

Amateur Radio in Kalamazoo County



KARC

Kalamazoo Amateur Radio Club

The KARC owns and maintains two repeaters: the 147.00 and the 444.65. Both provide good coverage of Kalamazoo County and beyond. These repeaters are for the entire amateur radio community to use.

The KARC conducts a 13-week Technician class for newcomers to the hobby. When there is adequate interest the KARC also sponsored a class for operators wishing to upgrade to the General class license. If you are studying on your own, the KARC sponsors Volunteer Examiner (VE) Amateur Radio License Testing every other month at the Kalamazoo County Sheriffs Office on Lamont Avenue.

The KARC constructed and maintains a disaster communications trailer. Generators, batteries, antennas, coax, and other supplies can be rapidly deployed in case of emergency, or at any club sanctioned event. There is also a club station at the Red Cross Chapter House in Oshtemo, equipped with radios and antennas for most bands and modes, including VHF, packet and EchoLink.

Visit www.w8vy.net for more information and meeting location.



SMART

Southwest Michigan Amateur Radio Team

The SMART organization has been supporting the activities of Kalamazoo area hams for over 50 years since its beginning in 1958. The club owns and supports three repeaters: a 2m repeater at 147.04, a 70cm repeater at 444.875, and a 6m repeater at 51.720.

The club meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month at a local restaurant for a breakfast of your choosing followed by a business meeting and informational discussions.

The SMART club also organizes an annual summer picnic/potluck at a local park and sponsors an annual bus trip to the Dayton Hamvention.

Visit www.k8kzo.com for more information and meeting location.

Each year the KARC collaborates with the Southwest Michigan Amateur Radio Team (SMART) to sponsor the annual Kalamazoo Hamfest. The two clubs also combine their efforts in June to participate in the ARRL Field Day exercise.

Both clubs provide communications support for numerous community activities throughout the year. Among them are the Crop Walk, MS Walk, Flowerfest Bike Tour, Prairie View Triathlon, and others.

The KARC and SMART members are active participants in the annual Kalamazoo County Disaster Exercise.

Emergency Communications



RACES

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

Founded in 1952, the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is a public service provided by a pool of specialized radio operators during times of extraordinary need. During RACES activations, trained and certified volunteers are called upon to perform many tasks for the government agencies they serve. Although the exact nature of each activation will be different, the common thread is communications. The Kalamazoo Office of Emergency Management sponsors the local program, and provides us with two disaster communications trailers.



ARES

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service

ARES consists of licensed amateur radio operators who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty when disaster strikes. Every licensed amateur, regardless of membership in ARRL or any other local or national organization, is eligible for membership in the ARES. The only qualification, other than possession of an Amateur Radio license, is a sincere desire to serve. Because ARES is an amateur service, only amateurs are eligible for membership. The possession of emergency-powered equipment is desirable, but is not a requirement for membership.



LOST

The Line Of Sight Team

LOST, is dedicated to providing emergency communications wherever they are needed by our local ARES/RACES program and the Kalamazoo County Office of Emergency Management. Through weekly drills and regular public service events, we improve our ability to set up portable communications equipment, and pass messages for relief agencies and the public, during a disaster.



SKYWARN

SKYWARN is a program used by trained weather spotters to observe and report severe weather to the National Weather Service via amateur radio.

The National Weather Service uses Skywarn spotters to provide “ground truths” about developing weather conditions and severe weather events as they occur. While their sophisticated radar and other tools give an indication of conditions in an area, the specifics are often unknown unless they are observed by trained spotters. Skywarn spotters also provide observations that are helpful in providing severe warnings and watches, and documenting weather trends. Many National Weather Service offices have an amateur radio station within the facility, to receive weather reports by Skywarn spotters. Participation in Skywarn does not require an amateur radio license. Spotters can also report severe weather via telephone or e-mail.

In Kalamazoo County, all of the above functions are operated under the same umbrella of leadership. If you would like to join any or all of these groups, or just need more information, visit www.kalcountyraces.org or www.nk8x.net