Central Division News & Views

Issue #15 - March, 2006

Grass Roots Legislative Activity

A couple of years ago, the ARRL board launched a *grass roots initiative* to supervise and coordinate the organization's relationships with governments and various government agencies. I believe this is the first time the ARRL has formally recognized that the old ways of doing business with our federal government, and the FCC in particular has changed. For several decades, our informal networking with FCC staff usually resulted in relatively rapid Commission approval of ARRL Petitions for Rule-Making (PRMs). Now, with the severe reduction of FCC staff, White House directives on certain issues, and the charge from Congress that the Commission produce revenue, this way of doing business is not very effective. ARRL has been forced to maintain a larger presence in Washington, DC in order to advocate for the Amateur Radio Service.

ARRL is an IRS 503 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization. As such, it cannot make campaign donations to political office holders. However, ARRL can gather and provide information to its members and outside parties, make presentations to office holders at all levels of government, and litigate on behalf of its members without endangering its tax-exempt status. Part of the making presentations activity is asking ARRL members and FCC licensees to write letters to, and visit, their elected representatives when there are positive or negative issues affecting amateur radio present... and to develop a grassroots network that will make this type of activity effective.

In the last couple of years, there have been several amateur radio-related proposals laid before Congress. But none of them have ever made it to a vote on the floor. Once again, the ARRL is attempting to get a resolution passed in the U.S. House of Representatives. **House Resolution 230** is a recommendation to the FCC that it carefully and fully re-examine the RF interference issues inherent in Broadband Over Power Lines (BPL). This is an election year for the 435 representatives and amateur radio's high profile during last year's disastrous hurricane season, gives us a good opportunity to obtain a positive legislative result.

Therefore, I ask all of you to send your U.S. Representative an email letter, followed up with a paper copy, urging co-sponsorship and passage of **House Resolution 230** in this session. You will find a sample letter text in between the double-dashed lines (= = =). You should be able to cut and paste it into your word processor so you can edit it to meet your requirements. You will also see a table of ARRL members and FCC Licensees for each congressional district in the Central Division. You will have to <u>insert the correct numbers into your personalized copy of this letter</u>. Please mail, email, or FAX a copy of your letter to our congressional lobbyist. His contact information is:

Mr. Eric Heis Email: eric.heis@chwatco.com

Chwat & Company, Inc. FAX: 703-684-7594

625 Slaters Lane, Suite 103 Alexandria, VA 22314

And then send me an email notice that you have sent your letter. Your names and letters will not be published or sent to anyone. I simply need a count of how many people have sent letters.

(Today's Date), 2006

U.S. Representative (First & Last Name) (Washington, DC office address)

Dear Representative (Last Name):

As one of more than (Number) federally licensed amateur radio operators in the (State) (Number) Congressional District, I ask you to join your colleagues who have co-sponsored House Resolution 230. This resolution urges the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the potential of broadband over power line (BPL) systems to interfere with amateur radio, public safety, and other licensed radio services.

BPL utilizes electric power lines to serve as the conductors of the broadband signals. Unfortunately, because the power lines are not shielded, they also act as antennas and radiate the signals into the air. These radiated signals will interfere with radio receivers tuned to the same frequency range. BPL has only been deployed to a very limited extent, but the Amateur Radio Service is already experiencing severe BPL interference that the FCC has been unable or unwilling to correct. Unlike BPL, other methods of providing broadband Internet services to consumers, such as Cable TV, DSL, microwave wireless and optical fiber to the home, do not pollute the radio spectrum.

The FCC continues to resist growing evidence that its rules are inadequate to protect radio communication systems, including those used by First Responders, from radio spectrum pollution caused by BPL systems. The FCC needs to objectively and carefully review this evidence and adopt rules that will at least keep interference from BPL within reasonable bounds. Unfortunately, not only has the FCC shown no inclination to do this, the agency is even failing to enforce its rules in specific instances where harmful interference is documented such as in Manassas, Virginia and Briarcliff Manor, New York.

Because we need no third party infrastructure in order to communicate, the Amateur Radio Service is the only 100 percent fail-safe emergency communication capability in the world. It's well-known that the first two days of helicopter and boat rescue operations after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans would have been virtually impossible without amateur radio communications as all the other communications systems in that area were out of service. Interference from BPL emissions will significantly disrupt this capability. **Please co-sponsor House Resolution 230 as soon as possible** to express your concern over the interference potential of BPL to Amateur Radio operators and to public safety licensees.

The Department of Homeland Security has already demonstrated its belief in our Amateur Radio Service emergency communications abilities by awarding the ARRL a large three year grant that was used to train thousands of amateur radio operators to provide more efficient emergency communications. In its recent rulings, the FCC appears to be taking a different view.

Sincerely,
(Signature)
(Name, Address & Contact Information)

Central Division ARRL Members & FCC Licensees By Congressional Districts

State	District	Members	Licensees
IL	01	80	334
IL	02	88	490
IL	03	216	783
IL	04	37	206
IL	05	131	551
IL	06	291	1227
IL	07	90	302
IL	08	440	1599
IL	09	211	861
IL	10	363	1329
IL	11	299	1054
IL	12	255	1294
IL	13	382	1281
IL	14	346	1374
IL	15	324	1409
IL	16	415	1464
IL	17	277	1347
IL	18	331	1531
IL	19	338	1769
State	District	Members	Licensees
IN	01	224	1086
IN	02	281	1492
IN	03	395	1690
IN	04	352	1632
IN	05	495	2050
IN	06	310	1442
IN	07	186	905
IN	08	275	1495
IN	09	255	1279
State	District	Members	Licensees
WI	01	329	1284
WI	02	345	1266
WI	03	278	1216
WI	04	149	702
WI	05	341	1365
WI	06	283	1085
WI	07	323	1444
WI	80	284	1045

Hamfest Visits & Meetings

As of the publication of this newsletter issue, here is my ARRL travel schedule for the first three months of 2006. It is subject to change if required ARRL meeting dates are changed or there are $\underline{\text{last}}$ $\underline{\text{minute}}$ transportation problems.

Mar 11	ARRL Executive Committee Mtg	St. Louis, MO
Mar 31-Apr 1	AES Superfest	Milwaukee, WI
May 18-21	Dayton Hamvention - ARRL Expo	Dayton, OH

I hope to see many of you at these hamfests. In addition to shopping for new and used equipment, they are a great way to renew and develop friendships and to meet some of the voices you have heard on your radios.

73 - George R. (Dick) Isely, W9GIG Central Division Director