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

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===== ARRL Board adopts guidelines on the appropriate use of Amateur Radio =====

The ARRL Board of Directors recently adopted guidelines on the appropriate use of Amateur Radio on behalf of commercial, non-profit and government entities, as well as recommendations for additional steps to be taken by the ARRL to educate radio amateurs and others on how to prepare and train for public service and emergency communications while complying with the current FCC Rules.

Candidly, this is a sticky topic, but one that needs a degree of attention by those utilizing ham radio for emergency communications.

Last spring, at the Dayton Hamvention, FCC raised the topic of Part 97.113 as it relates to ham radio communications and pecuniary interest, as well as communications performed on behalf of employers. There apparently have been several recent occurrences where ham communications, a degree of it related to emergency communications, have been conducted on behalf of an employer – whether for-profit, non-profit, or government. Enough, apparently, for FCC to take notice and raise the issue on its own.

There is no doubt that ham radio provides a crucial role in emergencies where effective communications is needed. And while many of us devote our time and treasure preparing to assist our communities with our ARES organizations, we need to bear in mind the governing Part 97 rules and regulations which allow ham radio to be in existence in the first place. Part 97.113 is by no means a new regulation, as it's been "in the books" for well over a decade. Some may contend that it needs to be revised to better accommodate emergency communications, and others believe that it's best left alone. Regardless, its present day form is what we have to live by.

Another area of concern has to do with organizations – again for-profit, non-profit, and government – pursuing the use of the Part 97 Amateur Radio Service for their own emergency communications because of its inexpensive nature and already existing infrastructure (i.e. repeaters, etc) rather than utilizing the Part 90 and Part 95 (Land Mobile Radio Service, General Mobile Radio Service, or Commercial Mobile Radio Service) radio services that are allocated specifically to them. When does this become an inappropriate use of ham radio?

To assist with the understanding of 97.113 as it relates to our communications, as well as the appropriate use of ham radio by entities that have multiple other radio service avenues available to them for their communications needs, please review the guidelines drafted by ARRL at <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/09/25/11094/?nc=1>. ARES and other public service organizations are welcomed to share this document with those agencies/organizations for whom they assist.

It's unknown what, if anything, lies in the future regarding FCC and this topic, but it serves as a friendly reminder that we – and those who look to us as communicators in an emergency – must be aware of the regulations that come with our privilege to utilize the ham radio spectrum.

===== 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, October 14
TIME: 7:30 PM MDT
FREQ: 7240 kHz +/-

General check-ins will be accepted, news and information will be passed, and everyone participating will be invited to ask their Division leadership questions, raise any concerns, or suggest ideas. We hope you'll join us!

===== 285 TechConnect Radio Club TechFest (Colorado) – November 7 =====

The 285 TechConnect Radio Club, an ARRL affiliated organization, will host a full day of technical presentations on various topics at its annual TechFest on Saturday, November 7 in Morrison, Colorado (west Denver). Workshops on topics such as RF propagation, test equipment, SWR, and more will be offered.

All Hams are invited to attend, however space is limited and pre-registration will be required. The 285 TechConnect Radio Club will donate 50% of net proceeds from this event to nearby Deer Creek Elementary School's ham radio program. For more details on this event please visit 285 TechConnect Radio Club's website at www.na0tc.org.

===== Archive of past Division Updates available! =====

For your reference, an archive of previous Rocky Mountain Division updates are available on the "News & Announcements" page of the Rocky Mountain Division website:
<http://www.rockymountaindivision.org/news.html>

===== 2010 Rocky Mountain Division Convention...save the date! =====

After a fantastic event held this past summer in Estes Park, Colorado, the 2010 Rocky Mountain Division Convention will take place Memorial Day weekend (May 28-30, 2010) at the Platte River Resort in Casper, Wyoming.

The Northeast Wyoming ARC is hard at work planning a great event for you. Please save the date and consider enjoying your Memorial Day weekend with hams from across the Division at an awesome venue.

More details will appear at <http://www.rockymountainhamcon.org/> as planning progresses.

===== Rocky Mountain Division member survey...stay tuned =====

This fall/winter we intend to offer an online member survey to gather your thoughts on a variety of general and specific topics related to the Rocky Mountain Division and ARRL in general. We look forward to utilizing yet another avenue to solicit your feedback to help us represent you better.

The last member survey was offered in 2007 and was responded to by approximately 12% of the Division membership. If you'd like to review the results of the 2007 survey, please read the PDF document at http://www.rockymountaindivision.org/survey/survey_results.pdf

As for this year's survey, we'll keep you in the loop as to when it's been released and available for your input.

===== Tech Tip of the Month: Are you ready for winter? =====

The purpose of this Tech Tip section is to offer a platform for ARRL members like 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 in a few paragraphs to Vice-Director Dwayne Allen WY7FD (wy7fd@arrl.org) for consideration!

And now for this month's tech tip from Dwayne WY7FD...

Winter is on the way. Snow and cold conditions can make it difficult to work on your antenna system. Now is the time to get ready for the long and sometimes brutal winters that we see here in our Division.

Cold weather causes wires and cables to contract. If you put up a new antenna support this summer, check to make sure there is enough slack in the guying system to allow for constriction. Also, check to make sure your fastening systems are sound. They are the weakest point of a guy system. Did your new installation include a rotator? Check to make sure the lubricant is suitable for the expected cold temperatures for your area.

Over the years, coax coupling devices may work loose. Some brands of electrical tape become brittle in cold weather. Is your coax old and cracking? Check these now.

During the winter, it is much more comfortable to be in the warm shack operating than out on the tower freezing your fanny off.

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

October 10	Bridgerland ARC SwaptoberFest 2009 (Logan, UT)
October 31	Socorro Amateur Radio Association Hamfest (Socorro, NM)
November 7	285 TechConnect Radio Club Techfest (Morrison, CO)
January 16	Northern Colorado ARC Winter Hamfest (Fort Collins, CO)
February 7	Aurora Repeater Association Swapfest (Brighton, CO)
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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