

**ARRL Public Relations Committee  
Report to the Board of Directors  
January 2020**

**The 2020 PRC Committee Members**

Committee Chairman, Sid Caesar, NH7C  
Angel Santana, WP3GW  
Andy Milluzzi, KK4LWR  
Ed Efchak, WX2R  
Scott Roberts, KK4ECR  
John Bloodgood, KD0SFY  
Gordon Mooneyhan, W4EGM  
ARRL Communications Manager, David Isgur, N1RSN  
ARRL Communications Content Producer, Michelle Patnode, W3MVP  
Board Liaison, Bill Morine, N2COP  
RAC representative, Alan Griffin

**Mission, Purpose, and Scope**

*The Public Relations Committee's (PRC) mission is to ensure the ARRL's public relations practices and techniques are effective in presenting Amateur Radio and the ARRL to amateurs, served agencies, and the general public.*

*The committee's purpose is to advise the Board of Directors via the committee's Board Liaison on policy regarding public relations strategy, allocation of resources to public relations, and the structure of public relations activities.*

*In addition, the committee works with the ARRL Communications Manager to define, guide, and review public relations components. The committee's scope includes media and messaging techniques, resources allocated to PR, policy governing PR activities and components, and evaluation of PR activities. The committee is not responsible for the creation or implementation of specific PR components.*

**Activities Report**

Bolstered by the addition of the newest PRC members, the PRC has continued its progress toward the new set of goals and objectives set for the Committee, focusing on engaging and empowering Public Information Officers (PIOs) and Public Information Coordinators (PICs) throughout the ARRL, to raise the visibility and awareness about the Amateur Radio community.

In this reporting period, the PRC has continued to focus attention to the needs of the ARRL PIO/PIC cadre. These efforts are focused on the PRC goals to increase cooperation, collaboration, and participation between the PRC, the PIOs/PICs, and the ARRL Sections and Divisions, while enhancing the tools and resources available for PIOs and PICs to serve their ARRL Section and the members of the ARRL.

### **PRC Strategic Plan Development Update**

The PRC has continued to coordinate with Chairman Caesar towards the development of the multi-year plan that will provide the framework of the duties, responsibilities, and deliverables of the PRC, to better shape public relations communications goals and objectives within the ARRL. After completion, the PRC Strategic Plan will allow PIOs/PICs to have a resource that fully describes the necessary knowledge of the public relations/public information goals and objectives of the organization.

Currently, the PRC is formulating suggestions to increase the participation levels of the PIOs and PICs, at both the national and field levels. Areas identified for improvement include conference call participation, continuing education, and PIO/PIC participation with ARRL Section leadership. The PRC will be investigating additional ways to enhance the relationship that the PRC shares with the Section Managers and the Section Emergency Coordinators. Including the SMs and the SECs on Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC) activations during severe or tropical weather events has proven to be very beneficial for the PRC and its members. (see further description of VJICs below),

### **Field PIO/PIC Outreach – 2020 Field Day**

The PRC has decided to enhance its outreach to PIOs and PICs for the 2020 ARRL Field Day. As it did last year, the PRC will host a series of Field Day video conference calls to bring the PIO/PIC community together, supplemented by on demand videos on how to leverage coverage during Field Day. These video conference calls will be staggered by date and time to allow for interested PIOs and PICs to join the members of the PRC to discuss Field Day best practices, lessons learned, and provide answers to questions from the PIOs/PICs. Special attention will be paid to new PIOs/PICs, to be sure that they can have a successful 2020 Field Day.

The PRC is in the process of assessing other events on the Amateur Radio schedule to increase outreach and awareness to POIs and PICs. These events include World Amateur Radio Day, SKYWARN Recognition Day, Severe Weather Awareness Week, National STEM Day and FEMA's Emergency Preparedness Month.

### **PR-101 Update**

The draft PR-101 has been reviewed by the full PRC, with edits and additional material captured for inclusion into the course. The draft PR-101 has entered a second phase of editing, now that the input from the last review has been included. Pictures, logos, and other artwork will be added to the PR-101 course after final edits.

