

## Ham radio operators organize

By PATTI TEETS  
Staff Writer

Amateur radio operators in Hancock County are attempting to organize an emergency civil defense communications system.

Representatives met Monday night at the Red Cross office to discuss preliminary plans for organization, but attendance was light. "We have a problem in notifying all of the operators about the meetings," said Robert Wampler, who will head the civil defense organization.

Wampler explained that books of licensed ham radio operators are listed by call letters, rather than by area or name. The books contain thousands of entries.

"We will have to come up with a list of local hams by memory," said Wampler, and "and then send out letters notifying them of the next meeting."

Wampler estimated that there are about 50 amateur radio operators in the county.

The operators are being organized to provide a system of continuous communications in case of an emergency, such as winter's blizzard or a tornado. The system will be organized mainly for intra-county communications, with enough power to tie in to the Marion County Red Cross system.

The network will have its headquarters inside the Greenfield Police station, which has an emergency generator in case of a power outage.

Organizing the civil defense network will be done in three stages, said Wampler. First, the ham radio operators will be organized.

Next, he said, the group will meet with the Hancock County REACT to coordinate the two programs.

Finally, the equipment for the network will be set up in the basement of the Greenfield police station.

Outside of Greenfield, the communications centers will be in the local fire departments, but none of them have emergency power generators.

Beside the police station, emergency generators are at WSMJ and the Hancock County hospital, plus several generators owned by ham operators.

The civil defense system will be coordinated closely with the Hancock County Red Cross.