

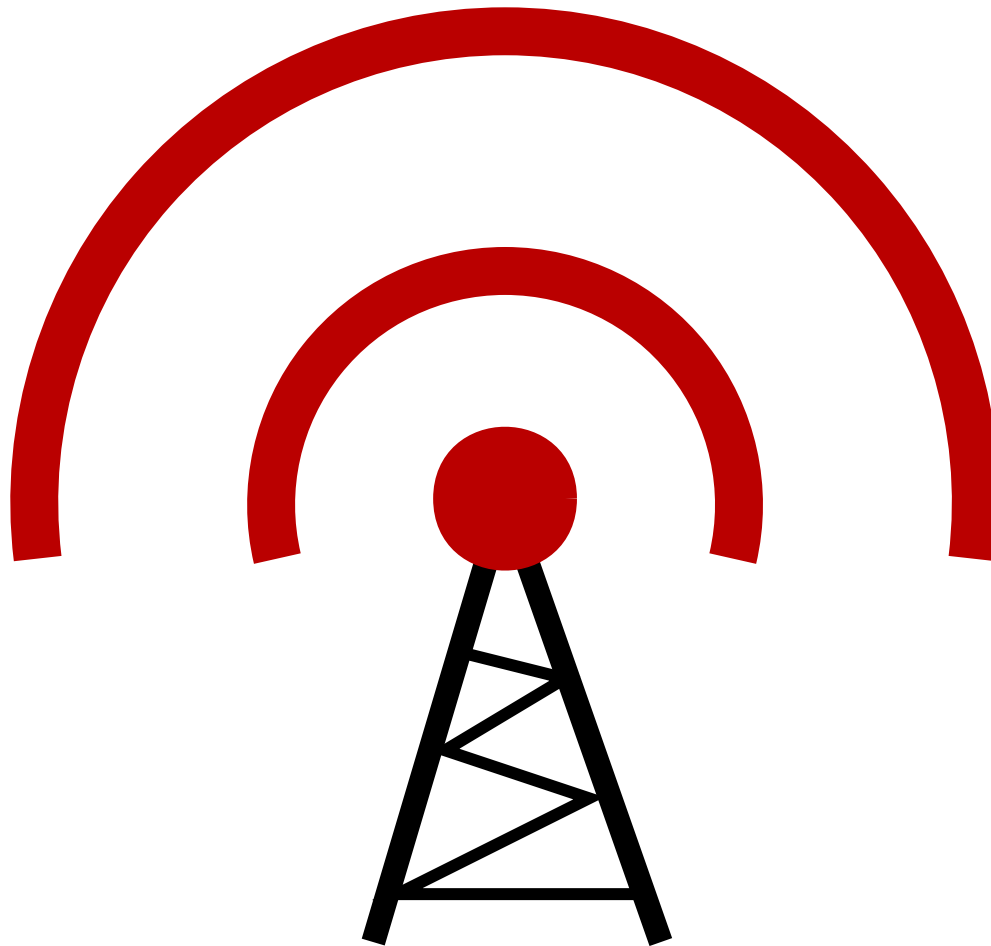
September 2026



THE HAMSTER



Official Monthly Newsletter Publication Of The *Rochester (MN) Amateur Radio Club*





THE HAMSTER

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The Hamster is the official monthly newsletter publication of the **Rochester (MN) Amateur Radio Club (RARC)**. The Hamster is distributed monthly via the official RARC [groups.io](#) email reflector free to members and non-members and is also available online in the club website: [www.rarchams.org](#).

Rochester (MN) Amateur Radio Club was founded in 1932 and has been an [ARRL](#) (Amateur Radio Relay League) Affiliated Club for 50+ years.

All members are invited to [contact the Hamster](#) with comments and/or questions. Additionally, members are encouraged to suggest or submit story ideas, photos or content to the Hamster via the Editor's email link below.

The Hamster has an *outstanding* staff of regular contributors and you are invited to join the team!

