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# KDØCI's Radio Newsletter

Volume 2 Number 7 - Supporting Amateur Radio in East Central Minnesota - May 25, 2007

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## **REGION ACTIVE WITH PACKET NETWORK AND REPEATER DEVELOPMENTS**

All of a sudden, there is plenty of news on the Packet Network and Repeater fronts across East Central Minnesota. Here are just a few of the latest developments.

On the Packet Radio front, as a followup to the Packet Seminar held in Milaca on April 12<sup>th</sup>, the Mille Lacs County Public Health Center hosted a workshop on the late afternoon of Tuesday May 15<sup>th</sup> for local amateurs. The purpose was to further acquaint operators with the Packet equipment used at the site. The equipment was successfully set up by John Smolenski, NØYR, who also brought his equipment along to the session. Although there were no successful connections made with Nodes, everyone had a chance to work Packet by connecting with NØYR's Packet station.

In order to keep the interest and momentum in Packet operations going, there was a discussion held between KDØCI and NØYR on how best to proceed with ongoing Packet operator training. One idea that seems to have merit as well as support is to commence a regularly scheduled "on air" Packet exchange by operators at hospitals and public health centers across the region, as well as involving operators at home sites that may be "on line". NØYR suggested that the schedule for such should be determined by feedback from potential operators and facilities managers to determine the most suitable times for this activity. As a result of his suggestion, a survey sheet regarding this activity is included in this newsletter. All interested parties are urged to respond to the survey and return it ASAP to [kdzeroci@ecenet.com](mailto:kdzeroci@ecenet.com).

Then on May 17<sup>th</sup>, Tom Jameson, WØKGW, installed a new Two Meter Packet Node in Askov, operating on 145.67 MHz. Packet operators are encouraged to connect to the MNASK site to try it out.

Meanwhile, there are several developments regarding two regional repeater sites. The first one concerns the 145.350 MHz repeater in Milaca, which has been down for several months. Following a series of month-long tests conducted by local amateurs to see if the repeater was operational, a technician who recently visited the site reported that while the repeater was actually generating a signal, it was not detectable beyond a few feet from the shelter. There was also a report of lightning damage on the main antenna mounted at the top of the 200 foot tall tower. He could not access the locked shelter to investigate the problem any further, but the word is that the custodian of the repeater, presently living in Nevada, is "very interested" in getting this repeater back on the air.

The Milaca repeater is situated at a first class site, and has the potential of being immensely valuable for emergency communications. In the past, the Milaca repeater provided impressive coverage over a large area of East Central Minnesota, however when asked if it could be used as a facility for our emergency voice repeater network, KDØCI responded by saying that unless this facility became operational on a far more consistent basis and better maintained than it had been in recent months, we can't rely on it and thus it would not be useful.

At the same time, efforts got underway to reestablish a two meter repeater presence in Mora. Working with Homeland Security Managers in Pine and Kanabec County, KDØCI is on the verge of applying for a two meter frequency pair for the Mora area that would provide complete coverage for Kanabec and Pine Counties. One engineering plan being considered is a "split site" repeater with the main receive and transmit sites in Mora, and remote receive sites at key locations in fringe coverage areas. This could include remote sites in Mille Lacs County at Foreston and Onamia for the Hospital Net into St Cloud, and in Pine County at Willow River for the Skywarn Net into Duluth. Mora repeater's coverage area will have to be developed in stages starting with the basic transmit/receive sites in Mora, progressing from there based on the availability of funds. The most likely remote sites to be set up first would be the Willow River site to enable much needed Skywarn Coverage in Kanabec and Pine Counties into Duluth, and the Foreston site to enable hospitals and public health centers in Sandstone, Mora and Milaca to communicate with St Cloud Hospital.

Another key development is the amateur radio classes being offered in the region. Jim Cashman, KCØEQE started a new six week class at St Louis Church in Foreston on Sunday April 29<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, the one day class that was to be held on Saturday May 26<sup>th</sup> at the Pine Medical Center in Pine City with KDØCI acting as the instructor was postponed again. This class was originally scheduled back in March, but was postponed due to a snow storm.

