

## **ARES at Wildfire Preparedness Seminar**

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South-Central ARES DEC Gord Snarr VE4GLS, South-Central ARES member Tedd Vidler VE4VID and myself represented ARES at the first-ever Wildfire Preparedness Seminar organized by Manitoba EMO in Steinbach THURS 03 MAY. In the past few years it has become common before Spring Flood season for EMO to host flood Preparedness Seminars in areas likely to be affected (e.g. Brandon & Morris) but the problem of Wildland - Urban Interface Fires is relatively new ( 4 day Stuartburn fire last fall on Thanksgiving weekend and a number of wildland fires already this spring).

The topics included:

Seasonal Weather Forecast

Fire Smart Community Program

Fire Mutual Aid Program

Manitoba Conservation Fire Program

Evacuation/ ESS Concerns

EOC considerations with regard to Wildland-Urban Interface Fires and other considerations that have come up in rural communities in the recent past.

Organizations in attendance included:

Manitoba EMO

Office of the Fire Commissioner

Manitoba Conservation

Office of Disaster Management Manitoba Health

Emergency Social Services (Ministry of Family Services & Labour)

Environment Canada

RCMP

Manitoba Association of Native Fire Fighters

A number of Municipal Emergency Coordinators & Rural Fire Chiefs.

Nicki Albus, the Manitoba EMO Regional Emergency Manager that organized the seminar asked us if we could bring out some Amateur Gear for an informal show & tell session. Gord VE4GLS got the Municipal Emergency Coordinator for City of Steinbach/RM of Hanover Dennis Vassart to bring out the Amateur Radio kit that is contained in a wooden box in the Steinbach EOC (VE4SFD).



Tedd VE4VID brought out his personal gear that was used during 2009 Flood Ops when he and Kent Haase VE4KEH were deployed to St Adolphe. The gear in the VE4SFD box is also present in the Town of Winkler EOC and consideration is being given to construction of a similar box for Winkler to make the gear easy to transport one town over to Morden when required. Tedd, Gord and myself were at Tedd's truck during the morning coffee break and during the lunch break and answered questions from several interested Municipal Emergency Coordinators - Manitoba EMO encourages municipal emergency Coordinators to consider ARES for communications support.

Winnipeg ARES Inc covered the cost of our lunches and to me the seminar was well worth taking a vacation day from work to attend..