[G. Mark Kelm](#) (KØGMK) - Editor

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RARC Annual Picnic



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RARC Annual Picnic



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RARC Annual Picnic



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RARC @ Huntsville Hamfest



KFØPGS

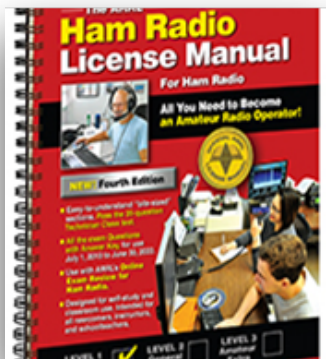
NØUM



K4IU

KFØPGS

KØUH



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Education

Dave - KØVH

Getting your ham radio license in Rochester is a straightforward 3-step process:

Step 1: Study for the Exam Prepare for the 35-question Technician exam using online platforms like HamStudy.org or the ARRL Licensing, Education & Training portal. Other study options are listed below.

Step 2: Get an FRN Before taking your exam, you must register on the FCC CORES website to obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN). https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/html/Register_New_FRN.htm

Step 3: Take the Test Locally Locally, exams are regularly hosted by the Rochester Amateur Radio Club. 2026 local testing is on November 12 at 7pm at the Red Cross. w0stv@arrl.net for more information.

Here are some other options for preparations and studying gathered from area hams that recently got licensed on what they studied for the test:

- Used a few Maple Grove Zoom classes for Tech, Ham Radio Study for general and extra.

NOTE: A General Zoom class starts in October! <https://k0lrc.org/general-license-prep-class/>

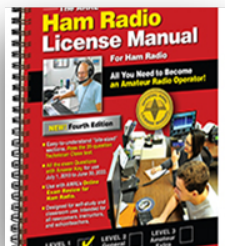
- Technician and General online via WM7X, it's a nationwide online testing service over Zoom, requiring 2 devices. For Technician and General used the ARRL practice test and used KB6NU's No Nonsense study guides for Technician and General.

- Used Ham Radio Test Prep phone app (very useful "on the go"). Have ARRL Tech and General license manuals for more depth when needed. [there are a LOT of phone apps out there! Ham radio prep, Ham radio Exam prep 2026, Ham Radio Exam

- ARRL books plus Hamstudy.org (Phone app, \$4). Two hams used HamStudy.

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- <https://hamradioprep.com/> has videos, practice tests and can cover all levels of licensing.
- KN6NU's guide (free on Kindle or as a PDF) plus Maple Grove Zoom class. For Extra used Zoom class from the Ham Club at the National Electronics Museum in Baltimore. This is an 11 week zoom session attended by hundreds across the US. https://www.k3nem.org/?page_id=12 Note there are Tech and General classes in the fall, and Extra in the winter.

Then *GET ON THE AIR!*

73 Dave Naatz (KØVH) Rochester, Minnesota

Contest Corner

Fred - K4IU

The wait is over! September marks the beginning of the [Minnesota Wireless Association \(MWA\)](#) season of focused contests where members compete with each other while collectively promoting the MWA against other worldwide clubs. Members are assigned to teams balanced for ability, availability and station capability. Below are the eligible contests for the 2026-2027 Team Challenge

1. CQWW RTTY
2. CQWW Phone
3. California QSO Party
4. ARRL SS CW
5. ARRL SS Phone
6. CQWW CW
7. ARRL 160 Meter
8. ARRL 10 Meter
9. ARRL RTTY Roundup
10. NAQP CW (January)
11. NAQP SSB (January)
12. Minnesota QSO Party
13. CQ WPX RTTY
14. ARRL International DX CW
15. ARRL International DX Phone
16. CQ WPX SSB
17. CQ WPX CW





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Anyone can join the MWA! Enrollment and more information about the MWA can be found [here](#) to include the annual membership meeting September 22, 2026, held at [Broadway Pizza Blaine](#), 11822 Aberdeen St NE, Blaine, MN 55449.

Here are some of the September highlights to plan for:

September 5-6 [ARRL EME Contest](#): This contest is not for everyone! But it has a fascinating objective and that is to work as many amateur stations as possible via the earth-moon-earth path on any authorized amateur frequency above 50 MHz. If you miss this weekend there will be more opportunities next month. See the detailed rules [here](#).

September 12-14 [ARRL September VHF Contest](#) Technician alert! This is one you will enjoy.

