

Guidance for ARES Virginia District Steering Committees

Preface

On February 1st, 2020 ARES Virginia was reorganized into seven districts (from fifteen). Our strategic planning team has spent months hashing out the pros and cons, the how tos and what fors. Now it is time to operationalize this re-organization. For very good reasons the effort to find the right form and fit for the new structures in the seven new districts will be delegated to those most effected – the current DECs, ADECs, and ECs in each of the new districts. In each new district a steering committee will be formed, with the objective of making decisions about the new organization, and providing a recommendation to me. I am the approving authority.

We hope that those with sincere interest and energy will step up to the plate – this is your ARES – you know your territory, and there is no one at the state level that can figure out how to organize your district better than you.

To help with your effort, and to add a small bit of standardization, we offer the following guidance. We have, as general guidance, the principles of NIMS and ICS – these should be followed to the extent possible, and in fact are one of the drivers to reduce the number of districts (NIMS gives a span of control range of 3-7).

The committee should familiarize itself with the two reference documents to understand the drivers of this re-organization.

Members of the strategic planning team are available for consultation. As they say, “the only stupid question is the one not asked.” Contact information is given below.

Reference

ARRL ARES Plan <http://www.arrl.org/ares-plan>

Virginia ARES Strategic Plan <https://www.aresva.us/> found under VA ARES Resources TAB
Frostfest Presentation by Jack Smith ... is available on the ARES/RACESofVA Facebook page (under files), or contact Jack.

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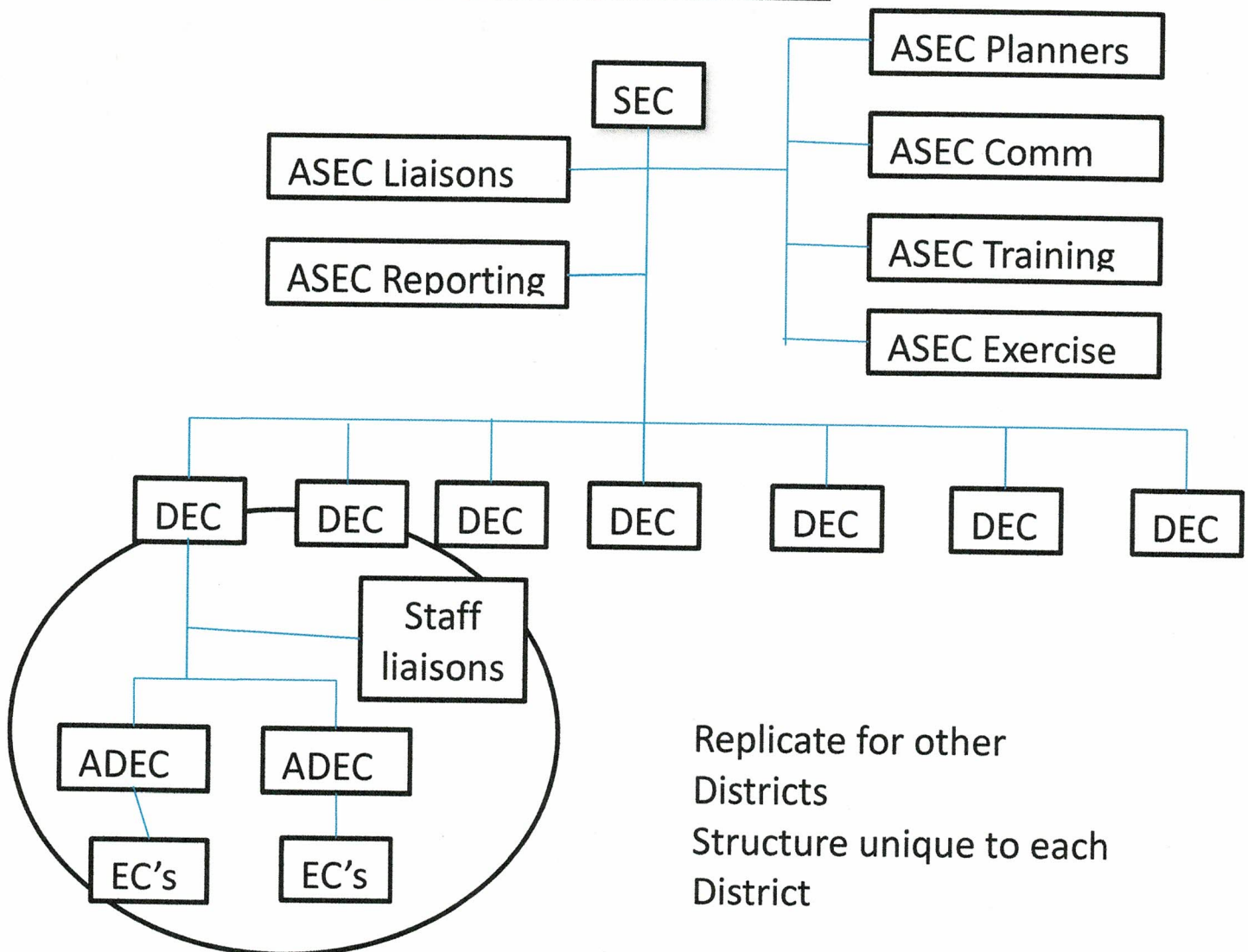
Guidance