## NEW HAMS NEED GEAR –

One of the problems that has reared its ugly head in recent months is that some of our newest hams still have no gear. Some of them have been too busy, or otherwise unable to acquire the gear they need to get on the air. Some of these people are finding it difficult to find the time to look for gear, and/or scrounge up the necessary funds to buy new gear, and are ready to settle for used equipment just to get on the air.

As a service to these people, the KDØCI Newsletter is prepared to provide space for amateurs to post equipment for sale as a free public service. As an additional service, this new space will also post new “BARGAIN ITEMS” found at various Amateur Radio Equipment vendors, just in case any of our readers wants to spring for that new piece of gear after all.

The only conditions set forth by the posting of this information is that hams who offer their equipment for sale in this newsletter must remember that in standing with good amateur practice, all equipment must be in normal working condition, and contact information must be provided.

Amateurs who have equipment to sell should submit their list of items, complete with prices and contact information to [kdzeroci@ecenet.com](mailto:kdzeroci@ecenet.com). In the meantime, here are just a couple of the latest “BARGAIN ITEMS” that I ran across in the June edition of QST.

Amateur Electronic Supply [AES] in Milwaukee Wisconsin is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of business. To find out more, check out their website at [www.aesham.com](http://www.aesham.com) or call 1-800-558-0411. One item they have on sale that caught my eye is the Yaesu FT-2800M two meter transceiver. For whatever its worth I have an FT-2800M, and I really like it. This rig covers the two meter band [144-148 MHz] with additional coverage of 137-174 MHz. It has selectable power outputs of 65/25/10/5 watts, and features Weather alert, CTCSS & DCS Encode/Decode. **The AES price is only \$139.99!** I also noticed a brand new Icom IC-718 HF All Band Transceiver listed at AES for only \$549.99! They advertise the rig as “perfect for those new to HF”, so if you have a General ticket, this may be worth considering.

Having given this information, one thing to keep in mind is to shop around for possible better deals elsewhere. Among the “elsewhere’s” is Burghardt Amateur Center in Watertown South Dakota. You can either call them at 605-886-7314, or visit their website at [www.burghardt-amateur.com](http://www.burghardt-amateur.com).

## GET READY FOR FIELD DAY – By Kenny Broshofske KDØCI

One of Ham Radio’s biggest events is the annual ritual known as Field Day. This event occurs on the last full weekend in June, which this year happens to be June 23-24. The purpose behind the Field Day exercise is for Hams to literally take their gear out of the house or storage for field operations. They routinely set up sites at locations as diverse as from their own back yards, to local parks and campgrounds, to out of the way places, and off the beaten path to tally as many contacts as possible during the contest period. Field Day is promoted not so much as a contest as it is a public service event, and it is often used to demonstrate Amateur Radio at various venues across the country.

Now I have to confess, I’m not a big fan of Amateur Radio “contests”, BUT having participated in a few Field Days over the years, this is one event that has always interested me. To me, Field Day was not just about the fun of operating, but it’s much about the camaraderie, particularly years ago. Years ago, I belonged to a Brainerd area group that called itself the Paul Bunyan Wireless Association. One of the highlights of our Field Day was to see who came up with the biggest steak to grill. Some of those steaks were really pathetic, as in TOO SMALL, and those people were usually the recipients of quite a bit of funny verbal lampooning for being “so cheap”.

For many operators, especially city dwellers, this is the one occasion they have during the year to really “let it out”, and they do. If you check out enough Field Day sites, you’re likely to encounter just about every conceivable portable setup and antenna configuration imaginable.

If you have an opportunity, you should try to take in a Field Day event near you, or maybe participate in it yourself. You don’t have to be in a club to operate. To familiarize yourself with the contest rules, check out the Field Day page on the American Radio Relay League website at [www.arrl.org/fieldday](http://www.arrl.org/fieldday).

