

# DISASTERCOM

DERA Newsletter

48 Years of Service

March 2010



## Update on Current DERA Disaster Support Activities

### HAITI

Within ten minutes of the National Earthquake Warning Center's report of a major earthquake in Haiti, DERA's executive committee had authorized the first of many support missions. DERA's Director of Operations, Catherine Lawhun, was designated our Incident Manager and she quickly assembled an incident management team initially consisting of: Robert Rathbone, Field and Tactical Communications; Robert Dockery, Long Range HF Communications; Claude Baker, Weather, Tsunami and Aftershock Warning; Gene Bess, Chief Watch Officer for the DERA Online Emergency Operations Center.

DERA staged three flyaway satellite communications kits in South Florida and made these available to response teams from our partner organizations deploying to Haiti.

DERA opened four conference call switchboards and continues to make them available at no cost to partner organizations needing to coordinate their response activities.

DERA moderated a twice-daily multiagency response coordination conference call, where response organizations were able to share resources and provide mutual aid. Because of this coordination, many organizations were able to deploy joint missions to Haiti, reducing the cost and overhead of their operations. Additionally, many organizations were able to share limited airlift, greatly improving response effectiveness.

DERA arranged warehouse space, logistics tracking and airlift throughout January and February to support numerous response organizations.

DERA continues to support response efforts by making our Online EOC ([www.dera.us/ecoc](http://www.dera.us/ecoc)) available to response organizations, both in the Open Mode (everyone can see) or Private Mode (available only to organization personnel).

### U.S. WINTER STORMS

Extremely damaging ice and wind storms resulted in extensive damage throughout North Dakota and South Dakota. Additionally, the threat of catastrophic flooding remains a concern for five states.

Six DERA members have been deployed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and are currently working in the disaster areas. An additional twelve members work for state and local agencies in the impacted areas.

## **DERA's Annual Meeting**

DERA held our Annual Membership Meeting and Preparedness Institute Workshop held in conjunction with the International Disaster Management Conference, in Orlando, Florida February 18-21, 2010. Sunday's activities were cut short by flu-like symptoms that hit several attendees and put a damper on an otherwise outstanding gathering.



(L to R) Howard Pierpont, DERA Chair; Karyl Pierpont; Jeane Peterson, RN; Georg Grosse-Hohl, International Programs, Kathryn Dunlevy-Wilson, DERA Publications, Jay Wilson, Executive Director

DisasterCom is the quarterly newsletter of DERA International. News items and articles are always welcome.

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Editor: Kevin J.D. Wilson

Membership in this Nonprofit Association is open to all who share our commitment to effective disaster preparedness and response.

See back page for Membership Application

The Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Association, International

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[www.disasters.org](http://www.disasters.org)

## **DERA International**

P.O. Box 797  
Longmont, CO 80502

DERA is a Nonprofit, U.S. IRS 501(c)(3) Disaster Service and Professional Association Established in 1962  
Incorporated in the State of Wisconsin.  
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### **Officers**

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### **Partnerships & Affiliations Include**

**ARRL**  
American Radio Relay League  
[www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org)

**CNA**  
Colorado Nonprofit Association  
[www.ColoradoNonprofits.org](http://www.ColoradoNonprofits.org)

**EM Forum**  
[www.emforum.org](http://www.emforum.org)

**EMLRC**  
Emergency Medicine Learning Resource  
Center  
[www.emlrc.org](http://www.emlrc.org)

**FAIRS**  
Foundation for Amateur International  
Radio Service  
[www.fairs.org](http://www.fairs.org)

**Florida VOAD**  
[www.flvoad.org](http://www.flvoad.org)

**NIAR**  
National Institute of Amateur Radio (India)  
[www.niar.org](http://www.niar.org)

DERA is seeking member volunteers to provide disaster assistance in the following areas::

1. Watch officers to assist with keeping our Online EOC updated. No regular work shifts required, but as they have time available, watch team members update the online EOC with reliable info from radio nets, State Department or FEMA bulletins (we give you sites to check) and other reliable sources. If you're familiar with Planning Section ICS duties, this would be similar to the Situation Unit staff.

2. Moderators/facilitators for conference calls. Currently, we're running a multiagency coordination call at 3PM EST daily, but may soon need additional calls or facilitators for followup calls. The moderator sets up the conference call by dialing into the conference bridge, starts/stops recordings and acts as a gatekeeper for discussions, and sees that all followup action items get identified to our Ops and Planning Chiefs.

