

LL_FieldDay_2009

The 2009 version of Amateur Radio Field Day is now a part of the record books. As we look back on this 24+ hour demonstration and exercise in operations under presumed 'emergency conditions' we should view this annual experience in light of the lessons learned to improve our operating skills and tactics.

Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance --

More than anything else, a meaningful Field Day experience needs to be based on a proven plan of action. Without a plan, along with multiple alternative contingencies, the entire operation has the potential for becoming a part of the problem instead of the solution.

Site location, antenna and operating position locations, duty roster for not only operators, but support personnel and many other aspects need to be addressed well in advance of proposed operations.

The likelihood of a visitation by 'Murphy' is an ever present item.

Pre Field Day preparations need to be in the planning stage for months rather than weeks or days in advance. Key bonus point areas of media publicity, public location, educational activities, invitations for site visits by local elected officials and served agency persons must be addressed early on. Materials and supplies for the public information table need to be pre ordered well in advance.

In the message handling area, preparation of the message to the SCM/SEC along with the series of ten messages to be handled can be done in advance along with the selection of the method and frequencies to enable transmission of the same thru the NTS.

Power considerations and layouts along with antenna locations must be well thought out and set into a site location plan. Under most circumstances the usage of antenna band pass filters is a must to enable communication in the close environment prescribed by the rules with simultaneous operation on voice, CW and digital modes.

Both the solar power and GOTA Station locations and operations must be designed to get the maximum exposure and participation by both 'new' and light or no usage amateur radio operators.

Perhaps the only variable over which absolutely no control exists is that of propagation characteristics. And even this factor, while not controllable, needs to be managed so that the maximum benefits of that which is in existence

can be taken to advantage.

Finally, fun needs to be factored into the equation to truly make Field Day an enjoyable experience for all involved.

In light of the above, I would challenge each of us to review our own Field Day participation with a backward look to see if we can make improvements in the future.

"When all else fails ... Amateur Radio works"