

Columbia County "ham" receives Emergency Management award

During a natural disaster, one of the most critical tools of emergency management personnel is communications. However, communications can be severely damaged and hamper relief efforts. Often, the only contact that can be made is by ham radio operators.

Developing a countywide system of ham operators who can spring into action when an emergency situation develops has been a top priority of John Clouse, Emergency Management Coordinator for Columbia County. With the help of Martin T. Anderson, a volunteer ham

operator working with Clouse since 1999, communications equipment has been upgraded, ham operators recruited and training and a communications plan developed.

For all of these accomplishments and more, Anderson was recognized with a Service Award from Oregon Emergency Management Association (OEMA) at the association's annual workshop in Eugene on August 22. Only two such awards were given out state wide.

"Not being one to sit around and waste his energy or knowl-

edge, Martin has done innumerable things," Clouse said of Anderson in a nominating letter to OEMA. "The intangible thing is that he has been very uplifting to my morale as I build an emergency management program from very meager beginnings," Clouse continued.

Anderson, a manager at the Mill Plain Fred Meyer store in Vancouver, Wash., is currently the Emergency Coordinator of

the Columbia County Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES). According to Clouse, Anderson has recruited a number of volunteers, including several younger people, and has trained eight Assistant Emergency Coordinators.

Anderson has also upgraded equipment located on the roof of the courthouse and the Meissner Road repeater station. In addition, he has worked

closely with other groups to secure funding to purchase new equipment, including Columbia 9-1-1 Communication District's \$2,000,000 radio system replacement.

After receiving the award on Wednesday, Anderson was right back on the job, manning the Columbia County Emergency Operations Center's ham radios for the Hood to Coast and Portland to Coast Relays.

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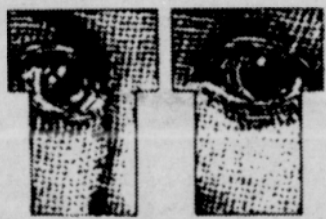
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