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ARRL Rocky Mountain Division update – June 2009
Division website: www.RockyMountainDivision.org

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This month's Division update is packed to the rim with information...let's get right to it!

===== An Awesome Division Convention it was! =====

"Amateur Radio: Resilient, Relevant, Ready" was the theme of last weekend's HamCon Colorado and 2009 ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Convention, and an awesome convention it was! Attended by exactly 499 hams from all over the Division and other states like Kansas, Arkansas, California, Arizona, and Connecticut, this year's event was jam-packed with activities.

Hams attending were greeted with 35 mostly-technical forums, 25 organizations and dealers including Icom and Yeasu, a chance to operate special event station W1AW/0, a rowdy QLF contest, a solemn Wouff-Hong ceremony, excellent meals, a silent auction for new ham radio transceivers, tons of prizes, and awesome guest speakers.

Among the guest speakers were: Rick Roderick K5UR (Second Vice President of ARRL, and uber DX and VUCC operator), Harold Kraemer WJ1B (ARRL Chief Operating Officer), Gordon Hardman W0RUN (2009 Desecheo Island DXpedition participant and chief engineer of Alpha Radio Products), Mike Gruber W1MG (ARRL EMC Engineer and contributor to "The Doctor Is IN" QST column), Cheryl Muhr, N0WBV, YL columnist for WorldRadio Online (formerly WorldRadio Magazine), Editor for YL-Harmonics the Young Ladies' Radio League's (YLRL) Bi-monthly magazine, and Brian Milesosky N5ZGT (Director, ARRL Rocky Mountain Division).

Rick Roderick (Second Vice President of ARRL, and uber DX and VUCC operator) gave a super, inspirational banquet address on ham radio being the greatest hobby in the world and some of the efforts ARRL is engaged in. Audio from his address is available in MP3 format at <http://scottwesterman.com/Rick%20Roderick.mp3>. Please listen to his speech in his entirety; you'll surely be drawn in and fired up.

Many kudos go to the HamCon 2009 committee who planned and executed a first-class convention. On behalf of ARRL, we greatly appreciate the time and treasure you put in to making it all happen! And thank you to everyone who traveled to Estes Park to enjoy all of the fun the committee promised you'd have. Vice-Director Allen and I enjoyed discussing ham radio and ARRL with you.

===== Heads Up: 2010 Division Convention =====

After a superb convention in Estes Park, it's time to look to next year's big event. The Wyoming section will host the 2010 Rocky Mountain Division Convention, and planning is in full swing. Please mark your calendars for Memorial Day weekend (May 28-30, 2010), as the convention will take place at a great venue: the Platte River Resort in Casper, Wyoming.

More details will be shared as they become available!

===== ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Award recipients =====

We are pleased to announce the 2008 Division Award recipients, announced at last weekend's convention in Colorado.

2008 Rocky Mountain Division Ham of the Year: Darryl Hazelgren K7UT of Lehi, UT
2008 Rocky Mountain Division Young Ham of the Year: Phillip Shaw KE5LZX of Belen, NM
2008 Rocky Mountain Division Technical Achievement Award: Clint Turner KA7OEI of West Jordan, UT

Please offer your congratulations to each of these gentlemen. Their pictures and a short description of their accomplishments can be found in the "Awards" section of the Rocky Mountain Division website.

Nominations are being accepted for 2009's awards – do you know someone who's deserving of recognition?

===== Rocky Mountain Division HF Net =====

Our next monthly Rocky Mountain Division HF net will occur next week to disseminate information and give us a chance to meet you and your ideas in QSO. Here are the details:

DATE: Wednesday, June 10
TIME: 7:30 PM MDT (see note below)
FREQ: 3939 kHz +/- (we will likely QSY to 40 meters beginning in July!)

(Note on time: The New Mexico Roadrunner net occurs on this frequency and is usually finished by 7:30pm MDT. In the event that it's still in progress at that time, we'll begin the Division net immediately afterwards.)

Propagation and noise have affected us the last few nets, but we'll press on regardless!

===== ARRL Field Day: This Month! =====

Whether it's to be enjoyed with a bunch of friends, a local club, or an ARES group, in the mountains or in the city, Field Day happens this month! We hope you and your club are gearing up to be a part of the fun on June 27-28.

ARRL once again offers a useful feature on its website: A tool that displays Field Day sites and information across the United States and Canada, thanks to Google Maps. While you or your club members may know where your particular Field Day site will be located, the real beauty of this feature is that it informs other Hams, prospective Hams, or visitors where Field Day efforts will take place in their areas. Is your site shown on the map?

Head over to <http://www.arrl.org/contests/announcements/fd/locator.php> to see what Field Day sites are nearby, or to add yours. This tool is only as good as the number of people who make use of it, so please post your site and spread the word to all the Hams you know, especially those new to the hobby.