3. Planning Section help. Currently, we've been running a 24 hour Incident Period. That planning cycle is overwhelming and we plan to go to a 7 day planning cycle in the next few days. As we make that transition, we will need two or three people to take responsibility for portions of our Incident Action Plan (IAP). We'll have a couple of conference calls during the week, the Planning Section Chief will consolidate inputs from our planners, coordinate them with the Ops Chief then get approval from our IC. We hope to break out the duties enough so that each individual planner would have no more than 2 hours of work to be done over a 3 day planning window.

4. Agency liaison. As organizations request assistance from DERA, we would like to assign them a single point of contact for liaison. This can be a rather demanding job if you get assigned a very active organization, or a very boring job if they make initial contact with us then don't need anything after all. For the active organizations, we'd like to have three liason officers, available in a regular 8-hour shift rotation.

5. Logistics Support Specialists. We expect this function to spool up in about 10 days as our partner agencies exhaust their disaster reserve stocks and ask us for help in locating donated or loaned supplies and equipment. Depending on the requests we receive, we anticipate needing several people who would make contact with suppliers and transportation companies, catalog what they have available/how to get it, then either put them in touch with our partner needing the support, or having our Logistics Section Chief make direct arrangements.

6. Communications Operations and Coordination Task Force specialists. We and our partners have been operating ad-hoc, but we need to find a way to assist our partners with interoperability issues, both in OCONUS and in the islands. This is such an overwhelming task that we don't yet have a strategy worked out, but over the next two weeks it's predictable that commercial circuits out of the AOR will likely go to gridlock. If we can start planning backup and work-around systems for our partners, their missions will be less affected by the gridlock. Our initial assessment indicates:

BGAN systems are working beyond reliable capacity now, with many dropped calls, poor audio and video quality. We need to help partners learn to use less voice/video and more short data transmissions.

IRIDIUM is currently near gridlock.

GLOBALSTAR is nearly inoperable due to satellite problems. A working satellite is in range for only a few minutes per hour, and if a call can be made it must be very brief.

Hughes VSAT- Leased channels near capacity. Some reserve capacity exists. As DOD and FEMA MERS deploy large earth stations to Haiti, all reserve capacity will be used.

HF Voice and Data-These capabilities are very much underutilized right now. We believe that the greatest help we can provide our partners is to work with existing nets such as SATERN, Sail-Mail Association, Winlink.org, and others to plan an efficient backup system-of-systems. This job will require good interpersonal skills as well as technical knowledge of radio and data systems.

**To volunteer:**  
**Email: [dera@disasters.org](mailto:dera@disasters.org)**

*Tell us your interests & qualifications.*

**Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering for one of the following positions...or if there is a special project you would like to undertake with DERA sponsorship:**

