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For Immediate Release

### **News Summary: Williamsburg Ham Radio Operators Join in Public Deployment of National Emergency Communications on June 28-29, 2014**

Williamsburg Area Amateur Radio Club (WAARC) members will join thousands of Amateur Radio operators to show off their emergency capabilities this weekend. Over the past year, the news has been full of reports of ham radio operators providing critical communications during unexpected emergencies in towns across America including California wildfires, winter storms, tornadoes, and other tragic events worldwide. During major weather events, amateur radio-usually called “ham radio”- is often the ONLY way people can communicate, and hundreds of volunteer “hams” travel to the affected areas to save lives and property. When trouble is brewing, Amateur Radio's people are often the first to provide rescuers with critical information and communications. On the weekend of June 28-29, the public will have a chance to meet and talk with Williamsburg's 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 the USA 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” sponsored by the ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Using only emergency power supplies, ham operators will construct emergency stations in parks, shopping malls, schools and back yards around the country. Their slogan, **“When all else fails, ham radio works”** is more than just words to the hams as they prove they can send messages in many forms without the use of phone systems, the internet or any other infrastructure that can be compromised in a crisis. More than 35,000 amateur radio operators across the country participated in last year's event and the Williamsburg club was one of the most active in Virginia.

As the ARRL notes, this is not your grandfather's ham radio anymore. This was evidenced by the club's recent ham radio contact with an astronaut on the International Space Station (ISS) in conjunction with students at the Berkeley Middle School. Ham radio has also become deeply involved in the recent STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) emphasis at local schools. But besides that----- it's fun!

There are over 700,000 Amateur Radio operators in the US and more than 2.5 million around the world. In the Williamsburg area, local amateur radio operators serve the County and City governments, Eastern State Hospital, Colonial Chapter of the American Red Cross, College of William and Mary, Sentara Hospital and the neighborhood Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERT), all for free. The Williamsburg hams will be looking to sharpen their operating skills in anticipation of the 2014 hurricane season.

The public is most cordially invited to come, meet and talk with the hams and see what **modern** Amateur Radio can do. They can even help you get on the air! Williamsburg's Field Day operations will be at the Little River Reservoir Park in Toano and run continuously from 2:00 PM on Saturday June 28th until 2:00 PM on Sunday June 29th, 2014. The public is invited and encouraged to attend at anytime during the operation.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Williamsburg take Route 60 West to Forge Road/Route 610 in Toano, turn left onto Forge Road/Route 610 and proceed 2.3 miles, turn left at the Field Day sign onto Lakeview Drive and proceed to the Park. For more information, contact Chuck White at 757-870-8602 or Bill Conkling at 757-880-1481.

**Summary:** Williamsburg Area Amateur Radio Club (WAARC) operators to contact thousands of other hams throughout North America in the nation's largest ham radio on-air event.

**Who:** Licensed Amateur Radio Operators in the Williamsburg Area Amateur Radio Club (WAARC).

**What:** Hams will set up and operate emergency field radio stations to contact other hams throughout the US and Canada over 24 hours. Objective is to see who can make the highest number of contacts during the contest period.

**Where:** Little River Reservoir Park on Lakeview Drive off Forge Road /Route 610 in Toano.

**When:** From 2:00 PM on June 28th until 2:00 PM on June 29th, 2014.

**Why:** Participation in the American Radio Relay League's (ARRL) Field Day. Field Day is a competition as well as a "trial run" for emergency communications skills used during disaster situations. Amateur Radio operators practice communication skills under primitive conditions with generator and battery-powered equipment and portable antennas. The event offers photo opportunities, interviews, and a chance to view activities of local participants in an important national Amateur Radio event as well as see all Amateur Radio communication modes in action.

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