

## Radio System Upgrade Improves Employee Safety and Communications at Caesar Creek Lake

Lake: [Caesar Creek Lake](#), LRL

Partners: ACE-IT, [Warren County Telecommunications](#), [USCGAUX 8Th District Easter Region, Flotilla 6-3](#)

Partnership Type: Contribution

Corps POC: Joseph Bertolini

Related stories/video:

[http://ftp.wcoh.net/public/User\\_Information/SafetyNet/SafetyNet\\_September2011\\_MIN.pdf](http://ftp.wcoh.net/public/User_Information/SafetyNet/SafetyNet_September2011_MIN.pdf)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tmnTV77PF8&feature=plcp>

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=082-06-03&category=WHATSNEW>

On June 15, 2011 Caesar Creek radio tower was struck by lightning, resulting in significant damage to several project systems including the radio base station and repeater system. As a result of this lightning strike, the project was without an operational radio network. ACE-IT was contacted and discussions were held on the best options for getting radio communications reestablished at the project.

Project personnel contacted Warren County Telecommunications (WCT) to determine whether a replacement radio system with integrated function allowing direct communications with the county system would be possible. Discussion included the options to have direct communications with other agencies such as the Warren County Sheriff's Department, ODNR, Divs. of Parks, Divs. of Watercraft, and Divs. of Wildlife personnel and other local fire and police agencies that have regular contact with the Corps staff or overlapping jurisdictional authority.

During these initial conversations, WCT suggested we consider switching over to an 800 MHz system and offered to provide a dedicated talk group for the Corps team at Caesar Creek Lake within the County communications network. Further discussion with the project team, ACE-IT, and WCT resulted in the Warren County Telecommunications Working Group granting permission for the Corps personnel to be given access to the County communications system (see first article above)

ACE-IT supplied the project with sixteen Motorola XTS 2500 hand held radios and one XTL 2500 mobile radio for the project patrol boat. These radios were subsequently shipped to the project and all units were delivered to WCT where they were tested and programmed to the appropriate frequencies at no charge to the Corps. Allison Lyons from WCT provided training to all Corps team members on the radios, their function, capabilities, maintenance, proper storage, and communications requirements (watch video of WCT ride along on water safety patrol at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tmnTV77PF8&feature=plcp>).

All project personnel are now furnished with an individually assigned radio. A unique CAD ID # for signing in with dispatch is assigned to each radio and team member and all have the ability to communicate directly with the dispatch system in order to get law enforcement, fire, and other services directly for the project. Additionally, the Visitor Assistance Rangers have the ability to receive SMS and MMS text messages on their cell phones to be further appraised of activities and incidents that occur on the project after normal duty hours. Each Visitor Assistance Ranger has access to LEADS inquiries through the dispatch center. Access to this radio communications system has greatly improved personnel safety, visitor safety, response time, and interagency coordination of incidents at the project.

A further upgrade to the project's communications abilities occurred in August of 2012 with the addition of a Standard Horizon GX1700 Marine Radio provide through ACE-IT and installed in the project patrol boat. This new system came about through the project's ongoing partnership with members of USCGAUX, 8<sup>th</sup> District Easter Region, Flotilla 6-3, from Dayton, OH. Past Division Commander (PDC) Gary Branstetter, who is currently serving as the Division Public Affairs Officer (SFO-PA) was instrumental in assisting the project in determining the optimal system requirements for this marine radio for the project patrol boat. Working through the established MOU between the Corps and the USCGAUX, PDC Branstetter provided the project with recommended equipment specification, a flexible mount for the radio installation, and had discussion with the ACE-IT contract installers regarding location and placement of this equipment in the water safety patrol boat.

This addition of a marine band radio provides the public with another tool to contact Visitor Assistance Rangers on lake safety patrols when emergencies and breakdowns occur. This unit also provides for direct communications with USCGAUX and ODNR, Divs. of Watercraft personnel who routinely patrol on the lake and gives enhanced interagency communications abilities for both routine and emergency communications needs.

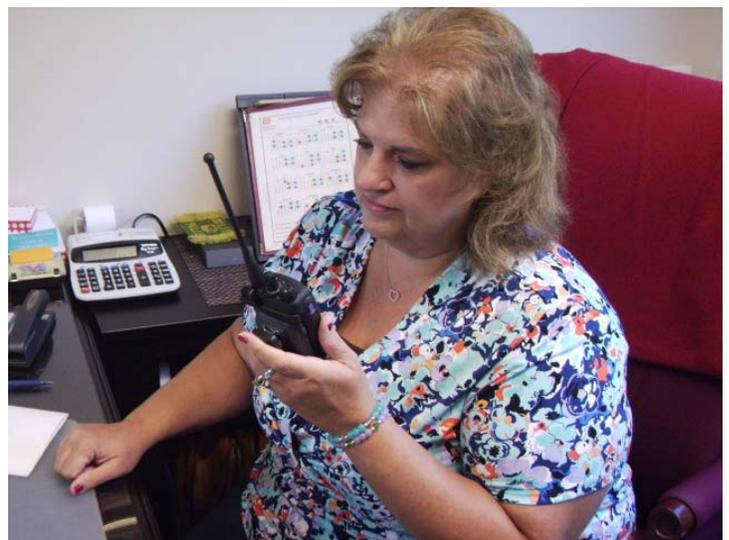
In addition, PDC Branstetter has also assisted the project by participating as an instructor in the project's boat operator refresher course, made recommendations on other important safety equipment useful on boat patrols, and participated in water safety patrols with project rangers. His service and dedication are greatly appreciated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the team at Caesar Creek Lake (See USCGAUX article on Caesar Creek Lake at <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=082-06-03&category=WHATSNEW> ).



Project Base Station Radio destroyed by lightning strike on radio tower 15 June 11.



Park Ranger Rebecca Elefante uses Motorola XTS for field communications.



Office Administrator Becky Byrge stays in touch with the project rangers using her Motorola STS 2500.



Motorola XTL 3500 radio mounted in project water safety patrol boat.



Standard Horizon GPS GX1700 Marine Band Radio installed in projects water safety patrol boat.



Overview of cockpit layout showing the various communications and safety equipment installed in projects water safety patrol boat.