



Field Day exercise tests readiness of amateur radio operators

By VICKY TAYLOR Staff writer

Ham radio operators from across the county turned out Saturday with their amateur radio equipment, prepared to spend 24 hours broadcasting continuously as part of the national ARRL Ham Radio Field Day.

Members began setting up Saturday morning and went on the air at 2 p.m., broadcasting from the C.V. Antique Engine & Machinery Association's show grounds west of Chambersburg.

They are to stay on the air until 2 p.m. today.

Between 20 and 30 ham radio

operators with the Cumberland Valley Amateur Radio Club are taking part in the annual field day, an event club president D. Daniel McGlothin (call letters KB3MUN) calls a cross between a social event and an emergency exercise.

Field Day is actually a serious training exercise that prepares local operators for local or state emergencies, according to ARRL's Web site.

McGlothin said it can also be an educational tool for the public, which is invited to come to the broadcast site just off Twin Bridge Road in Hamilton Township and watch club members as they try to contact as many other amateur radio operators as possible from locations as close as down the

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road to as far away as across the country, into Canada or at sea.

The public is not only welcome, but encouraged to stop by and see what is happening, and ask questions.

"When people come out, we take the time to tell them what amateur radio is all about, and show them how our equipment works," McGlothin said Saturday as he and other members set up a broadcast tower and got equipment situated to begin the afternoon broadcast.

The local field day is among thousands across the country this weekend in which amateur radio operators showed off their emergency capabilities.

Participants stressed the

importance of amateur radio operators in unexpected emergencies such as severe storms, tornadoes and other events when communities are cut off from the outside world for extended periods of time.

During Hurricane Katrina, for instance, ham radio was often the only way people could communicate.

The local event will also offer an opportunity for one Boy Scout troop to meet the requirements for a merit badge, McGlothin said.

Of the 650,000 amateur radio operators in the U.S., more than 30,000 participated in last year's Field Day. Of those, about 30 were at Franklin County's Field Day.

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The weekend is the climax of Amateur Radio Week, sponsored by the ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio, and winds up National Amateur Radio Month.

Vicky Taylor can be reached at 262-4753 or vtaylor@publicopinionnews.com .

If you go

Event: Amateur Radio Field Day, until 2 p.m. today.

Where: 1501 Crider's Church Road

Directions: Take Interstate 81 to U.S. 30, travel west about six miles, at the traffic light turn

right onto Twin Bridges Road and go (carefully, due to the sharp curves) 1.5 miles. At the intersection, bear left on Crider's Church Road, and in about 1,000 feet, turn left at the show grounds entrance.

Sponsor: Cumberland Valley Amateur Radio Club

For additional information, go to <http://www.w3ach.org> or call Daniel McGlothin at 377-2337

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