

Third Annual Radio Field Day connected Tyler County to world

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Nick Toparcean, AE5VV, looks over some of the members of the Tyler County Amateur Radio Association who participated in the annual ARRL Field Day activities Saturday and Sunday, June 24-25, in the Tyler County Emergency Op Center in Woodville. Standing to the right of Toparcean is TCARA President Chuck Petri. See [WD5TYL.org](#) for more on the association and a host of resources. *Jim Powers Photo*

Turkey—Rhonda Holcomb, KG5SJT, made the farthest connection this weekend during the Tyler County Amateur Radio Association’s third annual official Field Day that officially kicked off internationally at precisely 1 p.m., Texas time, Saturday, June 24, in the Tyler County Emergency Op Center next to the Nutrition Center in Woodville.

Field Day is an international effort among 700,000-plus Americans and 3,000,000 others around the world, one of the few old-school gatherings on earth where true worldwide peaceful communication takes place every year. TCARA was up all night from 1 p.m. Saturday to Sunday at 4 p.m., Texas time—27 hours straight!

At the start, remnants of tropical storm Cindy portended to test the mettle of these fired-up radio enthusiasts. “These are the best conditions for us,” said James Wedgeworth, KG5HXM, the worse the weather the better to test their equipment and skills. Wedgeworth’s son, Joseph Wedgeworth, KG5INU, is 13 years old and the youngest active licensed radio operator in the TCARA. Petri, KF5YDG, had already spent the day before preparing the center and lining out the equipment. They had six stations running with the capability to do “every mode,” including voice, digital, data and Morse Code.

They were most grateful to be using the Tyler County Emergency Op Center. While not a true competition, as the operators are not trying to “beat” anyone, the TCARA does



Tyler County Amateur Radio Association held its third annual Field Day on Saturday, June 24, at the Tyler County Emergency Operations Center in Woodville, kicking off a 27-hour international communication fest. Madalynn Odom, 7 years old, chatted on the radio under her grandmother’s watchful eye, Rhonda Holcomb, KG5SJT. In the background is Joseph Wedgeworth, KG5INU, 13 years old and the youngest active licensed radio operator in the TCARA which meets every first Thursday at 7 p.m. at 201 Veteran’s Way in Woodville, Texas. Visitors are welcome and one can see more at [WD5TYL.org](#).

get points for a long list of emergency and communication preparedness items and connections. Using the Op Center itself allowed TCARA more points in the international event.

Amateur Radio Emergency Services Coordinator Nick Toparcean, AE5VV, decades-long radioman, presented to Robert “Bob” Caruthers, KG5SFI, his Extra Class License certificate this weekend, which is the top level radio license allowing Caruthers more access under FAA law.

The main objective of these exercises is to keep vital communication going in the event of escalated emergencies, be that the weather or a nasty terrorist. For whatever reason, should the hospital or sheriff or county lose communication, the TCARA can be up and running for about \$10 in about ten minutes. They can even talk with the International Space Station.

Petri said, the Morse Code “distress call of the Titanic was heard round the world.”

TCARA began over four years ago, and today Petri maintains their vast website, WD5TYL.org, that continues to add features—a real labor of love for this radio expert.

The American Radio Relay League, est. in 1914, hosts ARRL Field Day every year for a 27-hour marathon of international communication that crisscrosses the globe. The goal is “To work as many stations as possible on any and all amateur bands ... and to learn to operate in abnormal situations” (from ARRL.org). Always on the fourth Saturday in June at precisely 1800 or 6 p.m. Zulu or Greenwich Mean Time, which is set at the Prime Meridian in Greenwich, England—in Woodville it was 1 p.m. because of daylight savings.

This year the TCARA made over 293 connections. Preliminary points were about 2,600, besting last year by about 300 points (fully calculated later in the week). Petri said, “This was our best Field Day experience to date. The weather may have been wet, but the radio conditions were great. We had a wonderful time of fellowship with the public and fellow hams around the country and world.”

The TCARA meets every first Thursday at 7 p.m. at 201 Veteran’s Way in Woodville, Texas. Visitors are welcome, and for a load of info see WD5TYL.org.



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