- **Bands:** 50 MHz and above (VHF/UHF)
- **Modes:** CW, SSB, FM, Digital (FT8, MSK144, etc.)
- **Objective:** Work as many stations in as many different Maidenhead grid squares as possible.
- **Categories:** Includes Single Operator, Rover, Multi-operator, **FM Only**, and 3-Band categories.

September 26-27 [CQ World Wide DX Contest – RTTY](#) As noted above this is the first of the MWA's list of competitive contest events.

- **Mode:** RTTY (Radioteletype)
- **Bands:** HF (80 through 10 meters)
- **Participation:** Over 15,000 logs submitted annually, making it one of the largest digital mode contests globally
- **Objective:** Work as many DX stations as possible across all continents.

State QSO Parties For everyone chasing Worked All States award (WAS) participating in the SQP challenge September is a busy month:

- **September 12 [New Jersey QSO Party](#)**
- **September 19-20 [Texas QSO Party](#)**
- **September 19-20 [Iowa QSO Party](#)**
- **September 19-20 [New Hampshire QSO Party](#)**
- **September 19-20 [Washington State Salmon Run](#)**
- **September 26-27 [Maine QSO Party](#)**

For a full list of contests, check the [WA7BNM Contest Calendar](#) and the [ARRL Contest Calendar](#). These calendars provide details, rules, and dates for all major contests throughout the year.



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Ham Shack Cable-Management

A clean station is a quiet station! Messy, mangled and unruly cables are a common problem for almost all hams and their stations. Connecting radios and antennas is one thing but add in computers, power supplies and other peripherals and a new whole world of *desorganizado* is introduced. Good cable management prevents RFI, improves audio quality, and keeps your station running smoothly.

Here are 5 tips to help you the next time you get into the “tidy up” or find a “noise problem”:

- **Separate cable types** Keep RF coax, AC power, and digital/USB/audio lines on *distinct* paths to prevent coupling and RFI.
- **Use proper ties** like Velcro, cable ties, wall clips, and under-desk trays to keep runs neat and prevent accidental tugs or disconnects.
- **Label everything** at both ends. Saves troubleshooting time and prevents mystery cables from becoming permanent residents.
- **Avoid tight coils!** Coiling coax or power cords creates inductors that invite RF feedback and noise.
- **Place ferrites where needed** Snap-on chokes on USB, audio, control lines, and power leads dramatically reduce RF ingress. Use Mix 31 for most HF RFI problems. It's the “universal” choice for shack ferrites and place ferrites near the equipment end of



CU next month

73

Fred K4IU

September 2026



Hamster Hints

Bob - KEØEXE

KEØEXE is taking a well earned hiatus from his column in September, but he will be back in October with more hints!

September 2026



ARES

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Olmsted ARES Mission Statement:

To be so effective that you are able to help others.

The August ARES training was on APRS messaging, setting information objects on an APRS map, and how to use APRS messaging to our w0mxw@winlink.org Winlink email account by radio. Thanks to the people for your time and equipment to make Rochester/Olmsted ARES trained to help our served agencies.

ARES was asked to back up communications for the Rochester EOC for the Century High School shooting drill with radio operators staged at the 4 critical areas of the mock drill. The Rochester EOC, the EM-50 comm-van, the family unification center, and the family assistance center. Our job was to help with information and investigate issues that could not be handled through their normal channels. Glad to say we were not used during this drill.

Here is the rest of the story about this drill. ARES was included in the planning stages. During one of the sessions, ARES was asked to supply radio communications for 20 event coordinators and evaluators on a Monday. Here is where you have to think outside the box since there is no way to get 20 radio operators on a Monday. I had been attending Fillmore's ARES meetings, and I learned how they were using an app called ZELLO to communicate with non-hams. Rochester/Olmsted ARES had opened our own ZELLO account and had trained using it during an ARES training class. I also experienced using the app when one of the repeaters could not be contacted when Eric and I were net controls in Tofte for the John Bear Grease dog sled race starting in Duluth and ending in Grand Maria this last spring. I proposed this app to the Rochester EOC director to download and test. The Rochester EOC opened 2 ZELLO accounts and implemented all the coordinators and evaluators onto the network. It worked, information was heard by everyone staged things to happen, to those that recorded what was happening. This was one thing that did not get a single complaint after the drill evaluation. The takeaway from this is ARES trains to be so effective that we are able to be helpful to others no matter what the situation calls for.



