

EMERGENCY HAM RADIO STATIONS LINK JULIAN TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Julian – Julian CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) is the fastest growing CERT organization in the U.S., and a number of CERT members have joined together to form the Julian Emergency Radio Team, licensed by the Federal Communications Commission on June 12 as Amateur Radio Station W6JUL.

On Saturday, June 26, W6JUL team members gathered at the Julian High School to demonstrate their ability to provide emergency communications between Julian and the outside world in the event of a local, regional or national emergency.

In less than ninety minutes, the team erected four temporary communications antennas on HF (shortwave) and VHF (146Mhz) frequencies. Then, throughout the day, using 100-watt Amateur Radio transceivers powered by generators and emergency batteries, they exchanged messages with about one hundred other Amateur Radio Stations scattered around San Diego County, Southern and Northern California and in 25 states from Washington to Vermont and from Florida to Hawaii, plus several Canadian Provinces. W6JUL also made contact with radio operators aboard the U.S.S. Midway, which is permanently berthed in San Diego Harbor.

Local messages to San Diego County stations from Palomar Mountain to Fallbrook, Oceanside, Escondido, Del Mar, San Diego, Portrero, La Mesa and Coronado were achieved using FM modulation over VHF, similar to FM radio signals receive on home and car radios. Longer-distance exchanges with Los Angeles, the Bay Area, Sacramento, Seattle, Kansas, Wisconsin, Indiana, New Mexico, Texas, Alabama, Maryland, New Jersey, New England, Florida, Hawaii, Canada and other distant locations were accomplished over single-sideband on three Amateur Radio (shortwave) bands between 3.8 MHz and 14.3 MHz, according to W6JUL's station logs.

The June 26 demonstration in Julian was part of an annual nationwide event known as ARRL Field Day, during which thousands of licensed Amateur Radio (Ham) Operators establish temporary stations operating on emergency power. The slogan used by ARRL, the National Association of Amateur Radio is "When All Else Fails... Ham Radio Works."

W6JUL members recalled the Witch Creek Fire of 2007 when a telephone cable along Highway 78 between Julian and Ramona was damaged by fire causing many Julian area residents to be without landline phone and cell phone service for as long as a week. A small number of Amateur Radio Operators in 2007 were able to communicate from Julian to other parts of the County to exchange messages and report on fire and weather conditions.

Today, FCC records show about 65 licensed Amateur Radio Operators in the Julian area, including the members of the W6JUL team, who are now better equipped than in 2007 to establish independent emergency radio links between Julian and the outside world, from San Diego to Los Angeles, Sacramento and beyond.

Many of these new Julian Amateur Radio Operators earned their licenses over the past six months at free classes hosted by Julian CERT and instructed by the National Association of Amateur Radio's San Diego representative, Steve Early, who also participated in the June 26 emergency communications demonstration in Julian.

Additional free Amateur Radio classes are planned for Julian Residents, and will be announced in the future by W6JUL and Julian CERT in the Julian News and on the Community Bulletin Boards at the Post Office and around town.



W6JUL Team Members included (left to right) Brian Kramer of Pine Hills, Tim Augustine of Cuyamaca, Jeff Smith of Wynola, Johnny Hake of Julian and Jim Birdsell of Wynola. (All photos by Kurt Barnhart, W6JUL Trustee, Pine Hills)



Tim Augustine of Cuyamaca set up a portable HF (shortwave) Amateur Radio Station at Julian High School and contacted a dozen U.S. states and two Canadian Provinces.



Steve Early from ARRL, the National Association for Amateur Radio, examines a portable VHF antenna built by Brian Kramer of Pine Hills.



An example of one of the four long-range transceivers used by the W6JUL team.



W6JUL team members connect an HF (shortwave) antenna to a table of Amateur Radio transceivers under a sun shade at the Julian High School football field.