

Ham radio operators across the nation hold on-air open house

Group uses exercise for emergency response training

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

Ham radio operators across the United States and Canada connected Saturday in the largest annual on-the-air event.

An open house of sorts held each year on the fourth weekend in June, Amateur Radio Field Day features local clubs and ham radio enthusiasts who set up temporary transmitting stations in public places to demonstrate the purpose and capability of ham radios. Upwards of 40,000 people participate each year.

"We try to contact as many people as we can. We operate for 24 hours if we can stay awake that long," Jim Davis said with a laugh. "What we're doing is the granddaddy of events."

Davis and other members of the Hermiston Amateur Radio Club gathered Saturday at Boardman Marina Park. Using fishing poles, nylon paracord and lead weights, Don Drayton, club vice president, said they utilized the park's tall and abundant trees to set up antenna lines.

While operating ham radios is a hobby for many, they also serve a practical purpose. In the event of a natural disaster — which might result in the loss of electricity, cell phone towers, landlines and internet access — amateur radio operators are called on to assist with communications and emergency management, Davis said.

"We can be on the air in an hour anywhere we go," Drayton added.

When trees aren't available, Drayton said he has an 80-foot mast in his truck. Several of the club members, he said, have travel trailers with all their supplies, including generators, batteries or solar power systems. In the event of an emergency, everything is



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini
Bill Quick gives a thumbs up after Whitley Smith, right, makes contact with a ham radio operator out of California. Smith's grandson, Brenden Smith, 15, looks on. The group was participating in the Amateur Radio Field Day Saturday at Boardman Marina Park.



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini
Charles Eades, Jim Davis and Don Drayton participate in the Amateur Radio Field Day Saturday at Boardman Marina Park.

ready to go, Drayton said.

Another purpose for Saturday's event, Davis said, is to make sure all their equipment is working. Many of the local amateur radio operators will be on-air during the Aug. 21 eclipse.

In a May interview, Andrew Phelps, Oregon Office of Emergency Management director, told the *East Oregonian* that they are using the celestial happening as an emergency response exercise. With a predicted influx of a million people flocking to the path

of totality in Oregon, he said they plan to activate the emergency coordination center. It will provide valuable experience in planning for and evaluating emergency responses to disasters, such as an earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

The partnership, Drayton said, is beneficial to residents in Umatilla and Morrow counties, as well as the rest of the state. He encourages more people to obtain a license to operate ham radios — especially in rural counties.

Hams 'hogged' airtime

According to the American Radio Relay League, referring to amateur radio operators as "hams" was coined in the early days. Amateur users competed for time and signals supremacy in each other's receivers with other radio operators at government stations, ships and coastal stations. Often, the amateur radio operators could jam other operations with their powerful stations. Frustrated operators referred to the amateur "interference" as hams for hogging up the time. — www.arrl.org

The Hermiston Amateur Radio Club meets the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Umatilla County Fire District #1's Station 23, 78760 Westland Road, Hermiston. For more information, visit www.ai7ho.org.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

Missing girl found near Tollgate camp

By East Oregonian

A 13-year-old girl spent Saturday night alone near Tollgate while her family and others searched for her.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office in a written statement reported Kate Mollinedo, of the Portland area, woke up Sunday and yelled until searchers, including her mother's boyfriend, found her.

The girl and her family were on a camping trip at the Target Meadows Campground near Tollgate. The sheriff's office reported her mother, the boyfriend, and siblings thought the girl was playing Saturday afternoon with some other children at the campground when she went missing.

"They looked for her for about three hours before contacting the sheriff's office," according to the statement.

The sheriff's office at 6:15 p.m. received a request to send in the search and rescue team, according to county records.

"We deployed several assets during the search, including a helicopter with night vision, unmanned

aerial vehicles (drones), ATV units, canine units, and ground search teams," the sheriff's office reported. Sheriff's personnel and search and rescue teams from Morrow, Union, Wallowa, Baker, Harney, and Malheur counties also helped, as did staff and resources from the emergency management departments of Umatilla and Morrow counties, LifeFlight Helicopter and the U.S. Army National Guard.