So, how does this happen? I am not going to dictate the whos and hows! For each of the new districts we are depending on the leaders from the enclosed ‘old districts’ to get together and form up a steering committee. The committee should be made up of the active, engaged, doers that are interested in making this work. I don’t know who these people are – as I said at Frostfest, I received a total of four annual reports from around 100 jurisdictions that should have reported. So – to emphasize the point, we need the leaders in the new districts to step up to the plate. You

will first need to pull together a core group of interested leaders – DEC’s, ADEC’s EC’s – within the new district. We anticipate that there will be, in some areas, conflict and discord. We are all adults – we can work through these issues. If you want or need help either I or any one of the strategic planning team members will be glad to assist you. You will need to look at the geography, the nature of your served agencies, resources (active members), and make decisions on how you want this new district to work. You likely will need to do some recruiting. You will have free reign to organize in a way that makes sense for the new district, in line with the following guidelines. You will certainly need to arrive at one DEC and a small number of ADEC’s to make the span of control work within the district. At the county/city (EC and AEC) level very little will change. You will also need to consider your roles in association with the VDEM Regional organization. Let me emphasize – this is not business as usual. You are very fortunate to have an SEC that is willing to put in the effort to make this happen. As you know we are all volunteers.

A picture is worth a thousand words. This is a very general idea of where we are going. Pertinent to you – the lower left corner, how the new districts will look.

Virginia ARES Organization



The first decision you will make is how many ADECs you need in line positions. How many counties/cities (how many ECs) do you have, and how many ADECs do you need? Remember to consider span of control.

The steering committee for each of the new Districts is charged with the following:

1. Assemble the team to include all interested parties, current appointees plus those that show sincere interest in making this effort successful
2. Decide on an appropriate organizational structure for the district
3. Decide on who will be nominated to fill the DEC and ADEC positions
4. Review the EC and AEC positions as currently filled, get commitments from them (see below) and make recommendations for new appointments
5. Consider what staff liaison positions will be required under the DEC and ADECs
6. Finally, put together a recommendation package which you will send to the SEC for his approval and action. I will review the package, and if I concur I will prepare the paperwork to have all appointments sent to the League.

This is a good point to take a break and consider job descriptions. The ARRL ARES Plan contains job descriptions for all of our leadership positions. All new appointees will be expected to pursue the expectations given in these job descriptions. That includes the DEC and line ADECs. Important considerations include upward reporting responsibilities, as well as recruiting, relationship building, etc. roles as given in the plan. An important point – if you are appointed to one of these positions the League expects that you are doing the job.

You should build your organization with these job descriptions in mind.

The seven new DEC's will have a role that is new, driven by the alignment of the ARES divisions with the seven VDEM Regions. We have been mostly overlooking the regions. If you understand what VDEM is doing, they expect the counties and cities to interface with the Regions – for example resource requests go to the regions, not direct into VDEM headquarters. Each DEC will need to build a relationship with the region – and be prepared to provide emcomm services at that level. An appropriate deployment kit/package/go-kit will need to be developed to support the VDEM efforts in each region. The VDEM Regions don't have EOCs. They are expected to set up incident command centers at an appropriate location to provide service to jurisdictions in their Region – this could be a challenge but must be supported.

I look forward to working with you in this endeavor. Please contact me or one of the above mentioned contacts if you have questions.



John Roberts,
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