

**Date:** January 17, 2011

**From:** Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Packet Committee

**Subject:** Packet Network Update – Upcoming Changes

**Attention:** All ECs, AECs, MACs and other Santa Clara County Packet Users

This Packet Network Notice contains important information which affects your ability to access and use the county packet backbone. This update covers the following topics:

- Changes Scheduled for Wednesday, 26-Jan-2011
  - New Combined Installer for Outpost/PacForms
  - BBS call sign and hostname changes
  - Change of primary BBS for several agencies
  - New weekly packet check-in tactical call signs
- Updated web page
- Future Plans
- Schedule summary
- Action items
- Questions / Comments / Concerns

Please read this information thoroughly and pass along to any packet users in your local area.

### **Changes Scheduled for Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

The following changes will take effect on Wednesday, 26-Jan-2011. Wednesday is being chosen to give people time to install the new software and test it out prior to the following week's SPECS and SVECS weekly check-ins and the packet class on February 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **New Combined Installer for Outpost/PacFORMS**

The combined installer for Outpost/PacFORMS in Santa Clara County will be updated on Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. The new installer will incorporate the following new and/or changed functionality:

##### **Outpost:**

Includes an updated listing of the new Santa Clara County BBS call signs and hostnames (see below).

Also includes all Outpost v2.5 updates, including the following of particular interest to our county:

- **Windows Data Structure compliance:** Windows Vista and Windows 7 imposed new security controls on where programs can legitimately write data. It can no longer be written to the programs directory, as Outpost had done in the past. The new installer places Outpost data in the correct location for each operating system. Consult the release notes for more specifics.
- **Faster JNOS interaction:** Outpost no longer requests a message list if JNOS has already indicated that there are "0 new" messages in the selected area.
- **Force one-time bulletin retrieval:** This assists with retrieving old bulletins that the BBS knows you've already downloaded and, therefore, doesn't usually show in the message list.
- **Configurable PacFORMS launch during send:** In the past, when you submitted a PacFORM message to Outpost, Outpost would immediately ask if you want to see it in its native form. Since you just finished viewing it in its native form, this was usually unnecessary. In this release Outpost now allows you to turn off (default) the prompt to display a PacFORM in its native format while sending. This saves time and an extra click for each message sent.

**PacFORMS:**

- Pull-down menu options for ICS To and From position names in ICS 213 message form
- Automatically inserted Sent Date and Time when form is submitted

**BBS Call Sign and Name Change**

With the addition of two more BBSs, there was concern about having to remember multiple call signs. And with clubs limited to a single vanity call sign, the new call signs would be sequentially assigned and, most likely, be hard to remember. In addition, the existing hostnames used on the BBSs (such as scc.ampr.org) are not legitimate hostnames in the ampr.org DNS and were only used as temporary place holders. Now that our network will be connecting to the rest of ampr.org (see below), we need to clean up those hostnames.

Several options for hostname and call signs were reviewed in order to pick a structure that works for all of the county BBSs, minimizes the number of call signs to remember, minimizes the information needed to translate a BBS call sign to a host name, and fits within the naming convention of ampr.org. No single option was perfect in every regard, but the chosen option made the most sense to the most people. The call signs and hostnames of the county BBSs will change as follows:

Location	Current		New (Effective 26-Jan-2011)	
	Call Sign	Hostname	Call Sign	Hostname
SCCo Office Bldg in San Jose	W6XSC-1	scc.ampr.org	W6XSC-1	w6xsc-1.ampr.org
Crystal Peak (South County)			W6XSC-2	w6xsc-2.ampr.org
Mountain View	K6MTV-1	mtv.ampr.org	W6XSC-3	w6xsc-3.ampr.org

Frazier Peak (above Milpitas)			W6XSC-4	w6xsc-4.ampr.org
Training and backup			W6XSC-5	w6xsc-5.ampr.org

**How it works:** Say, for example, that you're assigned to the -3 BBS, located in Mountain View, as your primary BBS. To connect over X.25, you connect to W6XSC-3. When you send a message, people will see it is from <yourcallsign>@w6xsc-3.ampr.org. People will send you a message at <callsign>@w6xsc-3.ampr.org. So, the BBS that you connect to is the same name as where you tell people to send you messages. No need to remember that X call sign = Y hostname. And, since all of the BBSs have the same root call sign, the only thing that most people need to remember is the SSID (-#) part. As a reminder, messages addressed to tactical calls without specifying the @.... part will still be routed to their assigned primary BBS, just like before.

