



**National Traffic System  
Area Staff Chairs**

September 17, 2003

Mr. Jim D. Haynie, President  
Mr. Dave Sumner, Chief Executive Officer  
The American Radio Relay League, Inc.  
225 Main Street  
Newington, CT 06111-1494

Re: The Future of NTS

Dear Gentlemen,

As chairs of our respective National Traffic System (NTS) area staffs, we take notice of the Board's recent action in Minute 29, "Implementation of VRC Report Recommendations", from the July 18-19, 2003 Board meeting. We wish to offer some helpful guidance with respect to further action on open items.

The VRC Report contained notions and recommendations about the NTS. Since the Board took no action on the NTS-related recommendations, we assume that the Minute 29 action directing the Chief Executive Officer "...to study and determine the necessary action to implement the recommendations contained in the Report not otherwise specifically addressed by separate motion to the Board of Directors..." means that an "action plan" will be forthcoming from Mr. Sumner by December 31, which will or should include an NTS component.

The VRC Report drew several significant and largely unsupported conclusions regarding the NTS. For example, an implication was drawn that there is a new mission: "a viable emergency backup nationwide communications system." The present NTS mission is to make available an integrated message-handling facility to achieve the utmost in two principal objectives: rapid movement of traffic from origin to destination, and training amateur operators to handle written traffic and participate in directed nets. (See PSCM Introduction and both ARES and NTS Chapters One.)

The main purpose of NTS in an emergency situation is to tie together all the various local activities in direct support of ARES and to provide a means by which all traffic (typically health and welfare messages) destined outside of a local area, section or region can be systematically

relayed to the addressee. (See PSCM ARES Chapter Two 2.6 'NTS in SET'.) We are unaware of an NTS mission to serve as a "backup nationwide communications system". NTS functions daily on a managed, continuous, coordinated, nationwide basis.

NTS administrative leadership is separated between the Section Field Organization (Section Manager-appointed STMs and local/section net and MBO/digital managers) and the three area staffs (region and area net managers, TCC Directors, area digital coordinators, and at-large members). The Field & Educational Services Manager appoints area staff positions. The Section Managers and the F&ES Manager and their staffs have an important "linking-pin" role between these NTS administrative elements. (See PSCM NTS Chapter Two and Appendix A, 'Terms of Reference'.)

We appreciate the need to develop a network for rapid and accurate transfer of traffic nationwide. However, the VRC study hardly represents an accurate "in-depth" assessment of NTS and its capabilities. Experienced NTS traffic handlers have an extensive background and qualifications to develop such a network, and we urge that this expertise be part of a process to design, plan and staff such a system.

The NTS Officials and operators will continue to manage and operate the current message-handling network for purposes of training and public service.

We recommend that Mr. Sumner work closely with an "ad hoc committee" composed of the F&ES Manager, NTS Area Chairs, experienced NTS operators, ARES leadership and the VRC. The Area Chairs can offer specific advisors from their staffs as required.

Respectfully,

Marcia Forde, KW1U, Eastern Area Staff Chair

Jim Leist, KB5W, Central Area Staff Chair

Robert Griffin, K6YR, Pacific Area Staff Chair

cc: ARRL Board of Directors  
Rosalie White