



**County of McHenry
County Administration**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2009 McHenry County EMA Field Day

McHenry County IL — On Saturday, June 27 from 2 PM to 6 PM and Sunday June 28th 8 AM to Noon, the public is cordially invited to meet and talk with the McHenry County amateur radio operators who provide critical communications in emergencies world-wide. Local residents will have a chance to see what this "radio service" is really about. The McHenry County Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) Organization a volunteer division of the McHenry County Emergency Management Agency will hold a demonstration of their emergency communications abilities in the McHenry County Government Center parking lot, 2200 N. Seminary Ave., Woodstock, IL.

This annual event, called "Field Day" is the climax of the week long "Amateur Radio Week" sponsored by the ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio. Using only generators, batteries or solar power, the hams construct emergency stations in parks, shopping malls and back yards to test their skills under all situations. The slogan, "Ham radio works when other systems don't!" is more than just words to the hams as they prove they can send messages in many forms without the use of phone systems, internet or any other infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis. More than 30,000 amateur radio operators across the country participated in last year's event.

"We hope that people will come and see for themselves, this is not analog radio anymore," said John Zelz, Volunteer Chief of the McHenry County RACES Division and ARES County Emergency Coordinator. "It may be called 'Amateur Radio' because we are unpaid but that does not mean we're not prepared!"

Over the weekend hams will be demonstrating AM Radio, sideband Radio, FM Radio, digital Radio, Morse code and even satellite communications. Several clubs in the area will also be experimenting with TV signals and incredibly high frequency equipment. It was from their practical experience as hams that led to the development of today's communications.

There are numerous licensed Amateur Radio Operators in McHenry County, and more than 2.5 million around the world. Through the ARRL, hams provide emergency communications for the DHS Citizens' Corps, the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, FEMA, many states and the local governments within McHenry County.

To learn more about Amateur Radio, contact McHenry County Emergency Management Office at 815-338-6400, go to www.arrl.org/newham, or come see us on June 27th at the McHenry County government center.

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“McHenry County government is dedicated to providing the highest quality services for the health, safety, and welfare of the County’s residents and communities. We foster representative and transparent government to ensure social, economic and environmental justice.”