Bottom line, everybody usually has a good time at Field Day. It’s an event we should consider participating in by having one in our area – if not this year, sometime in the future.

# PACKET NET SURVEY SHEET

Please answer the following questions and return to [kdzeroci@ecenet.com](mailto:kdzeroci@ecenet.com).

1. Your name and call sign.
  
2. If you participated in a regularly scheduled Packet exercise, where would you operate from?  
Home [ ]      Hospital [ ]      Public Health Center [ ]      Any or all [ ]
  
3. What day[s] of the week would be most suitable to you for participating in the Packet exercise?  
First choice?                      Second choice?                      Third choice?
  
4. What time of day would be most suitable to you for participating in the Packet exercise?
  
5. How long should this exercise last?  
Half hour [ ]      Hour [ ]      Longer [ ]
  
6. How often should this exercise take place?  
Weekly [ ]      Semi-monthly [ ]                      Monthly [ ]
  
7. Would you be able to participate on a regular basis? How often?
  
8. Have you had any training in Packet radio?
  
9. Would you be willing to participate in a Packet Radio training session?
  
10. What other comments or ideas do you have regarding any on-air exercises and nets?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey sheet. Your participation in this survey will help determine the course of action we will take in establishing regularly scheduled Packet Radio Practice Exercises, for the express purpose of training operators who will respond to the need for emergency communications, if and when the need occurs.

## UPCOMING VE TESTING – Courtesy of ARRL & QST

26-May-2007

**Sponsor:** UNSPONSORED

**Time:** 8:30 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

**Contact:** JOHN J SMOLENSKI

(763)263-8741

**Email:** [N0YR@ARRL.NET](mailto:N0YR@ARRL.NET)

**VEC:** [ARRL/VEC](http://ARRL/VEC)

**Location:** AMERICAN LEGION

525 RAILROAD DRIVE

ELK RIVER, MN 55330

02-Jun-2007

**Sponsor:** ST PAUL RADIO CLUB

**Time:** 8:30 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

**Contact:** DAVID M BUENDING

(952)486-0836

**Email:** [AD2B@ARRL.NET](mailto:AD2B@ARRL.NET)

**VEC:** [ARRL/VEC](http://ARRL/VEC)

**Location:** ROSEVILLE CITY HALL

2660 COUNTY ROAD C

NW COR CTY RD C & LEXINGTON AV

ROSEVILLE, MN 55101

23-Jun-2007

**Sponsor:** UNSPONSORED

**Time:** 8:30 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

**Contact:** JOHN J SMOLENSKI

(763)263-8741

**Email:** [N0YR@ARRL.NET](mailto:N0YR@ARRL.NET)

**VEC:** [ARRL/VEC](http://ARRL/VEC)

**Location:** AMERICAN LEGION

525 RAILROAD DRIVE

ELK RIVER, MN 55330

## HAMFEST INFORMATION

### Type Key:

\* = ARRL Convention

\*\* = ARRL Convention pending Executive Committee approval

+ = ARRL Hamfest

x = non-ARRL Hamfest

Dates	Type	Event and Contact	Location
2 Jun 2007	+	Tailgate Swapfest TwinsLAN ARC & Mining ARC <a href="http://www.twinslan.org">http://www.twinslan.org</a> <b>Talk-In:</b> 147.120+ <b>Contact:</b> Anders Johansson, KB0PJV 8201 32nd Ave N Crystal, MN 55427-2532 Phone: 763-208-7493 Fax: none Email: <a href="mailto:kb0pjb@yahoo.com">kb0pjb@yahoo.com</a>	St Paul, MN 3M Center Bldg 209 Parking Lot <a href="#">McKnight Road &amp; Interstate 94</a> <b>Div:</b> Dakota <b>Sect:</b> Minnesota

**NET INFORMATION** - [Post near your radio for handy reference]

**NAME CHANGE FOR TUESDAY EVENING NET**

Effective on Tuesday June 5<sup>th</sup>, the Tuesday Evening Simplex Net, presently known as the Mille Lacs County Emergency Preparedness Net, will have a new name.

