

Community News

County Amateur Radio Clubs Have Field Day

2014 Emergency Field Day Exercises Take Place June 28-29

FELTON — Santa Cruz County amateur radio clubs will once again be participating in several local Field Day 2014 emergency preparedness events. Held annually the last weekend in June, Field Day embraces remaining vigilant and ready to serve with well-honed radio communications skills in the event of an emergency or disaster. The Field Day events will take place on June 28 and continue for 24 hours.

Organized as a nationwide contest, many members will set up complete with radios, antennas and emergency power for contest operations. The objective is to perfect remote field operations, as well as to educate the public regarding the amateur ("ham") radio service and how it serves as part of the communications backbone during disasters. Skills practiced will include antenna building and station setup, with limited to no infrastructure support, as well as clear, concise, rapid-fire communications exchanges with other US and Canadian radio hams.



Given the continuing low rainfall these past winters and the early fire season already in California, communications exercises like Field Day are critical

to readiness. The San Lorenzo Valley Amateur Radio Club (SLVARC), host of the largest County event this year, will also focus on training newly licensed amateur

radio operators with a special Get On The Air (GOTA) station for their exclusive use. Other event sites are being sponsored by the UCSC Amateur Radio Club and SCCARC/South County ARES.

During the recent landslides in Washington State, ham radio operators worked seamlessly with emergency personnel in reporting on the ground slide and river conditions in addition to partnering in the rescue efforts. Here locally, ham radio saved the day providing communications during the Loma Prieta earthquake, Love Creek flood, as well as the Lexington, Summit/Eureka Canyon, Bonny Doon Martin and Lockheed fires. Even during the 2011 tsunami with its ensuing damage to Santa Cruz harbor, ham radio rose to the occasion staffing local emergency communications centers and served agencies.

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