The more you know!

Since we have two public service events happening in September, there will not be a monthly ARES class training class session for September.

Please take the time to send an email to w0mxw@yahoo.com anytime during the week to test your capability to use our ARES email accounts to receive field information, files, photos, and videos at the Rochester or Olmsted EOCs. Your email will be announced during Sundays ARES nets that start at 9:00 p.m. on either the 146.820 or the 147.255 repeaters. Thank you all for your time and dedication.

September has 2 public radio service opportunities for our local amateur radio operators to help with communications. The first one is on September 12th. This is the Scheels HHR that is a half marathon in Rochester. The race starts at 7:00 a.m. from Soldiers Field, runs for 13.1 miles with 4 water stops, a medical tent, and an on-site coordinator that need radio communications. HT radios are sufficient for this event. If you can help or want to team up with another radio operator to learn? Send your name, call sign, cell number, and your preference to w0stv@yahoo.com. You may also call me at 507-254-3993 for more information or questions.

The second radio event is helping Winona Radio Club with their Multi route Ride the Ridge bicycle race on September 19th. The RARC will cover communications for the Rushford water stop, the routes from Money Creek to Rushford and from Rushford to Houston. We should be on site at Money Creek and Rushford early and check on the bikers after they leave Rushford. Will announce the start times when determined. Would like 2-person teams on each of the routes to and from Rushford. Mobile 50-watt radios and APRS transmitting is required for this race. The RARC has portable APRS transmitters to hand out and to use during this event. If you can help or want to team up with another radio operator to learn? Send your name, call sign, cell number, and your preference to w0stv@yahoo.com. You may also call me at 507-254-3993 for more information or questions.

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Both of these events will end for us in the early afternoon.

PS: Please include your shirt size when you sign up to help with either of both of these events.

I will post the people that sign up the week before each event to make sure no one is missed.

Steve Wiebke (W0STV) - Olmsted/Rochester ARES EC

The more preparation, the less confusion

September 2026



NORTH STAR RADIO CONVENTION

The Minnesota Amateur Radio Consortium presents

2026 North Star Radio Convention

Hosting the ARRL Dakota Division Convention

Hennepin Technical College

9000 Brooklyn Blvd, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

October 10, 2026 | 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

www.northstarradio.org

September 2026



Happenings In The Dakota Division

Bill Lippert - ACØW - ARRL Dakota Division Director

The Souris Valley ARC received a surprise this week when the 69th Airstream Club International Rally rolled into town at the North Dakota State Fairgrounds with thousands of participants, 70+ vendors and over 100 hams. The Souris Valley ARC helped set up antennas and a station. They have a daily 2-meter net and a special event station using W1A. The hams have some classes and even a test session while they are there. The ham radio activity details can be found at <https://rvnet.wbcci.net/rallies-and-events/> . More information on the Rally is found at these sites <https://airstreamclub.org/rally2026/registration> , <https://airstreamclub.org/rally2026> .

We had a wonderful time at the Brainerd Hamfest last weekend visiting with attendees. While the surrounding area received rain, the fairgrounds stayed dry. We have a few weeks break until three weekends of several hamfests in September. Then in October we finish with the Dakota Division Convention in Brooklyn Park, MN.

Hopefully we will see you at one of these hamfests.

Have a good weekend.

