

Members of the Bellbrook Amateur Radio Club (BARC) are going to show the importance of what they can do during Field Day Saturday and Sunday June 26-27.

During the last year, hurricanes, tornados, and forest fires have proved the worth of amateur radio communication during emergencies. Anyone interested in seeing how it's done is invited to visit with members of BARC as they take part in the national event, being held locally in Sackett-Wright Park in Bellbrook.

Since 1933, ham radio operators across North America have set up temporary ham radio stations in public locations during Field Day to highlight the science and skill of amateur radio. In 2020, there was no BARC club Field Day because of pandemic restrictions but many individual members took part from their home stations.

For more than 100 years, amateur radio — sometimes called ham radio — has allowed people from all walks of life to experiment with electronics and communication techniques, as well as supply a free public service to their communities during a disaster. During Field Day more than 35,000 amateur radio operators from thousands of sites in the United States and Canada show their ability to reliably create a communication network under any condition from almost any location.

“Usually, the cell phone system provides communication to anywhere in the world,” said Ray Hitt, Field Day coordinator for BARC. “But natural disaster can interrupt or overload cell phone and other communication systems. Ham radio functions completely independently of the internet and phone systems and a station can be set up anywhere in minutes. Hams can quickly raise a wire antenna in a tree or on a mast, connect it to a radio and power source, and communicate effectively with others,” Hitt added.

BARC members will show this ability by quickly setting up radio stations in the park with the ability to communicate worldwide, according to BARC member Don Parker, Ohio District 3 emergency coordinator for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service.

The annual Field Day is just one way that hams continually work to remain a valuable asset to their communities during disasters and live up to their motto, "When All Else Fails, Ham Radio Works," he said.

Anyone can become a licensed amateur radio operator. There are more than 750,000 licensed hams in the United States, as young as 5 and as old as 100. And with clubs such as the Bellbrook Amateur Radio Club, it's easy for anybody to get involved.

Field Day will take place in and around Shelter No. 1 from 2-9 p.m. June 26 and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. June 27. Sackett-Wright Park is at 3371 State Route 725, just east of Bellbrook.

For more information about Field Day, contact Ray Hitt at hittra@gmail.com or 937-848-4547.