



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

When groups could gather in person, the Central Oregon Coast Amateur Radio Club used to meet annually for the Amateur Radio Relay League Field Day.

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action to provide communications in crises when more sophisticated platforms are compromised.

As part of the group's training, they participate in the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) Field Day, an annual event designed by the league to simulate conditions which would require the use of ham radios as the primary source of communication between government entities and the public.

The 2021 ARRL Field Day takes place next weekend, June 26 to 27, and more than 40,000 "hams" across North America will set up temporary transmitting stations to

demonstrate the important service they provide to the community. Florence will be participating in the national radio exercise from 11 a.m. on Saturday until 10:59 a.m. on Sunday.

"Hams have a long history of serving our communities when storms or other disasters damage critical communication infrastructure, including cell towers," said COCARC Field Day Chairperson Bob Pine. "Ham radio functions completely independently of the internet and phone systems and a station can be set up almost anywhere in minutes. Hams can quickly raise a wire antenna in a tree or on a mast, connect it to a

radio and power source, and communicate effectively with others."

Unfortunately, the continuing issues associated with the pandemic will have a significant impact on this year's event, as it did last year. Ham operators will not be able to share the day with the public and will be operating from homes, garages and trailers scattered throughout Lane County.

Many hams have portable radio communication capability that includes alternative energy sources such as generators, solar panels and batteries to power their equipment, which could be invaluable in a time of crisis.

There is also a competitive

aspect to the day, as participants will attempt to contact as many stations as possible in addition to learning how to operate their radio gear in abnormal situations and under less than optimal conditions.

The AARL represents more than 170,000 FCC licensed amateurs and their expertise is used by fundraising events like marathons, bike-a-thons, walk-a-thons and parades when not training for disasters.

Individuals interested in learning more about ham radio or the ARRL Field day should contact COCARC representative Jay Guettier at 541-991-9478 or at jguett@gmail.com.

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