73
Bill
ACØW



September 2026

Division elected leaders:

Director Bill Lippert, AC0W ac0w@arrrl.org

Vice Director Chris Stallkamp, KI0D ki0d@arrrl.org

MN Section Manager Bill Mitchell, AE0EE ae0ee@arrrl.org

ND Section Manager Ralph Fettig, N0RDF n0rdf@arrrl.org

SD Section Manager Nick Hauser, KT0W kt0w@arrrl.org

Several special operating events in September

9/09 – 9/16 W0ZSW

Handiham Radio Camp QSO Party

Full details at

<https://handiham.org>

<https://handiham.org/wordpress1/2026/07/26/handiham-program-59th-anniversary-radio-camp-qso-party/>

9/09 – 9/16 W0H

Handiham Radio Camp Special Event Station

7.200, 14.250, 28.350, 14.050

fred@wb4ael.com

QSL

Handiham Program

3915 Golden Valley Rd.

MR 78446

Minneapolis, MN 55422-4249



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9/12 – 1500 – 2100 UTC; WA0CJU

60th Anniversary of Viking Amateur Radio Society

7.074, 7.225, 14.074, 14.250

Certificate & QSL (SASE)

Kevin F Dirks

1705 Clear Lake Drive

Waseca, MN 56093

wasecavars@yahoo.com

HAMFESTS (all times local time):

9/12 – 9 AM to Noon; Rush City, MN

ECMARC Rush City Radio Rendezvous

East Central MN ARC

ARRL Representatives

Rush City High School

51001 Fairfield Ave

Rush City, MN

Contact: lj@ecenet.com

www.qrz.com/db/K0ECM

www.arrl.org/hamfests/ecmarc-rush-city-radio-rendezvous-2

9/19 - 10 AM to 3 PM: Hot Springs, SD

Hot Springs Amateur Radio Club HamFest

Hot Springs ARC

ARRL Representatives

Meuller Center

801 S 6th ST

Hot Springs, SD

Contact: hsarc@k0hs.net www.arrl.org/hamfests/hot-springs-amateur-radio-club-hamfest



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9/19 – 8 AM to Noon; Plymouth, MN
Last Chance Tailgate Swapfest
Twin City FM Club
ARRL Representative
West Medicine Lake Community Club
1705 Forestview Lane
Plymouth, MN
Contact: president@tcfmc.org
www.arrl.org/hamfests/last-chance-tailgate-swapfest-3

VE TEST SESSIONS (all times local times)

VE - South Dakota

9/08 – 7:00 PM Sioux Falls, SD; must preregister
Contact: wgravning@yahoo.com
Sioux Empire Amateur Radio Club
Minnehaha County Emergency Mngt Bldg
608 N Sigler Ave
Sioux Falls SD
<https://hamstudy.org/sessions/SEARC/all>

9/22 – 6:00 PM Bismarck, ND
Contact: VEteam@w0zrt.com
Central Dakota ARC
Bismarck Public School Career Academy
1221 College Dr
Room 230
Bismarck ND
www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/bismarck-nd-58501-25



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VE Minnesota

9/5 – 10:00 AM; Sauk Rapids, MN; must preregister

Contact: NOJFY@W0SV.Club

St Cloud Amateur Radio Club

VE's Residence

1833 Eastern Star Loop

Sauk Rapids MN

www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/sauk-rapids-mn-56379-2558-8

9/9 – 7:00 PM; Lakeville, MN

Contact: N00A@ARRL.NET

Valley ARC

17387 Kenyon Avenue

Lakeville MN

www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/lakeville-mn-55044-4459-209

9/12 – 9:30 AM; Roseville, MN; must preregister

Contact: pipemajor2@gmail.com

St Paul Radio Club

Galilee Lutheran Church

145 McCarrons Blvd N

Roseville MN

www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/roseville-mn-55113-6923-41



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9/15 – 8:30 PM; Mankato, MN; must preregister

Contact: wx0mik@gmail.com

Mankato Area Radio Club

ONLINE

<https://hamstudy.org/sessions/MARC/all?includeFull=1>

www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/mankato-mn-56001-9999-71

9/19 – 9:00 AM; Cottage Grove, MN; must preregister

Contact: wd0gup@hotmail.com

South East Metro ARC

St Luke Lutheran Church

7000 Hinton Ave S

Cottage Grove MN

www.semarc.org/P7_VE.htm

www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/cottage-grove-mn-55016-1809-28

ARRL Dakota Division

Director: Vernon E Lippert, AC0W

ac0w@arrl.org



- Are you a member of the **ARRL**?
- Are you new to Ham Radio?
- Have you been licensed for a while but not active?
- Are you active but have never explored the **ARRL**?

