

Cupertino ARES Field Day! 2013

Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CARES) positions Field Day as an Emergency Field Communications Drill, typically with this scenario: With City Hall (and the EOC) collapsed under the force of a 7.4 magnitude earthquake, the City EOC Staff sets up shop in the parking lot, and CARES needs to get on the air any way we can to support the city responders as well as exchange traffic with Santa Clara County OES. With this as the context, we always look forward to Field Day!



Although we are not hard-core field day'ers (we start setup by 8:00am and we're cleaned up by 5:00pm!), we use Field Day to talk to the City staff, City Council, and the community about ham radio and our mission. Setting up between City Hall and The Cupertino Library guarantees us plenty of foot traffic as kids and parents stop by to check us out, try making a contact at the GOTA station, and walking away with information and a different sense on radio technology.

This year was no different, and Field Day satisfied on many levels.

- Darryl KI6LDM, our Field Day Event Manager, kicked off the planning back in March. His efforts paid off (as usual) and CARES members rallied with masts, antennas, equipment, and food, putting us on the air as K6KP, 3F SCV (plus GOTA).



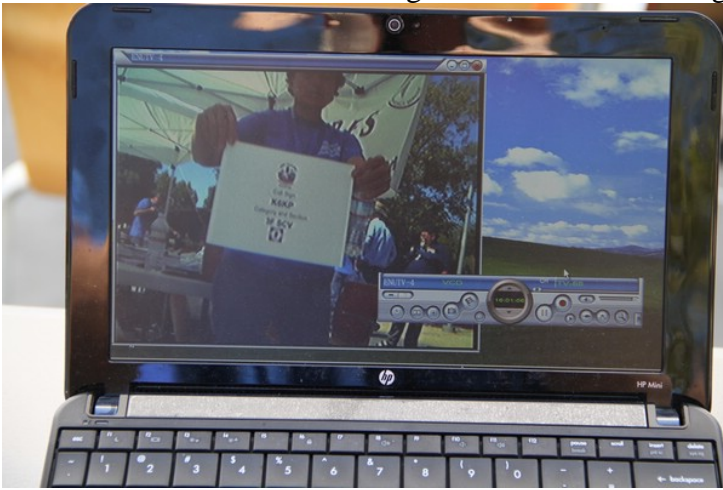
- Walt K6WGY brought out 200 watts of solar panels. While solar can be found at many field day sites, Walt's panels were mounted on a home-built sun tracking platform. This was definitely an attention-grabber and drew in plenty of folks interested in going Green. Watching his tracker slowly keep the panels facing the sun all day long, along with technical highlights provided by Walt, made for a very interesting and engaging topic.



- Sunny AG6GR provided the group with an update on our HSMM Mesh network project. Our goal is to provide access to the City's ARCs (shipping containers stocked with CERT supplies). Sunny's demo validated the technology (ref: June QST), and sets up CARES for taking the next step in testing wireless access between the ARCs and the EOC.



- Jim KN6PE demo'ed ATV on 440 using a Wavecomm Modulator and camera on the transmitting side, and a PC TV tuner into a laptop on the receiving side. The TV tuner (tuned to Cable Channel 58, 427.25MHz) and HP Netbook combination worked great and confirmed that we will never have to lug a TV out to the field again!



- Phil WA2KDX retrieved the City's Comm Van and we operated one of the HF stations from within. With its 30ft mast deployed, it was a good talking point to passersby on how CARES serves the city with emergency communications.



- Fari KF6UVS staffed the GOTA station and our public information area. We had over 42 signed in visitors with several of them making their first contact on ham radio!



- We made a respectable number of contacts thanks to the radios and antennas provided by Dale KT6DM, Kevin K6TD, and Darryl KI6LDM. We had different teams operate over the course of the day netting 95 contacts from around the country.



- We also had visits from Brandon NI6C and James NV6W, Santa Clara Valley's SM and ASM respectively, from George N6NKT of the Red Cross, and our own Orrin Mahoney, Mayor of Cupertino.



- And, we talked to the public. You can't beat a location where you are in close proximity of the local public library where there was a steady stream of parents and kids stopping by and asking what was going on. We talked about ham radio, emergency communications, and the Cupertino CERT and MRC programs.



- The one person who was not there, and was missed, was Vince K6TEN, SK. I'd like to think he was with us in spirit.



Phil WA2KDX and Paul KI6DRN took a lot of pictures; see the entire album up on the CARES website (www.cupertinoares.org).

When it is all said and done, we achieved what we set out to do; prove we can operate independently in the field, share ham radio and emergency preparedness with the community, show off some neat technologies, and have fun! All in all, it was a terrific field day! Same time next year?