In the 13 months that the Tuesday night net has been operating, the operational scope of the net has expanded beyond the borders of Mille Lacs County, and it was felt that a name change was necessary to reflect the growth. Thus, the net will be identified as the **East Central Minnesota Emergency Preparedness Net**.

While the name of the net will change, the format will remain basically the same as it has been. However, there are plans to introduce training at some point, especially as more operators come on board. Training in the handling of formal written traffic is high on the training agenda.

Please note the changes made in the net preamble below, and replace any old copies with the updated copy.

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**EAST CENTRAL MINNESOTA EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS NET**

Every Tuesday Evening @ 7 PM – 146.565 MHz [Simplex]

**Preamble and Format for the Mille Lacs County Emergency Preparedness Net**

[Updated on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2007, and supersedes all previous issues]

**Preamble:**

This is [your call sign] calling the East Central Minnesota Emergency Preparedness Net. This net meets each Tuesday evening at 7 PM Central Time on a frequency of 146.565 Megahertz for the primary purpose of operator training. This net also provides dissemination of Amateur Radio information and bulletins. All stations are welcome to join the net, and are asked to check in by the use of their call sign only. This is a directed net. Transmit only at the direction of the net control, and please pause between transmissions so others may join our group. Each station will be recognized in the order they check in, and they will be given an opportunity for informal comments. Again, your net control station is [your call sign], my name is [your first name], and I'm located at [your location].

**Format:**

- Standby for Emergency Traffic
- Standby for check-ins from Mobile Stations only [Follow by asking for any relays on mobiles]
- Standby for Announcements or Bulletins
- Standby for general check-ins

Training and/or Informal Session [Standby periodically for any additional check-ins]

**Close the net:**

Thank all participants; return the frequency to general amateur use.

## **Other Area & Regional Nets**

### **CENTRAL REGION EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS NET**

First Wednesday of every month @ 1 PM – 147.015 [WØSV Repeater, St Cloud]

### **UPPER MIDWEST TEN METER NET**

Every Thursday Evening @ 8 PM – 28.475 USB [Net Control KBØHDA]

### **NEWCOMERS NET**

Every Monday Evening @ 8 PM – 147.015 MHz [WØSV Repeater, St Cloud]

### **MINNESOTA SECTION PHONE NET**

Daily @ 12 Noon and 5:30 PM – 3.860 KHz LSB.

### **EMERGENCY & SKYWARN FREQUENCIES**

Mille Lacs & Kanabec Counties: 146.565 MHz Simplex

Regional Packet: 145.670 MHz

National Weather Service [Duluth]: 146.94 MHz [Duluth], 147.00 MHz [Mahtowa].

National Weather Service [Duluth]: 75 Meter Net: 3.810 KHz LSB. Alternate: 3.820 KHz LSB.

## **Information On The World Wide Web**

Information on this and more local and regional Amateur Radio activity is posted on the St Cloud Amateur Radio Club website at [www.w0sv.org](http://www.w0sv.org)

## **KDØCI RADIO TOWER DOWN FOR MAINTENANCE**

By the time you receive this newsletter, the KDØCI Amateur Radio Tower will be lowered for routine antenna and cable maintenance. This means that with the exception of two meter mobile operations, I will be off the air on all amateur bands from home until all the maintenance work is completed. I don't expect this to take more than a week, unless I find something wrong that will require more time to fix.

In the meantime, I will appreciate any operator help that can be provided for our Tuesday evening net. Otherwise, if something comes up that you need help with or discuss, you may contact me at [kdzeroci@ecenet.com](mailto:kdzeroci@ecenet.com).

## **COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Permission is granted to subscribers to reprint this newsletter for distribution to others. Material herein may be used elsewhere, as long as this newsletter is referenced as the source. Your comments, questions, etc for this newsletter are welcome.

Send your comments, as well as any “newsworthy” items for inclusion to [kdzeroci@ecenet.com](mailto:kdzeroci@ecenet.com)

73,

Kenny Broshofske KDØCI