***RARC** has been an **ARRL** affiliated club for the past 50+ years. **RARC** wants all members to know about the benefits of being a member of the ARRL and how the **ARRL** promotes amateur radio and represents and supports Hams throughout the year.*

Here is a link for you to view what the **ARRL offers Hams. Take a look:**

[ARRL Benefits](#)



September 2026

Wednesday Morning **RARC** Ham Radio Gathering

You Are Invited!

*Stop By For Breakfast or Coffee
&
Ham Radio Talk!*



• **Wednesdays at 9:00 AM (1400 UTC)**

Rooster's (North Location) - 2280 Superior Drive NW



Parks On The Air® (POTA)

Perhaps you've heard talk on the repeaters or on one of the Nets about Parks On The Air (POTA). You might be interested and think that it could be fun to operate your rig and antenna remotely in a beautiful outdoor setting.

In a nutshell it's all about operating in a state or national park, state trail, national monument, historical location or national battlefield and making at least 10 QSOs to "activate" the entity. It's as simple as that, but there are a few [rules](#).

Take a look at the [Parks On The Air](#) website, view the [FAQ page](#), the [Help/Getting Started](#) section and perhaps view some of the getting started [videos](#) by seasoned POTA operators. If you are interested in becoming an Activator fill out the [sign-up](#) to become a





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Weekly Nets

Sunday:

- **Austin 73 Sunday Evening Net** - 7PM on 146.730 MHz PL 100
- **Owatonna/Steele County ARC Club Net** - 7:30PM on 145.490 MHz PL 100
- **MN D-Star Net** - 7:30PM Reflector XLX632A
- **Fillmore County Net** - 7:45PM 147.015 MHz PL 110.9/ 444.250 MHz PL 136.5
- **Goodhue County ARES Net/Hiawatha Valley ARC** - 8PM 147.300 MHz PL 136.5
- **Southern MN Fusion Net** - 8:30PM Wires X Rm 40861
- **Dodge County ARES Net** - 8:30PM 146.820 MHz PL 100
- **Faribault RBWMS Net** - 8:30PM 146.390 MHz PL 100
- **Winona Emergency Preparedness Net** - 8:30PM 146.835 MHz PL 131.8
- **Olmsted County ARES Net** - 9PM 146.820 MHz (even # Days) 147.255 MHz (odd # Days) PL 100
- **Northern Lights 2 Meter SSB Net** - 9PM 144.200 MHz

Monday:

- **Elmer's Net** - 8PM 147.255 MHz PL 100
- **Waseca Digital Practice Net** - 7PM 146.715 MHz PL 141.3

Tuesday:

- **SE MN 10 Meter Net** - 7PM 28.325 MHz USB

Wednesday:

- **SE MN Digital ARES Net** - 7PM 146.820 MHz PL 100 MT63 2000L
- **Wednesday Night Experiment** - 9PM 146.790 MHz PL 100

Thursday:

- **WØNE Weekly WinLink Check-in Net** - All Day
- **Rochester Hobby Net (Any Hobby Except Ham Radio)** - 7PM 147.255 MHz PL 100
- **Southern MN ARES 80 Meter Net** - 8PM 3.583.5 MHz Olivia 8-500

Saturday:

- **20 Meter IBM Net** - 11AM 14.347 MHz USB



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Contact RARC

RARC meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM (except the August meeting is the Annual RARC Picnic and January is the annual holiday party) in the lower level of Rochester Fire Station #2 in the EOC at 2185 Wheelock Drive NE, Rochester, MN

Website: <http://www.rarchams.org/>

Mail: RARC , P.O. Box 1, Rochester, MN 55903

Groups.io: [Register](#) to post and receive RARC official email, notices and the Hamster

Weekly Net: Sundays at 9:00 PM: 147.255 repeater (PL Tone 100) **Odd** numbered Sundays
146.820 repeater (PL Tone 100) **Even** Numbered Sundays

If you have any questions or comments about the Hamster or are interested in perhaps being a contributor please feel free to [contact me](#).

Thank you for reading the Rochester Amateur Radio Club's
Official Publication.

G. Mark Kelm - KØGMK - Editor