

UPDATE: CAL FIRE AND HAM RADIO REPEATERS 10-17-2019

## ARRL and the Shasta County Repeater Situation - **ARRL AWOL**

I am waiting for additional information on the repeater situation. Hope to hear on October 18th. This is the date that an official is scheduled to call me. In the meantime, I have cancelled news interviews. This was based upon my discussions with the official, in order to allow time for the State and other agencies to work these matters out. Thus, to give some breathing space.

However, in the meantime, people have been saying things they know nothing about. They don't even bother doing any actual research. One is a video on You Tube with two Hams (including N01PC - video entitled "There Is No Such Thing As Free Rack Space") . N01PC has been e-mailed about his erroneous video – but it remains and he hasn't responded to me. Another is an article by ARRL (dated October 15, 2019), appearing on the ARRL website.

This is a quick response. A more formal summary will be provided, pending my hearing back from the official on the status of this matter. I am advised that meetings are being held to resolve it. I am hoping that cooler heads at the State level will prevail, recognize the error, fix it, and move forward in a positive direction.

In the meantime, ARRL has posted a misleading article regarding the repeater situation in Shasta County. ARRL hasn't even bothered to find out the actual facts. That is really sad.

The Facts are:

In Shasta County, one of our repeaters was in the process of being removed based upon the Cal Fire directive (Ms. Pisi). The fees were too high and it was going to be removed. Another was also going to be removed (again the fees...). Another was also at risk. As to the ARRL comment about parties with an "Agenda" having blown the situation out of proportion, the ARRL ignores that the subject of this matter has been the removal of repeater infrastructure which has been in place for decades. My 14 page letter was directed to the actions of removal by Cal Fire on the basis of Ham radio "no longer the same benefit to State as previously provided" (that is what Cal Fire actually stated); that the 760 and 640 repeaters were part of the VIP Cal Fire program and placed in the vaults with the permission of the officials involved at the time; and a statement by a Cal Fire official that this action of Ms. Pisi (Cal Fire) was a State wide action (not limited to Shasta County). My 14 page letter was necessary because Ms. Pisi didn't respond to voice or e-mail communications, and the removal was going forward. The only agenda we have in Shingletown is to protect our emergency communications system which uses Ham operators (in conjunction with non ham neighborhood radio plans) for purposes of emergency proactive response, evacuation planning, smoke reporting, fire triangulation, Earthquake reporting and damage reporting, evacuation of disabled, accident reporting, etc... .

Both repeaters (760 and 640) in Shasta County were set up under the Cal Fire VIP program (and continue to be used for such purposes), and were set up on site with the permission of the officials. One repeater (640) was actually built into the engineering design of the site, and

required engineering information to be provided. I am advised there was a written agreement specifying no charges, rent, etc... . The state of California would have these documents.

Also, in Shasta County the following are listed in the Shasta County Emergency Communications Procedures Documentation as "Supporting Agencies" (you can go look it up on the Sheriff Website):

- Shasta County Sheriff's Office
- Shasta Tehama Amateur Radio Emergency Services
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

The 640 Repeater, which is one of the repeaters Cal Fire is seeking to remove, is owned by Shasta Tehama Amateur Radio Emergency Services (yes, the entity that is a "Supporting Agency" for Shasta County Emergency Communications). I don't own any of these repeaters.

Here is the kicker -- although listed as a "supporting agency" even the Sheriff of Shasta County was not aware of the intent to remove the repeater of this supporting agency (STARES) until my letter brought it to his attention. Also, several other emergency officials were not aware of the matter until my letter. So the statements of the State of California that this is a local matter to be determined by local authorities is absurd because no one at the local level was even aware the repeaters were going to be removed! The Sheriff would have found out after the fact and during an emergency! ARRL and others ignore this fact - so read it again.

As stated by the Sheriff "Please be advised for emergencies in Shasta County such as evacuations due to fires that is the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office. We work closely in collaboration and communication with Cal Fire on such matters."

Based upon the foregoing, the facts show that Cal Fire didn't collaborate or communicate with the Sheriff on the removal of this emergency communications equipment.

The ARRL hack job actually ignores the statements by the Sheriff that he wasn't aware of this situation until my letter! ARRL cherry picked only a piece of the Sheriff's letter. So, what is the "agenda" of ARRL?

The fact is that ARRL didn't even know about what was being done in California and now attacks the person bringing this to light. Just because ARRL was late to get the news, doesn't justify diminishing the import of the story.

We are working to avoid being the next "Paradise". It is sad that ARRL doesn't treat this situation with the importance that it deserves. Also, I was told by a Cal Fire representative, that the actions by Pisi were STATE wide, and not merely local. I obtained that information before my letter.

The fact is that but for my actions, 2 repeaters were going to be removed. An extension was obtained from Ms. Pisi (Cal Fire) because the Sheriff was reviewing the matter (as a result of my letter). The repeaters remain in place at this time while Cal Fire and other agencies review the

matter. I am to further discuss the matter on October 18. Hopefully, such will be positively resolved.

In the meantime ARRL attacks the work which has been done to protect the citizens where I live from Fires etc... ARRL seeks to diminish the severe consequences. In fact, we have had several fires in the last month. We are still at risk! There are others out there that speak as if they know something about a situation that they have been too lazy to even do any actual research on.

ARRL needs to stop listening to rumor and get the facts. The real questions are - why isn't ARRL helping out? And, why didn't ARRL know about this and warn the Ham Radio Community? Why isn't ARRL involved with this process at the State Level to assist in developing a proper policy within the State of California and Cal Fire?

Also, the ARRL comment that the State of California has not made any determination that Ham Radio is no longer of "benefit" ignores the FACT that it was Ms. Pisi (CAL FIRE) that actually made the statement! It is in English - ARRL needs to READ the statement. If you don't understand it then go back to school. ARRL passing the matter off as Cal Fire having transferred administrative responsibility for its communication sites to another department is totally irrelevant to the FACT that Ms. Pisi (CAL FIRE) MADE THE STATEMENT and, her title is "T&V Manager, Cal Fire Technical Services – Lands".

It would be nice if Hams would help out instead of destroying emergency communications (and Ham radio).

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