The PRC still plans to add the updated PR-101 course into the new ARRL Lifelong Learning platform, once it is available, later in 2020.

### **ARRL Public Relations Committee Virtual Joint Information Center – Hurricane Systems**

During this reporting period, there were two ARRL PRC Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC) activations. The VJIC activated for Hurricane Barry in July and Hurricane Dorian in September.

The goal of the VJIC activation is to share information regarding the storms, Amateur Radio activity in support of the storm emergency response, and to coordinate with our internal ARRL partners in Emergency Preparedness and ARRL Leadership. Chairman Caesar and the PRC have adopted and implemented the VJIC to assure connections with ARRL Public Information Officers (PIO) and Public Information Coordinators (PIC) during disasters.

The VJIC activation video conference calls had excellent attendance, especially from the impacted areas. The PRC specifically asked the Section Managers and Section Emergency Coordinators to join in on the conference calls, in addition to the PIOs and PICs. Although the conversations on the VJICs were focused on the hurricanes, there was a large set of discussions centered on the PIO “lessons learned” from previous tropical systems and severe weather.

The VJIC activation for Hurricane Barry was 3 days, while the VJIC activation for Hurricane Dorian was 5 days.

The PRC recognizes that disaster related public information is often coordinated by a designated Joint Information Center (JIC), usually headed by a government agency. In conjunction with the Emergency Response Director once that individual is named, the PRC would like to work to develop a reporting structure where responsible and credentialed Amateur Radio PIOs can work in concert with official JICs.

### **McGan and Leonard Awards Update**

The PRC was excited to have an upswing of nominations for the Bill Leonard W2SKE Professional Media Award.

The PRC has the following award recommendations:

In the Audio category, Roman Battaglia of *Jefferson Public Radio* (Oregon) was recommended for the 2019 Leonard Award for Outstanding Audio Reporting for his feature on Amateur Radio's role in responding to natural disasters.

In the Video category, Jim Altman of *FOX61 News* (Hartford, CT) was recommended for the 2019 Leonard Award for Outstanding Video Reporting for his feature story on the ARRL's demonstration of digital message handling for American Red Cross and FEMA officials.

In the Print category, Zack Plair of *The Columbus (MS) Dispatch* was recommended for the 2019 Leonard Award for Outstanding Print Reporting for his feature story that highlighted the wide range of activities undertaken by amateur radio operators.

Over the last two years, the PRC had been discussing ideas to reinvigorate the promotion of these two important awards, formulating plans to keep these awards alive and relevant. The PRC increased outreach in 2019 to the PIOs and PICs regarding the McGan and Leonard awards. These efforts included increased communication to the PIOs and PICs via the PR email reflector, award notices in QST and on QST.com, and individual efforts by PRC members discussing the awards when doing outreach to club and media organizations. The PRC will continue the increased outreach efforts during 2020.

### **Board and SM Social Media Guides Update**

In 2018, Bill Morine, N2COP, the PRC Board Liaison, requested that the PRC develop a short written "primer" regarding the operation, monitoring, and posting guidelines for social media accounts. The Social Media Guide was developed and made available to ARRL leadership in 2019.

The ARRL Communications Manager David Isgur, N1RSN, and Michelle Patnode, W3MVP, the ARRL Communications Content Producer, with assistance from the PRC members, have updated the Social Media Guide for 2020 (attached to this report). This document is expected to be updated each year, to including the latest information to assist ARRL Section and Division leadership.

A coordinated social media strategy is essential for the ARRL and the ARRL membership. There is a need for message consistency throughout the organization. The PRC feels strongly that the next phase of growth of the ARRL social media is the engagement of field officers, appointees, and ARRL members. The PRC will strive to continue to look for opportunities to assist our internal ARRL organization to realize the full potential of social media and how it links to the overarching goals of the ARRL.

In addition to the Social Media Guide, the PRC will be identifying and/or developing tutorials, including webinars and videos, to better communicate to PIOs, PICs and field personnel, on how

to build, maintain and better integrate their social media pages within the ARRL national social media strategy.

The PRC is looking forward to an exciting and fruitful 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Sid Caesar – NH7C  
ARRL Public Relations Committee Chairman