Information packets and rules for the 2009 event are available for download at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/announcements/fd> See you on the bands for Field Day this year! Vice-Director Allen and I look forward to working your station.

===== July ARRL Board of Directors meeting =====

The ARRL Board of Directors convenes twice a year to represent their Division on ARRL policy matters. Our second meeting of the year will take place in mid-June. Your concerns, questions

and ideas concerning ARRL policies are always welcome! Please help us represent you better by letting us know what's on your mind.

===== Check out this Ham radio Podcast! =====

Jerry Taylor KD0BIK, a member of our great Division from Denver, Colorado produces a wonderful podcast for your enjoyment. It's called "The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast", and over 23 casts (and growing) on a wide variety of topics await you at his website (<http://www.myamateurradio.com>) as well as from iTunes. Check it out!

===== New ham store open in our Division =====

Hams in northern Colorado and southern Wyoming might be interested in the opening of a new ham store! Valley Ham Shack in Loveland, Colorado opened its doors on June 1. Their website is www.valleyhamshack.com

===== Tech Tip of the Month: Antenna tuner myths =====

The purpose of this Tech Tip section is to offer a platform for our ARRL members (that's you!) to offer concise technical advice and suggestions for all. Our aim is not to teach someone how to design a radio, but to offer brief hints and kinks for hams to learn from. If you have a Tech Tip you'd like to offer – any topic pertaining to ham radio is welcome – please send it to Vice-Director Dwayne Allen WY7FD (wy7fd@arrl.org) for consideration!

And now for this month's tech tips:

There is a misconception among some hams that antenna tuners are the magic bullet for making a mediocre antenna work like a rock star. Well, sorta.

An antenna tuner is a device that matches your transceiver to your antenna, specifically your radio's 50 ohm impedance to the impedance (usually not 50 ohms, especially across all frequencies) of your antenna. Inside any tuner resides inductors and capacitors to get the job done.

It's important to note that impedance matching, which is crucial in any RF system, is the only function of the tuner. Some of our newer hams might have been told that the tuner will improve the performance of an antenna entirely. Unfortunately, that's not the case. If your antenna doesn't perform too well because of its configuration, size, etc, remember that the tuner will not do much for its performance outside of matching its impedance. A mediocre antenna attached to an antenna tuner is simply a matched mediocre antenna.

Remember also that the antenna is the most crucial part of any ham system. A 2 watt QRP radio transmitting into a well matched, well designed antenna will outperform a multi-thousand dollar Icom IC-7600 attached to a poor antenna. Excellent resources on antennas and how to improve them include the ARRL Antenna Book, LB Cebik W4RNL (SK)'s website at www.cebik.com, and theoretical books such as the Antenna Engineering Handbook (Johnson) and Antenna Theory (Balanis).

If you have a concise tech tip you'd like to offer for a future Division-wide email, please send an email to Vice-Director Dwayne Allen WY7FD (wy7fd@arrl.org).

===== Upcoming hamfests, tailgates & conventions =====

July 18 Pikes Peak Radio Amateur Association Megafest (Monument, CO)
August 14-15 Duke City Hamfest (Albuquerque, NM)
August 16 Denver Radio Club Hamfest (Golden, CO)
August 28-30 Mountain ARC CampFest 2009 (Lake George, CO)
September 5 Alamogordo Hamfest (Alamogordo, NM)
September 27 Boulder ARC BARCFest (Longmont, CO)
October 3 Pecos Valley ARC Swapfest (Roswell, NM)
May 28-30 2010 Rocky Mountain Division Convention (Casper, WY)

Links to websites belonging to the above events are found on the Rocky Mountain Division site:
www.RockyMountainDivision.org

If you're organizing a Hamfest, convention or tailgate, please consider having your event ARRL-sanctioned. Sanctioning details can be found at <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/hamfests/>

===== Upcoming on-air activities =====

In addition to chewing the rag with fellow hams, here are some additional on-air activities which await you on the airwaves.

Upcoming special event stations: <http://www.arrl.org/contests/spev.html>
Upcoming contests: <http://www.arrl.org/contests/calendar.html>
Operating awards: <http://www.arrl.org/awards/>

===== Final note... =====

Please touch base with your Section Manager if he can be of assistance to you:

Jeff Ryan K0RM (Colorado): <http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=CO>
Don Wood W5FHA (New Mexico): <http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=NM>
Mel Parkes NM7P (Utah): <http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=UT>
Garth Crowe N7XKT (Wyoming): <http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=WY>

Vice Director Dwayne Allen and I continue to welcome your concerns, questions or ideas regarding ARRL policies. See you on the airwaves!

73,
Brian Milesosky N5ZGT, Rocky Mountain Division Director
Dwayne Allen WY7FD, Rocky Mountain Division Vice-Director
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