

Life on 440

RCC Aug 2007 – Don/NX7J

Clark County Amateur Radio Club owns and operates two repeaters on 440 MHz. One repeater operates on 443.125 MHz and is located on Yacolt Mountain which provides pretty good coverage in the central and northern portions of the county, as well as being usable in most of Vancouver. The other repeater operates on 443.925 and is co-located with our 147.240 machine on Mt. Livingston. The 443.925 provides similar coverage to the “.24” machine in terms of pattern but with a lesser range of operation.

These two machines are well-maintained and are available “24/7” to the amateur community. Sadly, they are seldom used and you can listen for hours, if not days, to these machines and hear nothing more than an occasional ID or perhaps a kerchunk or two. While it would be possible to make a pretty good case for discontinuing the operation of these repeaters based upon their lack of use, it is important to recognize that they do serve a potentially important function in the event of an emergency. It would not take much traffic to overload a single repeater and simplex will not serve our county well for most communication requirements; therefore, it is important to have the alternative that these repeaters provide for reliable communications.

While the repeaters will be there for emergency use, will we be ready to use them in an emergency? Are our 440 MHz antennas functional? Are the repeater frequencies loaded into memory with the appropriate offset and access tones? Do you know which memory channels have these repeater frequency parameters loaded in them? Have you talked to anyone recently on these machines to confirm that everything is indeed working the way it should?

If you are like me, the answers to these questions at best is a “qualified maybe.” The solution, or at least the first step to a solution, is to suggest to the other station that you QSY to 440 the next time you have a QSO going on “24”. Who knows, you might discover something interesting on 440 MHz and at the very least will come away with a better understanding of the capabilities or limitations of our 440 MHz machines.

See you on 440!