

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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“Radio Hams” from Los Banos join in national deployment Public Demo of Emergency Communications June 26 - 27

Los Banos, CA - 17 June 2010 – Your Town’s “hams” will join with thousands of Amateur Radio operators who will be showing off their emergency capabilities this weekend. Over the past year, the news has been full of reports of ham radio operators providing critical communications during unexpected emergencies in towns across America including the California wildfires, winter storms, tornadoes and other events worldwide. During Hurricane Katrina, Amateur Radio – often called “Ham Radio” - was often the ONLY way people could communicate, and hundreds of volunteer “hams” traveled south to save lives and property.

Ham Radio is an essential part of supplemental communications in California, with our frequent earthquakes and wild fires. At least one group of trained emergency radio operators are in every county standing at the ready to assist in needed communications. Often times these communications are simply that necessary health and welfare net, used to let family and friends of loved ones location and status. Other times shadowing disaster workers and bridging communications between different agencies and disciplines is called into play.

When trouble is brewing, Amateur Radio’s people are often the first to provide rescuers with critical information and communications. On the weekend of June 26 - 27, the public will have a chance to meet and talk with Los Banos's ham radio operators and see for themselves what the Amateur Radio Service is about. Showing the newest digital and satellite capabilities, voice communications and even historical Morse code, hams from across the USA will be holding public demonstrations of emergency communications abilities.

This annual event, called "Field Day" is the climax of the week long "Amateur Radio Week" sponsored by the ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio. Using only emergency power supplies, ham operators will construct emergency stations in parks, shopping malls, schools and backyards around the country. Their slogan, "When All Else Fails, Ham Radio Works" is more than just words to the hams as they prove they can send messages in many forms without the use of phone systems, internet or any other infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis. More than 35,000 amateur radio operators across the country participated in last year's event.

"We hope that people will come and see for themselves, this is not your grandfather's radio anymore," said Allen Pitts, W1AGP, of the ARRL. "The communications that ham

radio people can quickly create have saved many lives when other systems failed or were overloaded. And besides that – it's fun!"

In the Los Banos area, the Los Banos Amateur Radio Club will be demonstrating Amateur Radio at Big Page Park on Saturday, June 26, 2010. They invite the public to come and see ham radio's new capabilities and learn how to get their own FCC radio license before the next disaster strikes. There are over 650,000 Amateur Radio licensees in the US, and more than 2.5 million around the world. Through the ARRL's Amateur Radio Emergency Services program, ham volunteers provide emergency communications for thousands of state and local emergency response agencies, all for free.

Communications is not limited to just talking over the radio air waves. "RTTY" called ritty, and is short for RadioTeleTYpe. This works much like the old Western Union teletype, except the interconnecting wires are replaced with radios. Slowscan TV and facsimile are other lesser forms of communications used. Other more "modern" digital forms include radio BBS's, APRS and various forms of packet. Vehicle location, text messaging, weather observations, and e-mail are some of the things one can do with those.

More recently a new form of digital communication was developed by our fellow hams in Japan. This is called D-Star, and digitizes the voice into digital packets by the user's radio only to be converted back by other D-Star compatible radios. This makes for exceptionally clear and clean voice communications, much like an in person conversation. Since these radios communicate using IP packets, these radios also have the ability of transfer text, pictures, video, or even surf the web.

Fellow ham operators, are expanding communications to what is called spread spectrum digital links. This will enable us (ham radio operators) to be able to set up data networks on a wide area network through a hilltop intertie, an extreme benefit for shelters, hospitals, Incident Command Posts, and EOCs.

There are many testing centers throughout the area, so that anyone can take the required FCC test and get involved, as one learns many of the various aspect of this fascinating hobby. Just aks any of the hams at our Los Banos Field Day Event on the last weekend of June. Or just visit us online at www.aa6lb.org

To learn more about Amateur Radio, go to www.emergency-radio.org. The public is most cordially invited to come, meet and talk with the hams. See what *modern* Amateur Radio can do. They can even help you get on the air!

Summary -

Field Day is the annual amateur radio exercise, widely sponsored by [IARU](http://www.iaru.org) regions and member organizations, encouraging emergency communications preparedness among amateur radio operators. In the United States, it is typically the largest single emergency preparedness exercise in the country, with over 35,000 operators participating each year.

Since the first ARRL Field Day in 1933, radio amateurs throughout North America have practiced the rapid deployment of radio communications equipment in environments ranging from operations under tents in remote areas to operations inside Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs). Operations using emergency and alternative power sources are highly encouraged, since electricity and other public infrastructures are often among the first to fail during a natural disaster or severe weather.

To determine the effectiveness of the exercise and of each participant's operations, there is an integrated contesting component, and many clubs also engage in concurrent leisure activities (camping out, cookouts, etc.). Operations typically last a continuous twenty-four hours, requiring scheduled relief operators to keep stations on the air. Additional contest points are awarded for experimenting with unusual modes, making contacts via satellite, and involving youth in the activity.

- Objective-

To work as many stations as possible on any and all amateur bands (excluding the 60, 30, 17, and 12-meter bands) and to learn to operate in abnormal situations in less than optimal conditions. Field Day is open to all amateurs in the areas covered by the ARRL/RAC Field Organizations and countries within IARU Region 2.

Field Day is always the fourth full weekend of June, beginning at 1800 UTC Saturday and running through 2059 UTC Sunday. Field Day 2010 will be held June 26-27, 2010.