

The Source Information Radio Newsletter

(December 2017)

Opioids, a Real Emergency

Topic Now Allowed for Broadcast on Info Stations

WASHINGTON, DC: Opioids kill as many Americans each day as automobile accidents. Nearly 60,000 perished in 2016 alone. The President's designation of the "Opioid Crisis" as a public health emergency on October 26th qualifies the topic for broadcast on our nation's network of Information Radio (TIS) Stations.

The country's departments of public health and emergency management may now utilize their fleet of Information Radio Stations to broadcast health crisis information over the air in their communities, in which the public needs to know. Content may be as specific as what to do in an overdose situation, as well as any other ways that citizens can assist in mitigating the risk to overall public health and safety.

The chairwoman of the AMA's opioid task force Patrice Harris stated that the designation is, "...a move that will offer needed flexibility and help direct attention to opioid-ravaged communities. The emergency declaration adds further urgency to this epidemic."

The FCC policy regarding the broadcast of emergency health information on TIS channels was made clear in the FCC's recent Report and Order (13-98). Paragraph 21 of the document stated "In an emergency context, this clearly could include retransmission by TIS stations of information regarding...health care."

NYC Weather: Mostly Missing

NEW YORK, NY: The National Weather Service has informed the millions served by its Weather Radio Station KWO35 on 162.55 MHz in New York City that the service is, well, not happening right now. The signal went off the air on Monday, November 27th; and according to a recent press release, the station will be "out of service for an extended period of time," which is estimated to be "several months."

On November 21st, [AAIRO.org \(the American Association of Information Radio Operators\)](http://AAIRO.org) sent a notice to Information Station operators in the New York City/Northern New Jersey area who use the NOAA feed for emergencies, informing them of the looming outage and offering free advice on how to reprogram their stations.

The KWO35 transmitter was originally located on the roof of 30 Rockefeller Plaza but moved to the MetLife Building on Park Avenue and later to a building near Times Square in 2014 to alleviate interference with Coast Guard frequencies.

Reason for this outage? The National Weather Service states that it needs to relocate the transmitter and is "in the process of identifying possible new locations."

Hardly Amateurs

Amateur (HAM) Radio Team Tapped to Manage Information Radio Services for California Town

PORTOLA VALLEY, CA: Amateur (HAM) Radio Operators provide critical point-to-point communication in emergencies when power, mobile phones and similar services go off-line. What about the general public? It's not lost on HAMs that they possess the perfect skill set to broadcast messages on behalf of

emergency managers directly to the general public, as well, during a disaster using Information Radio (TIS) technology.

Case in point: Portola Valley, CA, a somewhat isolated community of 4000, south of San Francisco. Their Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) has to be ready for almost any eventuality: earthquakes, wildfires, landslides and flooding. The San Andreas Fault "runs literally under our Town Center," according to committee member Ray Rathrock (WB5NVN). "Our assumption, per San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services is that Portola Valley will be on our own for possibly up to two weeks...should a big earthquake come. Given that, our town leadership has become very interested in investing in our survival."

That has meant coming up with innovative methods to get information to citizens in an emergency. In 2013, the EPC's Communications Committee took the lead acquiring a [RadioSTAT Portable Advisory Radio Station](http://www.theRADIOsource.com/products/radiostat.htm) (<http://www.theRADIOsource.com/products/radiostat.htm>), so they could speak directly to residents when critical services are down. The station's antenna was later installed at a permanent location. Now, a synchronized repeater is being proposed to augment the signal coverage.

The service, on 1680 AM, "...transmits 24/7/365," states Rathrock. On a normal day it can include broader warnings specific to Portola Valley, such as fire conditions, bad weather information and what to take – how much water, food, *etc.* – should an emergency occur.

"Our real threat here is fires, which come about every 20 years," cautions Rathrock. This fall's Santa Rosa fires missed Portola Valley but burned only 50 miles to the north of the area – close enough to see the smoke.

Radio's the Rock

A Steadfast Fixture on the Digital Dashboards of "Connected Cars"

ALEXANDRIA, VA: As hard as automobile designers have tried to envision a future without radio receivers, the service has stubbornly remained due to public demand. Yes, sometimes you may have to drill a little to find it, but there are reasons it's not going away – ever - as evidenced by a recent move by Pioneer Electronics. The company's new "In-Dash Multimedia Receiver" includes AM/FM radio as one of the prominent options for motorists to select from.

In the article "[Pioneer Radio Retains a Place in Today's Cars](#)," ("[Pioneer Radio Retains a Place in Today's Cars](#),") (*Radio World Magazine*, Nov. 22, 2017), Pioneer's Vice President of Marketing Ted Cardenas confirms why AM/FM radio will always be there. Below is a summary of Pioneer's rationale:

Local Content Unlike satellite radio, Internet playlist or streamed audio services, local radio stations employ "live humans" with relevant content produced right in the listeners' hometowns. Surveys show that this fact does not escape the public's notice, and car buyers insist on it.

Emergency Sustainability During serious disasters when services based on cell towers may fail and local information becomes most critical, radio stations are best positioned to deliver. Full service radio stations have generators backing them up so they can keep broadcasting when power is out. Because car radio receivers run on DC/batteries, radio retains a conduit to the public even when the grid is compromised.

Pioneer Electronics has been willing to relegate various technologies to the dust bin when their days have passed: 8-Track Tape; cassettes, AM stereo, *etc.* But the company states that this will never happen with AM/FM radio. Asserts Cardenas, "Nothing has ever taken radio's place as a live, local audio source...for nearly 100 years."