Rescuers found her Sunday at about 10:30 a.m. approximately 1/8 mile from her camp. She was unharmed, the sheriff's office reported, except for a few scratches.

She told the sheriff's office she fell from a tree Saturday afternoon, became disoriented and could not see or find her camp.

"She wandered along a trail where they picked huckleberries earlier, and then fell asleep near a tree after dark," according to the statement. "When she woke at daylight, she walked around and yelled until searchers, including her mother's boyfriend, heard Kate and found her."

She did not require any medical attention.

Man jailed for causing crash while intoxicated

East Oregonian

Oregon State police reported an intoxicated driver Sunday near Irrigon crashed into two vehicles.

State police arrested Jesus Eduardo Zuniga, 21, of Boardman, on several charges, including driving under the influence of intoxicants (alcohol and marijuana).

Zuniga was driving a gray Dodge Charger southbound on Paterson Ferry Road at a high speed Sunday afternoon, according to state police, when he crashed into a westbound car on Highway 730 and then into an eastbound vehicle.

The collisions resulted in minor injuries to Zuniga and the other two drivers,

Katherine Calvert, 45, and Virgil Leroy Hausinger, 66, both of Irrigon. State police reported ambulances took them to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston. A passenger in one vehicle was not injured.

State police arrested Zuniga at the hospital and booked him into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton. Monday morning, the Morrow County District Attorney's Office charged Zuniga with driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving, two counts of fourth-degree assault and three counts of recklessly endangering another person. He was released from jail on \$40,000 bail Monday. His next court hearing is July 6.

BOARDMAN

State will not suspend operations at new dairy

Petition for reconsideration pending

By GEORGE PLAGEN
East Oregonian

State regulators have denied a request by multiple environmental and animal rights groups to suspend operations at Lost Valley Farm, the controversial new 30,000-cow dairy permitted earlier this year near Boardman.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Quality are jointly responsible for administering Oregon's confined animal feeding operation, or CAFO, program. The agencies issued a hotly contested water pollution permit for Lost Valley Farm on March 31, which became final on April 20.

Opponents of the dairy farm have filed what's known as a petition for reconsideration, urging ODA and DEQ officials to change their minds. The coalition also asked for a stay of Lost Valley's permit, which was rejected in a ruling handed down Friday,

June 23. "Petitioners have failed to provide any evidence of exactly what harms, if any, their members will sustain during the reconsideration period," the ruling reads in part.

Petitioners include the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Columbia Riverkeeper, Food & Water Watch, Friends of Family Farmers, Humane Oregon, the Humane Society of the United States, Oregon Physicians for Rural Responsibility and Oregon Rural Action. They argue Lost Valley threatens to contaminate local groundwater and surface water as the dairy ramps up to full capacity over the next three years.

So far, Lost Valley has brought in just more than half the cows it is permitted to handle — 16,000 total, with about 8,700 milking cows. Estimates show that, at 30,000 cows, Lost Valley will produce 187 million

gallons of wastewater and manure every year.

ODA and DEQ claim they crafted a permit that will be the most protective of water quality to date. For example, Lost Valley is required to have 11 groundwater monitoring wells on site, which is seven more than usual. The facility will also be inspected at least three times as often as other dairies.

Tarah Heinzen, staff attorney for Food & Water Watch, previously told the *East Oregonian* they knew it was unlikely the state would stay Lost Valley's permit. Their petition for reconsideration remains under review, and the groups may still consider a formal appeal in court.

Greg te Velde, owner of Lost Valley Farm, previously said that suspending

his operation would have just as harmful an effect on the cows as it would his business. Without the CAFO permit, te Velde said he would have nowhere else to go with the cows. It is entirely possible they would have to be sold for slaughter, he said.

In addition, te Velde said he would likely face foreclosure in Oregon after roughly \$100 million worth of investment since 2003. Previously, te Velde ran Willow Creek Dairy on land leased from nearby Threemile Canyon Farms.

A spokeswoman for Lost Valley said the farm is pleased with the latest decision, and continues to focus on its operations.

Contact George Plagen at gplagen@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

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