### Changes to Primary BBS for Some Agencies

On Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, the following agencies will change their primary BBS to W6XSC-2 (Crystal Peak):

- All Santa Clara County Hospitals and DEOC
- Morgan Hill
- Gilroy
- Monterey County
- San Benito County
- Santa Cruz County

That means that all individuals in those agencies as well as the EOC/DOC and other tactical calls within the agency will connect to the W6XSC-2 as their primary BBS. This will continue to reduce the load on the W6XSC-1 access frequencies. More reassignments to both Crystal Peak and Frazier Peak will follow shortly thereafter – as soon as we complete some more propagation testing.

### New Weekly Check-In Tactical Call

Up until now, weekly packet check-ins for on Monday and Tuesday were sent to the SNYEOC tactical call. Beginning the week of 31-January-2011, there will be a new tactical call to use for weekly check-ins:

- PKTMON           for weekly packet net check-in on Monday
- PKTTUE           for weekly packet net check-in on Tuesday

This will allow for sharing of the packet net control duties and even for different packet net controls on Monday and Tuesday nights.

## Updated Web Page

The Santa Clara County ARES/RACES packet frequencies web page has been updated to reflect the change in BBS call signs and hostnames and primary and backup BBS assignments that will occur on January 26<sup>th</sup>. The web page URL is shown below and is linked to both the main Packet page and the main Operations page of the county ARES/RACES web site.

<http://www.scc-ares-races.org/freqs/packet-freqs.html>

## Future Plans

There are several other projects which are already underway and are expected to roll out over the coming months:

- Continued improvements to Outpost and PacFORMS functionality
- Additional load balancing of agencies across all four primary BBSs. Some reassignment of backup BBSs will also be included.
- Gateway to AMPRnet: We are working on a gateway that would allow connectivity between any of our county BBSs and the hundreds of other BBSs around the world which are connected to AMPRnet.
- Gateway to e-mail: We are working on a gateway to Internet e-mail. This would allow bi-directional connectivity between packet and Internet e-mail.

More information on these and other initiatives will be announced as further progress is made.

## Schedule Summary

Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>:

- New combined Outpost/PacFORMS installer available
- BBS call sign and hostname changes
- Changes to BBS assignments for several agencies
- New weekly check-in tactical calls

Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>:

- Weekly check-ins using:
  - New combined installer
  - New BBS names and assignments
  - New tactical call signs

Saturday, February 5:

- SCCo Packet Class – Level 1 part B (hands-on; covers addressing, among other things)

## Action Items

1. Print a and retain a copy of the new frequency and BBS info web page: <http://www.scc-ares-races.org/freqs/packet-freqs.html>
2. Download and install the combined Outpost/PacFORMS installer on Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> or as soon as possible thereafter. Connect to your assigned primary BBS and send one or more test messages to yourself (including PacFORMS) to verify proper operation.
  - a. **ECs:** Remember that you need to get the “private” version of the installer for your EOC. The private version includes additional PacFORMS which are not publically available and can be found in the password protected area of the website.
3. Check-in with packet on a regular basis on Monday or Tuesday evenings to regularly verify operation of both your personal station and the county network.
4. Attend the packet classes provided by Santa Clara County ARES/RACES to get complete information about how to use the network.

## Questions / Comments / Concerns

That’s all for this update. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, it is likely that someone else does, too. So it would be helpful if you direct them to the scc-packet Yahoo group. That way, everyone can see the answer. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scc-packet>