

## Ham Radio Field Day in Advantage News

<http://advantagenews.com/news/features/hams-take-hobby-to-next-level-at-airport%E2%80%99s-field-day/>







BETHALTO — Lewis and Clark Radio Club continued the spirit of exploration as they celebrated 30 years of ham radio operations on Amateur Radio National Field Day at St. Louis Regional Airport on Saturday and Sunday, June 28-29.

St. Louis Regional Airport manager Dave Miller also holds the position of emergency coordinator for Madison County through the American Radio Relay League.

“We’ve often joked through the club that if it were the end of the world, cockroaches and ham radio operators will still be there,” Miller said. “When all else fails ... if cellular, landline phones, or other basic communication is down, ham operators will still be able to help local hospitals, fire and police departments and civilians communicate.”

On National Field Day, ham operators from all over the world sign on using alternative power sources such as generators, solar or even wind power to run the equipment. Different types of communication through ham such as digital, Morse code, and audio transmission give operators several options to reach out to other ham operators worldwide.

“Even if the Internet is down, a computer can be used to communicate through radio sound waves,” Brady O’Brien of Worden said. “The FLDIGI program can be downloaded and saved off the Internet ... you just connect through the computer’s sound card and it can pick up over radio bands and you can type like you’re in a chatroom.”

Field Day has become a nationwide contest to determine the furthest distance reached through HAM communication. Different power sources or the type of communication is worth a designated number of points. The contest runs for 24 hours, from 1 p.m. Saturday to 1 p.m. Sunday. There are more than 350,000 ham radio operators nationwide.

“Everyone contributes,” Lewis and Clark Radio Club president Shawn Knight said. “As a club, we help with communications for events such as races, storm spotting, and even the fireworks displays ... we’re here to serve the community.”

Wood River native Troy Ware brought his son Eli to kick off Field Day and introduce him to ham operations.

“We were able to reach out to Brazil, Serbia, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Canada and the Virgin Islands,” Ware said. “I know we made well over 300 contacts.”

Ted Lohr of Godfrey made the final contact of the contest for the Lewis and Clark Radio Club when he signed off with a ham operator from Princeton, Texas.

“National Field Day and mass casualty drills help us prepare for emergencies,” Lohr said. “This type of contest is not only fun to see how far we can reach out, but to also keep our skills up.”

“To become a licensed ham operator, you must attend a four- to five-week beginners course that meets two nights a week,” Field Day coordinator Jacques Dupont said. “Once approved through the FCC, the club can conduct the tests ... testing is every other month.”

For information on becoming a ham operator, contact the Lewis and Clark Radio Club by visiting [www.k9ham.org](http://www.k9ham.org).