

A Successful Application Of Amateur Radio

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Wow! Not your typical bike event. Out of 1400 registered riders, less than 900 made it to our side of Ebbetts Pass!

Things began as usual, with the exception of Hermit Valley, where the setup was on the wrong end of the clearing and the dumpster was mistakenly placed $\frac{1}{4}$ mile west of the checkpoint.

Soon after the beginning of the ride, we were hearing reports of thunderstorms along the Monitor Pass leg, it was still sunny along the CARS area of responsibility but we suspected that it wouldn't be long before it reached us. When it came, it came with a vengeance, driving rain with occasional hail, the wind blew the spray past our awnings but fortunately not enough to dampen our equipment (or spirits)!

The early riders, pre dampened by their Monitor Pass experience, had dried by the time they reached our side of the pass, but began their return leg in the rain, the later arrivals had rain both ways! The riders had equipped themselves for 90° temperatures, not 50° rain and hail, their bikes had dubious traction on roads with running water, some types of brakes didn't hold when wet. Hypothermia was setting in and growing numbers of riders were bailing out and requesting SAG rides back to Turtle Rock Park.

SAG requests were being radioed back to DR HQ, nearly an order of magnitude above expectations, and the SAG capacity was soon overwhelmed. Some riders managed to get rides in private cars, the CHP sent several cruisers to ferry riders, their bikes would come down later in a box truck. There was a long wait before everyone was transported, at Hermit, we had a group of very cold riders rotating through my trailer with the furnace

turned up high. This scene was repeated at the other Ham sites.

I remained at Hermit Valley for several more days (and several more thunderstorms!), I spoke with Paul, WA6EWV, president of the TARA group via radio and he praised us for our expertise and dedication. He said that lives could have been lost.

All in all, it was a successful application of Amateur Radio, thanks to all of you who participated and I can't wait until next year !!