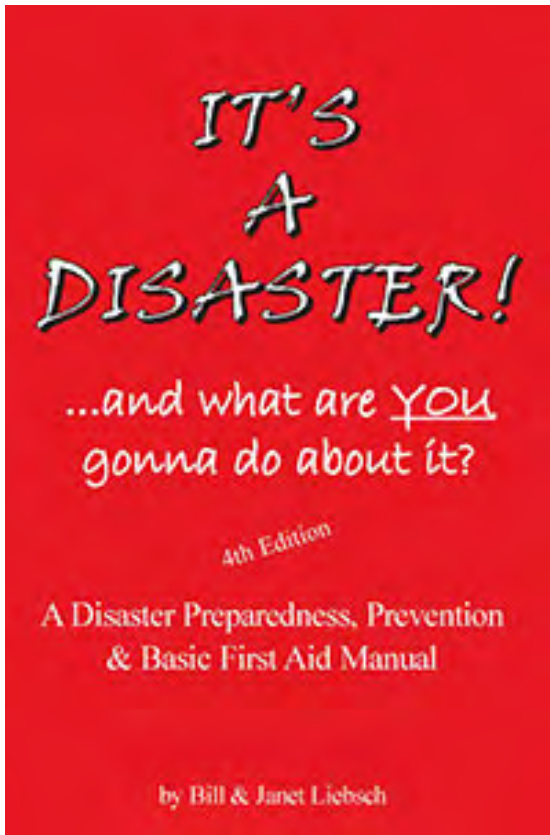
- Board of Directors. Two Board positions become vacant on July 1. If you would like to serve in one of these key decision-making positions, please submit a letter of interest and a resume with references by June 15, 2006. The nominating committee will contact you to set up a telephone interview.
- State Liaison Officers and Assistants. These are the "front line" jobs in DERA. State Liaison Officers represent DERA to state and local officials, establish good working relationships with agency staffs, VOADS and other NGOs, and provide media relations in time of emergency. Our aim is to have a primary and two assistant liaison officers in each U.S. state and territory, with comparable positions for our international membership. Please submit a letter of interest and a resume with references. The Liaison Coordinating Committee will contact you to set up a telephone interview.
- Regional Planning and Response Coordinators. These positions coordinate the activities of State Liaison Officers with territorial responsibilities generally following FEMA Regional boundaries. Please submit a letter of interest and a resume with references. The Liaison Coordinating Committee will contact you to set up a telephone interview.
- Newsletter Editor and Assistant. Our Newsletter Editor, Catherine Lawhun, has taken on responsibilities as Director of Operations for DERA emergency response missions. She will work with the new editor for an orderly transition over a couple of newsletter editions. Please send a letter of interest and resume.
- Webmaster and Assistant. Design and management of [www.disasters.org](http://www.disasters.org)
- Peer Review for DERA Monograph Publications
- Speaker's Bureau Coordinator and Assistant
- Assistant for Financial Development and Grants
- National Contingency Plans Chief and Assistant
- International Program Coordinator and Assistant
- Annual Membership Meeting Chair and Assistant. Organize activities related to our annual membership meeting, next one of which is scheduled for February 2007 in Orlando, Florida.
- Student Awards and Scholarship Coordinator. Arranges publicity for the program, coordinates with program sponsors, and presents awards.
- Member Awards and Recognition Chair.
- Professional Affairs Task Force Members. The task force will explore new opportunities for DERA to better serve its members and the profession.

**Send letters of interest and resume/statement of qualifications to:**

**DERA Leadership**

**P.O. Box 797**

**Longmont, CO 80502**



## Get your own copy now!

DERA is partnering with FedHealth to make this book available to our members at the lowest possible cost.

*It's a Disaster!* is the highly acclaimed, definitive guide to disaster preparedness, prevention and first aid.

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# WANTED

## Members

Add your strength to ours!

*Join our international network of prominent leaders, professionals and volunteers active in all phases of emergency preparedness, community safety and disaster response.*

## Speakers

Whether you are a well-known subject matter expert or just have interesting experiences to share, organizations around the world are looking for program speakers.

*DERA links members with an interest in speaking to audiences through our Speaker's Bureau. We also produce Podcasts, Webcasts and preparedness teleconferences which require little or no travel.*

## Writers

DERA offers numerous opportunities for publication: Our highly regarded Monograph Series is a peer-reviewed special publication for stand-alone research papers, field reports and preparedness guides, normally 12-36 pages in length. Our quarterly newsletter, Disasters•Org, gives members the opportunity to publish either a regular column or special articles.

*DERA provides members with the opportunity to gain professional recognition through high-quality publications.*

## Watch Officers

DERA operates an online Emergency Operations Center at [www.dera.us/eoc](http://www.dera.us/eoc)

*We need additional Watch Officers to keep the site updated with breaking news and situation reports. Watch Officers can post updates from anywhere they have access to the web. Even if you only have limited time and irregular schedules, you can be an important part of this program.*

## Regional and State Coordinators

Network where you live and work! DERA program coordinators and assistants attend key meetings in their state or region and network with all who might have an interest in DERA programs.

*DERA aims to provide every state with a program coordinator who provides liaison between governmental agencies, other nongovernmental organizations, and DERA members in the area.*

## International Program Coordinators

Since our founding in 1962, DERA has been very active in supporting international preparedness and relief efforts and we have sponsored emergency response teams throughout the world.

*DERA international program coordinators represent DERA within each country where DERA members have a presence and seek opportunities for cooperation, mutual assistance, and program development.*

**Learn more about DERA at [www.disasters.org](http://www.disasters.org)**

Please join us: We'd be honored to have you as a member.  
You may apply for membership online or use the form on the reverse.

Professional Affiliation  
**Membership Application**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please tell us if a member referred you so we can thank them: \_\_\_\_\_ NW-2010-03