



Grassroots Emergency Communications Operations

Sticky Notes

GECO Newsletter

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Ready to Serve and Sustain Our Community

Welcome to "Sticky Notes"

GECO (Grassroots Emergency Communications Organization) was named after the gecko lizard. The gecko is noted for its ability to cling to all kinds of surfaces. They can even stick upside down on ceilings! This tenacious ability to hold on is the inspiration for our group name GECO (which we pronounce like the lizard's name---gecko). Consistent with the gecko's ability to stick to things, we thought "*Sticky Notes*" was the logical name for our newsletter.

Scientific research discovered tiny hairs on the lizard's feet and toes. The lizard exerts control over these hairs to produce an "incredible synergy of the flexibility, angle and extensibility"¹ enabling it to cling to just about any surface.

We believe the synergy of flexibility (adaptability), angle (point of view), and extensibility (willingness to serve our community) are key components of effective EmComm (emergency communications). The radio antenna/ground icon shows the connection to amateur radio.

We are an all-volunteer community group operating on a shoe-string (well...more like non-existent) budget. So we are grateful to Neighborhood Link for the free website they provide for us (www.neighborhoodlink.com/GECO). At this time, we plan on publishing *Sticky Notes* on our website. The frequency will be at least quarterly or when there is a need or sufficient materials are available. 🦎

¹ <http://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/8518/20140812/the-secret-behind-geckos-sticky-feet.htm>

² <http://www.golgotha.com.au/2008/01/14/inverted-gecko/>



Photo by Matt Godden²; educational free use clause.



GECO Grows Up

[GECO](#) started as the [Rural Training Center-Thailand \(RTC-TH\)](#) EmComm (emergency communications) program. GECO is now independent of the RTC-TH. So the new logo sheds the RTC-TH branding. It is simply the amateur radio antenna-ground system icon and a green lizard. GECO embraces non-radio and radio EmComm methods. The goals remain the same: minimal systems (no to low cost, robust) suited to impoverished remote areas. We are based in Los Angeles, CA, but we will assist any interested hams world-wide.



<i>In This Issue</i>	
Welcome to Sticky Notes	1
GECO Grows Up	1
GECO Connectivity	2
Echolink node 717585: KM6EON-R	3

All the original materials developed for emergency preparedness, emergency communications, and weather observing related to emergency communications will remain on the RTC-TH Tech website. This will assure continuity for groups that linked to those materials. However, as the materials

and lessons are revised, the revisions will be posted on the new GECO website only. A notice of these changes and policies will be posted to the RTC-TH Tech website as the transition continues.

Another RTC-TH program MEWS (Mobile Emergency Weather Station) will be detached and integrated with GECO. MEWS trains hams to make systematic weather observations from disaster areas. This adds value to EmComm hams. There are few weather stations in remote rural areas. When disaster strikes, the lack of weather



The new GECO and MEWS grace the landing page for the GECO website.

data can hamper relief operations. A new MEWS logo followed the GECO simplification. The RTC-TH trappings were dropped. Sun, clouds, lightning bolt encircled by a lizard integrates MEWS with GECO.

GECO training will now include Basic MEWS training. At this level, MEWS is primarily observations relative to standardized visual aids and reference cards. The only instrument needed is a thermometer. 🌿

GECO Connectivity

- **Education** is a driving force for GECO. So it was natural for GECO to connect with [S.E.E.D.S.](#) (Sustainable Early Education Development System, an educational non-profit). The *modus operandi* is Community-based education. The idea is to adapt classroom lessons as hands-on, interactive community projects. These projects would directly link to classroom lessons. Learning will be improved when students experience a direct connection of their lessons to the real world.
- **Next Generation Emergency Communications:** This is a concept paper by HS0ZHM / KI6GIG (Greg) advocating emergency preparedness (EmPrep) and emergency

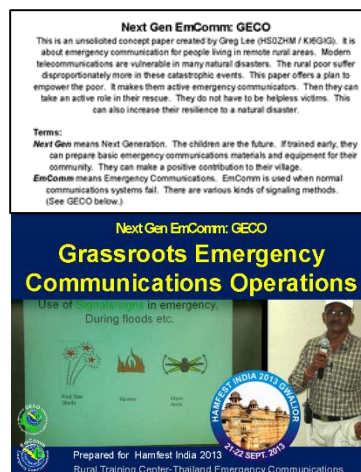


communications (EmComm). It is a blueprint for recruiting elementary school students as future EmComm hams. The Concept paper was published in the Hamfest India 2013. Next Gen Emcom: GECO was a collaborative presentation given by VU2NXM (Basappa). The concept of Next Gen EmComm was warmly received. The idea of introducing emergency preparedness and non-radio emergency communications captured the imaginations of the attendees. Discussions are underway to define the details of this working relationship. Basically, S.E.E.D.S. will endeavor to adapt GECO lessons to systematic curricula related to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).



- Narrow Band Emergency Messaging System ([NBEMS](#)) digital messaging is another future project on our wish list. N6WZK (Joe) is the official GECO Elmer and technician. He

will be working on adding digital messaging capability to GECO operations. A specific need is to have the MEWS Observer log as a test case. Among the advantages for digital messaging: faster and more accurate than voice communication; lower power consumption. All of these are admirable qualities for portable emergency radio communications. Portable operations are ideal for community service demonstrations. 🌱



Echolink Node 717585: KM6EON-R

Through the generosity of N6ZWK (Joe), the KM6EON-L Echolink station got a major facelift and upgrade. It is now KM6EON-R! It is a fully duplex repeater Echolink station operating at 445.060 MHz, negative offset, with a PL 186.2.

The entire radio rack is supported by an emergency battery bank to keep the station operational for several hours if commercial main power is lost.

The radio rack is also graced with a 220 MHz and 144 MHz radios to support the KF6ZTY-R Echolink station and a 220 MHz repeater. Joe is keen to give more local VHF/UHF hams a chance to use Echolink to make more contacts outside the local area.

Over the first few weeks of operation, US contacts were made in AL, AZ, AK, OR, HI, TN, TX, VT. International QSOs were made with Australia, Brazil, Canada, Nepal New Zealand, Oman, Sudan, Thailand, and the UK. 🌱

