



CENTRALIA AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE TEAM

January 2021

Amateur Radio is a hobby ... Amateur Radio Emergency Service is a commitment!

January 2021

Hurray! Woohoo! Cheers & Celebrations!

It's 2021 and we are finally free of Covid-19! Oh, wait.... my bad. That should read "we hope to be free of Covid-19 by 2031". Never mind.

A New All Time Record!

Thank You To The Repeater Fix-it Crew

Well, we had to find something valuable about Covid-19. The Centralia Amateur Radio Emergency Service team set a new record in 2020 for volunteer hours provided to our served agencies.

With nothing else to do and often stuck at home, our volunteers spent much more time checking into nets, upgrading and practicing with new radios and antennas and additional training mostly on Zoom.

During 2020, team members averaged 543 hours each month (a little over 28 hours per person) for a total of 6,524 volunteer hours for the year.

Nice job everyone! Keep up the great work!

Our two Cook Hill K7CEM repeaters have worked well considering they were both used when installed in the fire station eleven or so years ago. Most of us have a few additional issues as we age and we'll give the VHF / UHF systems their due.

Lately, however, our repeater guru, Bill, N7GWK, has had his work cut out for him. For the second time in as few weeks, Bill, Don, Chuck (W6RD), Linc, Chuck (W5KAV) and Paul have spent time getting the UHF side back in working order.

Thanks to the talents of this crew, all seems to be working correctly at this time. Thanks guys!

Operation Propagation - Part One Conclusion



With "Operation Propagation" - part one completed, it was time to hand out certificates and award prizes at our Monday training. Our prize winners, Ken Adams, KK6YUQ and Keven Rasku, KI7KKS, tied in total scoring and were the only two team members to find and transmit on both repeaters with both HTs and mobile radios from all Operation Propagation sites. For their hard work, they both received a set of rechargeable tactical flashlights. Most of the remaining team members received certificates with endorsements that included using multiple repeaters, contacts with both HT's and mobiles, park to park contacts and making contacts by bicycle. Those who made contact with EC Bob Willey, also received, in the mail, a special event, one of a kind QSL card. All the propagation data from each contact resulted in a coverage map of our Centralia / Chehalis response areas, but we're not finished yet. Take a look at Operation Propagation - part two later in the newsletter.

Chief Stacy Denham Comes To Visit Bearing Gifts!



Centralia Police Chief
Stacy Denham

Centralia Police Chief Stacy Denham came to visit at our February 1st ARES meeting and brought gifts to hand out. In December, Chief Denham sat down with EC Bob Willey to learn as much as possible about our team of volunteers, our equipment and how we train. While the ARES team had been deployed in 2020 for a lost person search under his command, this was the first chance he had to see our communications vans and trailer up close and ask questions. At the end of that meeting, Chief Denham asked “what do you need”? We decided we needed to replace our old CPD baseball caps and add each team member’s call sign embroidered on the back. (we will start slow and ask for the million dollar communications van next month) For the February 1st meeting, Chief Denham answered questions, gave an update on the state of the department during the pandemic and discussed issues on the table at the state

level poised to change the way police conduct business. At the end of his visit, Chief Denham handed out the new hats to each team member, shook

their hand and thanked them for their work. Both Police Chief Denham and Riverside Fire Chief Kytta have been very supportive of the ARES team and we thank them for all they do. Our community is in good hands.

Operation Propagation - Part Two

The ARES team moves on to part two of our Operation Propagation exercise in February and part three is planned for March. Our original exercise created a propagation map from data team members created while performing communications tests in multiple areas in our Centralia / Chehalis response. We tested both ARES repeaters and also tested comms using both mobile radios and HT’s. To further expand our propagation map we will be expanding our tests to cover as many of the country roads radiating 360 degrees out from the two cities as possible. The country around the two cities is covered in hills, trees, low spots and piles of dirt which make for creative conditions for amateur radio. Time to find out where things work and where they don’t. The county roads, ranging from just a couple of miles long to more than 15 miles have been assigned and over three Saturdays in February, we will be doing a communications test of each road - mile by mile. We are creating a propagation may that includes useful information about our entire coverage area. In a ten mile stretch of road can we plan on complete coverage? Partial coverage or very limited coverage? Can we increase this coverage with relay stations or even HF comms? Stay tunes with us and we’ll find out.

Bomb Response Field Exercise



After the Christmas Bombing in Nashville, TN, the ARES team planned a training exercise based on what we believed we would be asked to do if deployed by our Police and Riverside Fire professionals. Using the real info from Nashville, we created an explosion area centered around a downtown location which included a multi block, post blast, exclusionary zone. ARES volunteers were assigned different duties. Some set up a shelter with amateur radio comms while others set up medical helicopter landing zones, and street barricades. Comm II and Comm III, our ARES comm vans, were deployed on either end of the exclusionary zone with a dedicated net control to keep track of everyone. To make it more interesting, we did not use our repeaters choosing to use only simplex radio systems. Finally, we tested communications using the vans for possible help should the blast compromise local 911 systems as happened in Nashville. The plan originally included setting up fire response staging areas but with limited time and manpower, we decided to create a stand alone exercise with the help of Riverside Fire at another date and time. An interesting exercise, we will expand on it later.