cut power to reduce wildfire risk. The [LA Times](#) predicts a big earthquake would cause much worse widespread outages.

Having a backup communications system is critical. We've seen a dramatic rise in the frequency and intensity of storms, fires, and power shutdowns – events that disrupt our vital communications services and place lives at risk. Over 50% of US homeowners and 70% of renters depend entirely upon cell-phones to stay in touch with our friends, our families, and emergency services.

CERA helps to prepare individuals and local communities with emergency communications in the event of disasters such as catastrophic wildfires by providing programs and services that enable access to radio equipment, training, practice, and other programs that promote community connection, cooperation, and action.



500+ members

in El Dorado County's
Neighborhood Radio Watch



5 NRW groups

in El Dorado County and
more in surrounding
counties



600+ radios distributed

to NRW members that were
refurbished by CERA



**5,400 total radio
check-ins**

by NRW members across
weekly radio safety nets



**19 net control
operators**

who volunteered to run
weekly radio safety nets



26 NRW seminars

and workshops delivered
by CERA's Board and guest
presenters

Neighborhood Radio Watch

Member Appreciation

We thank and owe the success of CERA's [Neighborhood Radio Watch](#) (NRW) program to all of our community members who participate in the program. We also thank our community allies working on fire safe councils, fire safety personnel, and law enforcement.

We'd like to specially recognize some key contributors whose leadership helped promote, recruit, equip, and inform our members.



Alan Thompson is a familiar face to many since he is CERA's Public Information Officer and delivers many of the [workshops](#) to the public on the importance of NRW. Alan is the inspiration behind NRW since he was on the 4-person team who helped restore cell service in Paradise after the Camp Fire. Alongside his demanding work schedule, Alan dedicates personal cycles on outreach, education, information sharing, and bridging NRW and amateur radio by encouraging NRW members to participate and potentially join [EDCARC](#).



Steve Gregorich is one of our unsung heroes who spearheaded the massive effort to buy/acquire and refurbish the GMRS radios that many of our NRW members use. He scoured sites like eBay to purchase high quality, commercial grade radios on the secondary market, reconfigured the radios to simplify usage, set up the alert mechanism, pre-programmed and named each NRW channel. He leaves big shoes to fill and we wish Steve our best as he moves outside of our area.



Fire Safe Councils (FSC) and CERA are separate organizations that operate independently and are not affiliated although some FSC members may personally opt to join a CERA NRW group. CERA thanks the local FSCs for their allyship and for their invitations to speak at FSC meetings so communities can learn about NRW. Thanks to the many FSC Council members which include Deborah Kruse, Bob Hess, Linda Kirkbride, Bill Deitchman, Sandy Hodnett, Sherry Hawk, Tom Booze, Kay Campbell, Heather Campbell, Carolyn Pappas, Tom Daher, Elizabeth Standeven, Barbara Bills, Ken Robers, John Erickson, and Pat Dwyer.

Volunteer NRW Net Operators run weekly [radio safety net](#) to conduct roll and help NRW members practice their radio communication skills and test their equipment. During the 2022 Mosquito Fire, Net Ops relayed regular updates on incident/response status from authoritative sources which was essential to those who lost cell/internet/power. Sincere thanks to our Net Ops, including Alan Thompson, Anna Tivol, Barbara Bills, Bill Deitchman, Bill Santos, Bob Hansen, Cheyenne Vogel, Chris Farrar, Colton Meyer, Deborah Kruse, Erik Hornbaker, Gary Boal, Irene and Shannon Lile, Jacqui Moore, James Dean, Jeff Jones, Jeremy Dean, Jim Lockwood, JR Harmon, Justin Tabatchnick, Karen Hess, Ken Rogers, Lani Harris, Lara and Steve Gregorich, Laurie Tamez, Linda Kirkbride, Linn Small, Lon Williams, Lou and Cliff Olmstead, Margrit and Joe Petrofsky, Marilyn and Tom Tahl, Mary Dakers, Matt Silveira, Mike Hlavay, Patti Boyer, Ted Kooij, Tim Johnson, Tom Booze, Tony Miller, Yitzhak Gilon, and the many more who are volunteering.

El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club

Year at a Glance

The [El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club](#) (EDCARC) was formed in 1964 and is the premier amateur radio club in El Dorado County, representing a wide cross section of amateur radio interests.

EDCARC's purpose is to promote amateur radio and create a pool of experienced radio operators to provide emergency communications under the [Amateur Radio Emergency Services](#) (ARES) as a public service. During the Caldor Fire, EDCARC ARES provided radio dispatch and field communications when accompanying animal control officers and vets into evacuation zones to rescue and evacuate animals in places with little to no cell coverage. EDCARC ARES also partners with organizations like the American Red Cross on disaster preparation exercises or works with organizations who need auxiliary communications support during community events like charity walk-a-thons, parades, or special events like the Pony Express Re-Ride through El Dorado County.

CERA is the parent organization that provides funding support to EDCARC and we are proud to be associated with an organization with a long history of community service, volunteerism, and giving.



