American Red Cross

News Release

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RED CROSS PARTICIPATES IN DESKTOP DISASTER

For Immediate Release

GALAX, VA…Wood's River Chapter of the American Red Cross and area

Amateur Radio operators collaborated in a recent desktop disaster training event

under the direction of Carroll County Emergency Management.

The exercise, "Operation Wildfire", gave Red Cross and ham operators

the opportunity to test emergency communication equipment and people in

a mock-up scenario. This event simulated a forest fire in the south and

central part of Carroll County centered in the Beamer's Knob area which

houses much of the radio repeater system for the county. Additionally, a

nearby cell system was scripted to be disabled, leaving most of the county

without phone service.

Amateur radio was used in the drill to bridge the communication needs,

and a number of Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES)

stations were opened around the county, including a ham station at the Red

Cross in Galax. Red Cross volunteers received the transmissions and

discussed hypothetical options as to appropriate and efficient response by

their organization.

"This type of drill is an excellent chance for us to fine tune Red Cross

response before we're actually called upon , "comments Joan

Isom, Executive Director of the Wood's River Chapter, "and good

communications is critical to any disaster operation." She rated the exercise

as very successful on all fronts.

She continued by explaining that prior to a disaster striking, the Red

Cross works with community partners to help anticipate and prevent loss by

providing practical and helpful awareness and educational information that

shows the public how to save lives, reduce injuries, and protect their homes.

When disaster strikes, the American Red Cross feeds, clothes, and shelters

disaster victims and emergency workers, handles inquires from concerned

 family members outside the disaster area, provides blood products to

disaster victims, and help those affected to access other available resources.

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