

WILLIAMSBURG HAM RADIO OPERATORS JOIN IN NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TEST JUNE 23-24, 2018.

Williamsburg Area Amateur Radio Club (WAARC) members will join thousands of ham radio operators across the United States and Canada over the upcoming weekend during their annual "Field Day" event demonstrating their emergency communications capabilities. Their slogan, "**When all else fails, ham radio works**" is more than just words to hams as they prove they can send messages in many forms without the use of telephone and cellular systems, the internet or any other infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis. During major weather events, amateur radio, often referred to as "ham radio", is in many cases the **ONLY** way people can communicate. Hundreds of volunteer hams operators support their local communities and, when required, voluntarily travel to affected areas to give assistance in saving lives and property. During these chaotic times amateur radio operators, using their own personal equipment, are often the first communicators to give first responders critical information by providing situational updates, identifying potential hazards and supporting people needing assistance. During the terrible hurricane event in Puerto Rico last year 50 volunteer hams went to the island early on in the disaster and in many cases provided the only reliable communications channels to areas cut off from direct support. Williamsburg area hams have been working all year long to sharpen their skills in anticipation of the 2018 hurricane season that began officially on June 1st.

June 23-24 is the climax of a week long "Amateur Radio Week" sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association for Amateur Radio, founded over 100 years ago shortly after the birth of Marconi's world changing invention. Using only emergency power, ham operators will set up stations in parks, shopping malls, schools and backyards around the country. More than 40,000 hams in the U.S. and Canada participated in last year's event and the Williamsburg club was one of the most active in Virginia.

There are over 740,000 licensed amateur radio operators in the United States, or about one out of every 400 Americans. And around the world there are more than 2.5 million hams. Local amateur radio operators serve our James City County and City of Williamsburg governments, Eastern State Hospital, the

Colonial Chapter of the American Red Cross, the College of William and Mary, Sentara and Riverside Hospitals and neighborhood Certified Emergency Response Teams (CERT) – all at no charge.

The public is invited to visit the event and talk with the hams at any time during Field Day to see firsthand what modern Amateur Radio can do. You can even use the club's "Get on the Air" station intended for non-hams to enjoy the thrill of ham radio communications.

The Field Day Event will be held at the JCC Little Creek Reservoir Park in Toano, Virginia from 2:00 PM June 23rd until 2:00 PM June 24th. Directions to the Park from Williamsburg: Take Route 60 West to Forge Road/Route 610 in Toano, turn left onto Forge Road and proceed 2.3 miles, turn left at the Field Day sign onto Lakeview Drive. The club will be setup in the area near the public parking lot located off the Park's first right-turn entrance. Admission is free of charge.

The club conducts periodic classes to license new Technician class hams. Check the club's web site at k4rc.net for details. If you need more information you can contact Bill Conkling 757-880-1481 or Ted Edwards 757-208-0791.