**Radio support to
the rescue in
winter emergency**
Mountain Democrat | Jan 19, 2022

**Radio to the
rescue**
Georgetown Gazette | Jan 20, 2022

**12 volunteers
112 hours of support**



EDCARC ARES provides Pony Express support
Photo by Shelly Thorene, Mountain Democrat



**American
Red Cross**
Shelter Exercise, Training & Support

**EDCARC Gold Discovery
Special Event Station**



**CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH
1848 - 1855**

**>250 new or
upgraded licenses,
5 in-person &
87 online
HAM license testing
sessions**



**42
outreach events for
EDCARC and NRW**



El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club

Member Appreciation

Many of our EDCARC members are the backbone supporting CERA, amateur radio programs, and [Neighborhood Radio Watch](#) program. Each member contributes to EDCARC's culture of a shared passion in building community, learning and knowledge sharing through mentoring and teamwork, and embracing and recognizing each member's identity, diversity, and unique talents.

This year, we express our gratitude and appreciation to the members below who embody these characteristics.



Jay (KE6GLA) and Nancy (KG6PNP) Harmor currently serve as EDCARC's President and Treasurer, positions they've occupied for multiple terms. For years, Jay ran EDCARC's ARES weekly net while Nancy runs the weekly club net. Their humble leadership and dedicated service to EDCARC is clearly evident by the club's high participation rate in EDCARC's meetings, nets, projects, and causes and both contribute greatly to the club's camaraderie.



Frank Yost (KA6GWY) is El Dorado County Sheriff's recently retired Communications Manager, a post he held for 33 dedicated years. Frank activated [EDCARC ARES](#) during the Caldor Fire to request animal rescue communications assistance. He also helped bridge CERA's law enforcement outreach for Neighborhood Radio Watch. He setup the ["805" repeater](#), lends his personal time to help keep CERA's repeaters operational, and is generous in helping to mentor others with radio, communications, and safety protocols.



JR Harmon (K6LBP) is always among the first to lend a hand with CERA and EDCARC including helping with manning the booths at community outreach events, participating in [ARES events](#) like Caldor Fire animal rescue and last winter's snow emergency, running the new 220MHz weekly net, leading EDCARC's welcome and refreshments for meetings, organizing EDCARC's 2022 Christmas tree display along Hwy 50 in Placerville, and taking photographic memories that capture CERA and EDCARC's spirit of community service.



Roger Newman (W6WHU) has been the lead conducting our annual [ARRL Field Day](#) event which combines public service, emergency preparedness, community outreach, and technical skills all in a single event. This EDCARC and community event allows anyone to experience amateur radio and connect with radio operators across the country. Roger is also coordinating our [2023 Discovery of Gold](#) Special Event Station, similar to our past [commemorations](#), which celebrates the 1848-1849 California Gold Rush in Coloma, CA.

Donor Recognition

How Community Contributions Matter

The participation, contributions, and support from individuals and organizations is foundational to CERA's ability as a nonprofit to build and maintain CERA's programs and services that we offer to the public. Contributions can take the form of cash donations and non-cash contributions such as free or discounted equipment, use and access to properties hosting radio infrastructure, use of facilities to host CERA meetings, or free services that help enable CERA's operations.

With tremendous gratitude, CERA thanks the following individuals and organizations for their meaningful contributions to help CERA fulfill our mission.

Repeater Sites & Maintenance



Thank you Frank Yost (retired EDSO Communications Manager), Todd Crawford (retired EDSO, now with PG&E), Reese Willer (EDSO)

Facilities



Agency Cooperation



Equipment



Thank you Jeremiah Norrell for organizing this donation!

Cash Donations



Support CERA

Ways to Help

All of CERA's radio infrastructure, programs, and services are free to the public. CERA's Board and volunteer staff provide their time and expertise for free and without expectation of compensation.

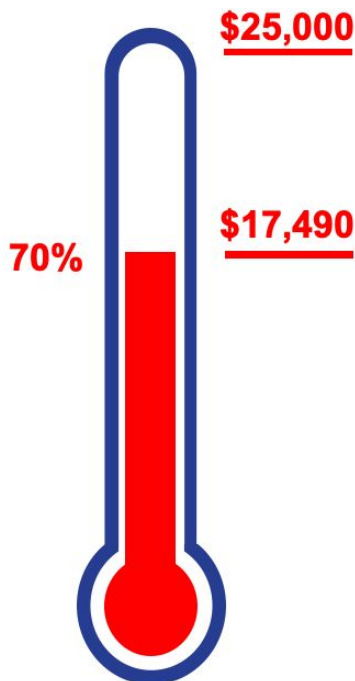
We rely on [donations](#) and grants to harden our infrastructure, cover expenses, and fund specific projects such as buying antennas, towers, and station hardware and renting equipment like basket cranes to set up and maintain our vast [Radio Repeater Network](#), and sourcing radios for the community, especially for those in need.

We hope that you will consider supporting CERA through the ways listed below. We also invite you to [share your story](#) on what CERA's programs have meant to you to inspire others to join our growing community.

Donate

In 2022, CERA raised \$17,490 which is shy of our \$25,000 fundraising target we need to cover anticipated expenses in 2023.

Please consider [donating to CERA](#). Donations are tax deductible and you'll receive a receipt when you donate.



Volunteer

To fulfill our mission, CERA relies heavily on unpaid [volunteers](#), like every member on the Board, who are passionate about sharing their skills or willing to lend a helping hand to serve our communities.

Please email contact@cerafund.org if you are interested in volunteering.



Fundraising



Grant Writing



Instructor



Graphics Artist



Audio / Video
Producing / Editing



Radio Programming
and Consulting

**A heartfelt thank you from CERA for your support
and participation in keeping our communities safe!**

