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High Desert Amateur Radio Group (Mission Statement and overview of activities 2024)

HiDARG is made up of dedicated ham radio operators who have various backgrounds that include aviation communications, electronics, military communications, commercial radio systems, commercial and private pilots, software development, computer systems, public service, education, and other types of jobs and disciplines. Our skill set is very broad, and we welcome folks from all occupations to join us in this great hobby of ours.

We provide emergency communication support of public events like the Pole Peddle Paddle, Lobos Motorcycle Races, Mudslinger Mountain Bike Events, Dog Sled Races, running marathons throughout the state, etc. These events are a lot of fun to do, however, and most importantly they provide us an opportunity to exercise and sharpen our skill set with communications. And in the event of some type of natural or man-made disaster those skills will be extremely valuable in supporting any communication requirements that various entities might require. “When all else fails, ham radio is there.” This is a common term used across the United States for many organizations such as ours.

Most of all we have lots of fun, we do many yearly events like Field Day. This is where we setup in a remote or public location and contact thousands of other hams across the country doing the same thing as us. This allows all hams to hone their skills to quickly make contacts and exchange information.

As part of our Mission statement we support the Region7 hospital group, specifically the St-Charles system Hospitals in Prineville, Redmond, Bend, Madras, as well as other hospitals in Burns, John Day, Klamath Falls, and Lakeview all of these entities have setup emergency ham radio stations. For HiDARGs part, we train hams and man the stations in our area. Other hams in other counties are responsible for their area. The HiDARG repeater system allows all those systems to stay in contact with each other in the event of power outages or the failure of their primary communications network. There are many gaps between these entities and HiDARG continues to work to fill them. That said we don’t exist solely for the Region7 group but support their sub entities in our area as part of our community service to the organization as a whole.

HiDARG owns and maintains a number of radio repeater systems in the Central Oregon area. We have repeaters on Long Butte between Bend & Redmond, Pine Mountain, Glass Butte, and Mt Stepheson which is north of Prineville, plus systems in Burns, and John Day... **All these repeaters are linked together.** If you’re talking on one of them via radio, you’re talking across the entire system at the same time. In most case’s this is done with a small handheld radio. You can talk to someone in Burns from a Bend location on a handheld radio. If the power is down due to a storm, you can still talk, as all the systems are on battery backup supplies. And even more exciting is that our Burns and Mt Stephenson site are all totally off the grid and powered by solar panels.

We provide classes and training to get new hams on the air, and to help them get setup with their own radios and training in the hobby. Just a few of the exciting things we are looking to do in the future are listed on the next page. Keep in mind this is just a small list in a very large hobby, with many areas of interest. Computers, the Internet, remote communications are all part of what ham radio does now a days. We are currently celebrating the start of ham radios second century.

Some of our projects we are involved with and working on:

1. Foxhunts, this is where we hide a low power transmitter, and have other ham folks see how fast they can find it, and score points tracking down the radio, this can be an all-day event.
2. Experiments with long distance Internet access using low power radio systems, ability to setup a remote site with Internet access, and example would be to help support a search and rescue operation in the wilderness. A few of our members are with Deschutes County Search & Rescue and affiliated with local law enforcement agencies who also have hams in their ranks.
3. Training exercises are held several times a year to train operations in the local hospitals radio systems.
4. Tracking and monitoring participants in various outdoor events, like marathons, bike race, horse endurance rides, and motorcycle races. All to benefit the health and welfare of those participants.

Having a range of repeaters across the area we support allows us to help with most any event that may need our support to ensure those attendees will have help if needed.

5. Helping all hams in Central Oregon, regardless of membership status with HiDARG.
6. Working to schedule a High Altitude balloon launch to help develop our search and tracking skills. Was put off in 2023 as some sensitivity to unmanned balloons were affecting scheduling.
7. Look for opportunities to enhance all systems with newer technologies as they become viable.

We want to encourage folks to review our information, look at our website, and some of our projects that we have done in the past. Ham radio has so many varied aspects to it that it is easy to be lost in all the things that you can do with it. There is something for everyone in ham radio, so contact us if our interested in learning more. We want to encourage and help anyone that shows an interest in our hobby. As mentioned, before we have many members with lots of different skills and interests to help out.

Sincerely thanking you for your support.....
High Desert Amateur Radio Group



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