

To FCC,

Below you will find a story from the NY Times Aug 19,2003. Do not let BPL get in the way of amatuer radio operators and the service we give to all Americans, not just a few to get cheaper internet service.... Mike Bald WD5GLW

From the NY Times:

August 19, 2003  
By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Filed at 1:57 p.m. ET

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) -- When technology failed on a massive scale last week, some old-fashioned broadcasting stepped into the breach as ham radio operators took to the airwaves to reach emergency workers.

For millions of people in the Northeast and Midwest, the Aug. 14 outage took access to e-mail and the Internet with it. Landline and cellular telephones were jammed by a crush of calls.

But the ham radio, which came into being in the World War I era, connected firefighters and police departments, Red Cross workers and other emergency personnel during the most extensive blackout in the Northeast since 1977.

Ham operators are not dependent on a server or cell tower, and with battery backups can operate when grids can't.

``When everything else fails, the ham radio is still there,'' said Allen Pitts, a ham operator in New Britain. ``You can't knock out that system.''

The radios are operated by a network of volunteers organized by the Newington-based American Radio Relay League.

Ham radio's importance won renewed recognition after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. ARRL won a federal Homeland Security grant of nearly \$182,000 to train amateur radio operators in emergency operations to help during terrorist attacks.

``It's incredible the differences you're seeing, the large cadre of people who know what they're doing,'' Pitts said. ``It's making a major difference.''

Tom Carrubba, a coordinator for ARRL in New York City's five boroughs and two counties on Long Island, said volunteers went to work immediately after power went down Thursday afternoon.

``In five minutes guys were on the air with the Red Cross

and Office of Emergency Management," he said.

During other disasters, such as severe weather, ARRL volunteers and coordinators activate telephone trees, Carrubba said. On Thursday, they instead hit their assigned frequency or staffed an emergency operations center.

In the New York-Long Island region, with a population of nearly 10 million, about 100 ham radio operators handled the situation, Carrubba said. Some volunteers headed to a Red Cross headquarters or shelter, fire department, or hospital, he said. One hospital was temporarily out of power and ARRL volunteers provided communications to ambulances until electricity was restored.

Carrubba estimated that operators handled 800 to 1,000 communications from Thursday afternoon until early Friday.

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