

The Vilas County Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Newsletter Number 1

July 2015

A Brief History of the Vilas County Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

During the month of April, 2015, local hams decided they would form a club in Vilas County. The mission of the club was to support the hobby of Amateur Radio with a specific focus on Emergency Communications. To help accomplish this they decided to install Repeaters in Vilas County and investigate incorporating Vilas County into the Northwoods ARES organization.

In the next month the club was officially incorporated in the State of Wisconsin as a non-stock, non-profit corporation and an EIN was obtained from the IRS. The first official meeting took place at the Newbold fire station immediately after the Rhinelander Repeater Association and Northwoods ARES meetings. Present was Paul Clay and Tony Campion with Loren Johnson on conference call. The meeting actually took place in a pickup truck outside the Fire House. At this time Paul Clay was named President and Treasurer, Tony Campion Secretary and Loren Johnson Vice President.

Work on the club progressed nicely when we received permission from Dave Juday to hold our meetings in the Vilas County Economic Development Manufacturing Incubator which he owns. Dave was very generous and told us that we could also erect a Tower on the property and install our repeater in the building if we wish. Bob Egan, Executive Director of the Vilas County Economic Development group, who has been very helpful to our club, coordinated this process for us. Bob was also one of our Donors and has offered continued support in the future when we have a need.

During the next two months the club made progress by obtaining a club call sign, KD9DXK, and submission of an application to the ARRL for Affiliated Club status. Once approved, an Affiliated Club enjoys several benefits including income from members' ARRL Membership renewals as well as highly discounted Liability insurance through a company selected by the ARRL. Our application made it all the way through the ARRL process and is now waiting for final approval by the ARRL Executive Board.

The club's fund raising committee, Paul (N7EKY) and Andy (N9NBC) were able to solicit over \$300 in needed donations from local citizens and businesses including Boat Sport Marina, The Paint Bucket, Andrew Davis, CPA, and Eagle River Tire. Please thank these businesses when patronizing their establishments.

In June, Loren Johnson resigned as Vice President due to his heavy work schedule and Andy Falkenstern (N9NBC) assumed the post. Thanks Lorin for your efforts and hard work! Dave McMaster (KC9ZJO) volunteered for the post of Treasurer and assisted in opening the Club Checking account at BMO/Harris in Eagle River.

As one of the stated goals of the club was to install several repeaters throughout Vilas County, the club agreed to purchase the first repeater from Warren Welcenbach (KC9ZJP) for \$500., including duplexer. The repeater is configured for 145.150 MHz with its' previous call sign of NS9Q. Once we determine the repeaters new home location we will submit a new Repeater Coordination Proposal to the Wisconsin Association of Repeaters. We won't know if we will be able to retain the frequency or not until then. To date the club has paid Warren \$200 and hopefully we will have the repeater paid for by the end of summer.

Andy (N9NBC) led the efforts to coordinate the first combined Vilas County Amateur Radio Club and Rhinelander Repeater Association Field Day on Saturday 27 June in St Germain. Andy reserved the location and provided the brats and refreshments and Dave McMaster (KC9ZJO) provided several antennas, including a Hustler 5BTV as well as emergency power, which were used throughout the event. The day was a success with Brat Sales and lots of Interest. At one time, the clubs had five radios going. Many people said that they are looking forward to next year's Field Day. Good job everyone who participated!

We also conducted a VE session during Field Day with VEs Mike – KC9ZJF, Andy – N9NBC, and Paul – N7EKY for four of our members who all successfully upgraded to General Class. Congratulations to Loren (KD9CXC), Dave (KD9DQP), Deborah (KD9DYL), and Warren (KC9ZJP) on their successful upgrade.

Tony Campion (KC9SZW) located a great tower immediately behind the Ministry Eagle River Hospital. The tower is about 85 feet tall and is mostly unused, even though there are several vertical antennas installed. Paul and Tony coordinated to submit a letter to Ministry asking for permission to install the club's antenna on the tower and the "new" repeater in the ambulance garage. The club is hoping for a quick approval to as to get our repeater on the air this summer.

After meetings with Jim Galloway, the Vilas County Emergency Communications Manager, the club received permission to use Vilas County towers in Conover and Presque Isle. Although the use of County Towers is attractive due to their height, the cost to the club could be prohibitive due to climbing fees, feed line and other costs. Additionally, we lose redundancy if our equipment is located with County equipment. Essentially, if the County Tower goes down, we would also. For these reasons we have decided to pursue the use of the Ministry Tower for the time being.

The club expects to meet with Jim Galloway and Ray Mark, Northwoods ARES® Director who is also one of our members, in hopes of including Vilas County in the Northwoods ARES® emergency plans. It is hoped that we can specify what support we can provide to Vilas County Residents, Government and NGOs. The initial meeting was postponed by but we hope to meet sometime in July.

As of this newsletter, the club has 41 members. This is great progress but we know of several hams that live in Vilas County, in addition to others up during the summer, who we may be able

to enlist into our club. Congratulations to all for their hard work.

CONTEST CONTEST CONTEST by Andy Falkenstern (N9NBC)

How do I get started?

1. Get a good logging program such as N1MM at <http://n1mm.hamdocs.com/tiki-index.php>
2. It's one of the best, is free, and supports most, if not all contests.
3. Find a contest that interests you. Try WA7BNM Contest Calendar which lists all contests. See <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/>
4. Read all the rules then read them again. We don't want to make a mistake!
5. Find a category you want to enter. There are lots of them with lots of power output levels, including QRP.
6. Jump in and get your feet wet. It's a ton of fun!
7. No matter how many contacts you make, upload your log in Cabrillo format. After you are finished with the Contest, in the N1MM Logger, click on File, then select Cabrillo Format.

The fall and winter is the best time for State QSO Party's and that's the best way to get started. Just jump in and start having fun!