

Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club

Western Tennessee • Western Kentucky • Southeastern Missouri

EmComm • Amateur Training • Public Service • License Testing • Special Events

501c4 Non-Profit Organization



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Library Display 2009

June, 2009

Location:

Obion County Public Library

The Obion County Public Library is a modern facility which is home to the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club meetings. It is located in Union City, Tennessee. The entry foyer has a display case that is approximately 20 feet long and is divided into six cabinets.

Background:

After the well-received and successful library display of 2007 which resulted in national exposure in the QST journal, it was decided in late 2008 to do another display near our signature event, Field Day. During the month of June, amateur radio is recognized by legislatures nationwide as a resource for available emergency communications. Rose W9DHD utilized this recognition as a theme for the new display.

Initialization:

Rose W9DHD and husband Bob K9IL actually *did* volunteer for this effort. Rose is well known for her artistic prowess and she took on the project with gusto. The theme of amateur radio operators as a lifeline during times of disaster began to materialize; over time, Rose and Bob would have more and more material for display.



The Display Develops:

During the regular scheduled Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club meetings, Rose would present her vision for the display. It would be a very different display than that of 2007 - it would be a narrative display on how amateur radio operators were instrumental for needed communications during times of disaster. It would begin with the national disaster of September 11, 2001.

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Content:

The display begins with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 where several hundred amateur radio operators assisted in much needed emergency communications. Regular lines of communications were completely jammed due to over-usage. People and relatives of the disaster were trying desperately to find out the status of their loved ones. In addition, emergency

management also relied on amateur radio when normal communications lines were overloaded. This is a common theme and is repeated throughout the display. Much of the display was dedicated to natural disasters such as tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, and ice storms. It also covered things such as electrical blackouts. During a very unusual start to the storm season, a rare February F4 tornado hit Jackson, Tennessee and specifically, Union University. Amazingly, despite near total destruction, there were no fatalities. Amateur radio operators throughout the area were very active in assisting not only welfare traffic, but also tracking the tornado activity as Skywarn spotters with the National Weather Service.

Recent earthquake activity in China, Italy and Indonesia was also on display as was the amateur radio response. China's amateur radio response was particularly impressive given the devastation and the conditions of the response. Rose W9DHD displayed artistic portrayals of the particular disaster and gave texture to the narrative. The response to a particularly devastating earthquake is high on the minds of emergency management and amateur radio operators in this area. It was here



in late 1811 and early 1812 that there were huge earthquakes involving the New Madrid fault that created Reelfoot Lake. Seismologists predict that this fault is due for another big quake.

Hurricanes were also on display with the destruction incurred by Katrina and Rita in the Gulf of Mexico area in 2003. Amateur radio operators showed their mettle many times over during the initial rescue stages and later during the recovery stages. In fact, during congressional hearings in the aftermath of these storms, amateur radio was pointed out as an item of "what went right". In the local area, Hurricane Ike came up the Mississippi River in September of 2008 and caused much wind-related damage. This did not require an amateur radio call-out, but did inspire the scenario "Perfect Storm" for the October Simulated Emergency Test (SET). Obion County was very active during this SET as were several surrounding counties. Our recently departed ADEC Ron W9RVR (SK) was instrumental during this event and his narrative appears in the July 2009 QST.

In January of 2009, Rose found herself with *much* more material for her display. In late January, a truly historic



ice storm hit this area and knocked out power to Northwest Tennessee and the entirety of the State of Kentucky. The destruction was like no one had seen in a hundred years with downed power lines

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and trees. Electricity was unavailable for many areas for weeks. This was particularly difficult in western Kentucky where, in the town of Hickman, there were no communications in or out. There was no electrical power and potable water was going to play out rapidly. Chris KI4TRM was the only line of communication out and he quickly made contact with many hams in Northwest Tennessee - among them Ron W9RVR (SK), Roger, KJ4AJP, Howard W4HLR, Jamie WB4YDL, and Carl KI4PCW... and many others. In particular, Ron W9RVR (SK) was able to put officials in Hickman in contact with state officials in Frankfurt via a cross-band technique. To anyone's knowledge, this had not been done before during these circumstances. This was successful in mobilizing resources to the West Kentucky area and in particular, the town of Hickman. For their efforts, officials in Hickman, Kentucky recognized both Ron and Chris with awards of merit for their emergency communications

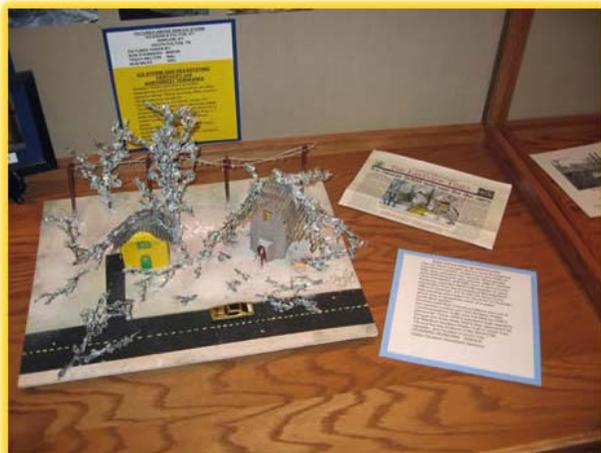
efforts.



The Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club is the ham radio club in this area with members scattered across several states and concentrated in counties of Northwest Tennessee. Rose included a display of our annual Field Day activities which occur in late June, with information on how to become a licensed ham radio operator.

Summary:

Amateur Radio Operators: A Lifeline in Time of Disaster. This was a timely theme that was displayed in a rare way with the artistry of Rose W9DHD and Bob K9IL. Together they managed to portray the essence of the existence of the Amateur Radio service, that is, when regular lines of communications fail or are overloaded, the widespread availability of trained amateur radio operators is there to fill the breach. In other words ...



When all else fails ... Amateur Radio.

