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Barrie Ham Radio Operators Demonstrate Emergency Capabilities

Public Demonstration of Emergency Communications – Saturday, June 24

Barrie, Ontario – Local Ham Radio operators will be showing off their emergency capabilities at the Oro-Medonte Fairground on the weekend of June 24-25. Over the past year, the news has been full of reports of ham radio operators providing critical communications in emergencies worldwide. During Hurricane Katrina, Amateur Radio – often called “Ham radio” - was often the ONLY way people could communicate, and hundreds of volunteer “hams” traveled south to save lives and property. When trouble is brewing, ham radio operators are often the first to provide critical information and communications. On the weekend of June 24-25, the public will have a chance to meet and talk with local ham radio operators and see for themselves what the Amateur Radio Service is about. Showing the newest digital and satellite capabilities, voice communications and even historical Morse code, hams from across Canada will be holding public demonstrations of emergency communications abilities.

This annual event, called "Field Day" is the climax of the week long "Amateur Radio Week". Using only emergency power, local ham operators will setup emergency stations at the Oro-Medonte Fairground. The slogan, "Ham radio works when other systems don't! " is more than just words to local hams as they prove they can send messages in many forms without the use of phone systems, internet or any other infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis.

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"We hope that people will come and see for themselves, this is not your grandfather's radio anymore," said Wendy Ford, President of the Barrie Amateur Radio Club. "The communications networks that ham radio people can quickly create have saved many lives in the past when other systems failed or were overloaded."

In the Barrie area, the Barrie Amateur Radio Club will be demonstrating Amateur Radio at the Oro-Medonte Fair Grounds on 24 June 2006 from 4 pm until 6 pm. They invite the public to come and see ham radio's capabilities and learn how to get their own amateur radio license before the next disaster strikes.

There are more than 50,000 Amateur Radio operators in Canada, and more than 2.5 million around the world. Ham volunteers provide emergency communications for local authorities, provincial, Federal, and Non-Government Agencies such as the Red Cross, all for free.

To learn more about Amateur Radio, go to www.rac.ca. The public is most cordially invited to come, meet and talk with the hams. See what modern Amateur Radio can do. They can even help you get on the air!