

For Immediate Release

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Public Demonstration of Emergency Communications June 22-23

Middletown, RI June 11, 2013 – Over the past year, the news has been full of reports of disasters such as Hurricane Sandy, the Blizzard of 2013, and the Oklahoma Tornadoes. Despite the Internet, cell phones, email and modern technology, whole regions have been plunged into darkness without a means to communicate. In these cases, the one consistent service that has never failed has been Amateur Radio. These radio operators, often called “hams”, provide backup communications for everything from the American Red Cross to FEMA and even for the International Space Station. Newport County Radio Club “hams” will join with thousands of other Amateur Radio operators showing their emergency capabilities during an event called “Field Day”.

On the weekend of June 22-23, the public will have a chance to meet and talk with Rhode Island hams and see for themselves what the Amateur Radio Service is about. Using only emergency power sources, the Newport County Radio Club members will deploy several emergency stations at Glen Park, located at Gilbert Barker RD (off of Glen RD) in Portsmouth, RI. Operations will begin at 2 PM on Saturday and continue for 24 hours non-stop. There will be a station dedicated to demonstrating Amateur Radio communication to the public, and anyone interested can make contacts of their own (no license required).

The Amateur Radio operators slogan, “When All Else Fails, Ham Radio Works” is more than just words to these hams as they prove they can send messages in many forms without the use of telephone systems, Internet, or any infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis. More than 35,000 amateur radio operators across the country participated in last year's Field Day event.

“Amateur Radio plays a vital public safety communication service” said Congressman Greg Walden, “with tremendous potential when all other forms of communication fail, especially during emergencies.” As Craig Fugate of the US Department of Homeland Security stated, “When everything else fails, Amateur Radio often times is our last line of defense. When you need Amateur Radio, you really need them.”

The public is invited to observe and participate beginning 2 PM Saturday June 22 at Glen Park, Gilbert Barker Road (off of Glen Road), Portsmouth, RI.