

EC Comments

January, 2010

Here we are at the end of the year already. And what a quiet year it has been. I certainly hope that we don't go to the opposite end of the spectrum next year.

Looking back at 2009, it really was a pretty good year.

Our relationship with Emergency Management continued to move forward on positive notes.

We became the custodians of a fairly large quantity of ham equipment that will be used in the Dispatch Center, Coldwater Police/Fire Departments and in the Communication Trailer.

The Comm Trailer has had some work done on the inside to add work surfaces in the radio room and in the main section of the trailer. The water tank that was located up front (radio room) has been relocated under the couch to get it out of the way. A small work surface was installed between the entrance door and the radio room door. This can be used as a dedicated location for the weather station. The AC power system has been upgraded to provide what we are going to need to operate the trailer. In addition to some ham gear to be installed, there will be a bunch of public service radio and computer gear installed. There is a 10 Kw generator that will provide the power when out in the field and away from electrical service.

There is still a lot of work to be done with antenna supports to design, build and install, coax to run and radios and power supplies to install. It is just too darn cold to work outside, so this project is going to wait until spring unless we can come up with a warm place to park it while we work.

What will this trailer be used for, you ask? As easy as it would be to think that this trailer is there for our exclusive use, we must remember that it is an Emergency Management vehicle and its primary purpose is to be available for any type of emergency or non-emergency use that requires any communication coordination capability. There are any number of situations that come to mind: spills, accidents, incidents, crime scenes, weather related activities and the list goes on and on. Wherever its presence can provide shelter, warmth or cool, hot coffee, a restroom, meeting space, or just a place for the people working a situation to get off their feet for a few minutes, it will be a much appreciated asset.

At any of these situations, the RACES group may be called upon to move the trailer where it needs to go, set up antennas and get the mother ship into operation. In exchange for our support and assistance, we will have the opportunity to exercise a secondary use of the trailer and that will be to take it to public places such as the Strawberry Festival, Relay for Life, Applefest and of course Field Day and other events. This will allow us to showcase both Emergency Management and Amateur Radio. I think this is a pretty good trade.

We also had an opportunity to track and recover an object from near space when we were asked to find the payload of a weather balloon that was launched at Ft. Custer near Battle Creek. What a time that was. For the first time we had to find a transmitter that was hiding at 50,000 feet for a while and came down wherever the winds took it. I have to say that with a bit of luck but a bunch of skill, we were able to locate the tiny payload 40 odd miles from the launch area and 3 hours and 41 minutes after launch. We are ready to do it again!

And I said it was a quiet year. It was a great year!

From my family to yours, we wish you the very best in 2010. See you soon.

73,

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