Communication_Outage

When a local disaster occurs for whatever reason, we have the potential of suffering a significant disruption to our local communications infrastructure.

When all of the other communication circuits may be out of service, some of our local repeater systems that we use on a regular basis may just not be there either.

With our handheld and mobile/portable radios we do have the option of moving to a location that might afford us more than the customary line of sight range and give us access to some of the surviving local amateur radio infrastructure or even allow access to some of our out of area amateur radio repeaters that will still be usable.

With the Wide Area Training Net event scheduled for the fifth Sunday of those months that have five Sundays, we have the opportunity to put into practice some of our disaster skill sets.

A move to an advantageous site with elevation and an obstruction free view in the selected direction is the first step. Antenna height and clearance will work wonders on your signal to the distant selected repeater. If possible choose a multi story parking garage that you have made prior arraignments to use; and from your position on that structure use a portable gain antenna, beam or ground plane to suit the operation. Using your vehicular twelve volt system to give you the necessary RF power output to get into the distant repeater is also to your advantage. If your selected location has a free view in several directions, you may find repeaters out there that you have not been able to access from your usually lower location.

Make sure that you have the list of these repeaters and the necessary PL tone to bring them up. As always listen on the selected local information frequency or alternate for instructions. And practice the art of listening for a time period to get the sense of the net operation being conducted. Follow the instructions of the net control station.

The simple combination of antenna gain, height and location, coupled with the necessary RF power output should make your part of this operation a success.

"When all else fails -- Amateur Radio works"