



Radio-Active!

June 15, 2026, Volume 5 Issue 6

Strawberry Field Forever Bike Ride Rolls Back into Santa Cruz and Monterey County!

Sunday, May 17th marked the exciting return of the beloved Strawberry Field Forever Bike Ride, sending riders out across the stunning roads of Santa Cruz and Monterey County. Whether tackling one of three scenic road routes or venturing off the beaten path on the gravel course, cyclists had plenty of ways to experience the beauty—and challenge—of the region.

Behind the scenes, a dedicated crew of twenty-five ham radio operators kept everything running smoothly. Stationed at six key locations along the routes and driving SAG (Supply and Gear) support vehicles, they were the backbone of communication and rider support throughout the day.

Most operator posts doubled as lively rest stops, offering everything from delicious Gizdich pies to refreshing pickle juice—fuel that kept riders smiling and moving. These stops also became hubs of information, with operators fielding the most pressing cyclist questions: “Where’s the bathroom?” and “How far to the next stop?”

When riders needed help on the course, SAG teams sprang into action—navigating with mapping apps, in-car systems, and CalTopo to reach cyclists wherever they were.

At the heart of it all, Net Control expertly coordinated the day’s activity. Led by Bruce, KN6DBR, and supported by Bob (KO6XX), Kathy (KE6VTY), and Dan (N6RJX), the team seamlessly managed the steady stream of calls from both posts and SAG units.

One standout location this year was the Calfee rest stop, which offered a front-row seat to advanced aerial testing at Monterey Bay Academy. This location’s 2,200-foot grass runway, access to Class G airspace, and coastal environment make it ideal for real-world research on autonomous systems and emergency-response aviation. The experience was an unexpected bonus though challenging for volunteers and riders alike!

From scenic routes to strong teamwork and great food, the return of Strawberry Field Forever was a resounding success—and a reminder of how much fun cycling (and supporting it!) can be.



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Santa Cruz County ARES Purpose

- The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment with their local ARES leadership for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.
- We are not fire fighters or police or sheriff's officers. We are volunteers who care about our communities by using our emergency communication skills.
- Before volunteering in an emergency, we first take care of ourselves, our family, and our home.
- We value every member's contribution, irrespective of license class, years of experience, or the price tag of equipment.

Community Rallies Around Disaster Preparedness with a Month of Engaging Events

Over the past 30 days, the community has seen a wide range of disaster preparedness efforts. On June 6, the Aptos Grange was bustling as it hosted a Disaster Preparedness Fair. One room featured numerous informational tables staffed by organizations such as the Community Emergency Response Team, ARES, the Volunteer Center, Firewise, the Long Term Recovery Group, PG&E, the Resource Conservation District, Central Fire, Large Animal Rescue, local elected representatives, and the Red Cross. Attendees of all ages enjoyed disaster-themed games and had opportunities to win giveaway prizes at various tables.

Ham radio operators were especially well represented, emphasizing the critical role radio communication plays in emergencies. Their enthusiasm proved contagious—fourteen attendees signed up to receive more information about an upcoming Technician class scheduled for October.

In another room, guest speakers covered a range of topics, including homeowners insurance, how to start a Firewise neighborhood group, home hardening strategies, and the role of the emergency operations center.



That same day, another successful event took place across the county. The SLV Firewise Family Day at Roaring Camp brought the community together for a fun and educational experience focused on wildfire preparedness. Families participated in interactive activities, hands-on demonstrations, and engaged with local fire and safety organizations. Set against the scenic backdrop of Roaring Camp, the event highlighted practical steps residents can take to protect their homes and neighborhoods while strengthening community resilience.



Earlier, on Saturday, May 30, 2026, the Bonny Doon Community Fire Preparedness and Resilience Fair was held at Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue's Martin Station. Hosted by 3rd District Supervisor Justin Cummings and the Bonny Doon Fire Safe Council, the free, family-friendly event featured panel discussions with fire resource organizations, informational booths, food, live music, and fire truck tours.

At a few of these events some ARES members learned about apps designed to improve situational awareness, with plans to continue these discussions at this month's ARES membership meeting.

Report your volunteer hours!

ARES volunteers reported **63 hours in May**, highlighting our continued commitment to training, preparedness, and community service.

Reporting your hours does more than track activity—it demonstrates to county public safety managers that ARES is active, dependable, and ready to serve when needed.

Logged volunteer time helps maintain our visibility and reinforces the value of amateur radio in emergency response. Please remember to report all ARES and ham radio–related activities, no matter how small.

Enter your hours here: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>

Every hour tells our story. Let us keep it visible.

When Everything Else Fails: Local Teams Prove Disaster-Proof Communication Works

The June 7 Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness communications test demonstrated a critical capability: reliable communication when it matters most. We successfully transmitted messages between the county Emergency Operations Center and 228 participants across thirty-three neighborhood groups. This proves that our community can stay connected and coordinated even under disaster conditions.

The exercise also delivered meaningful operational improvements. By separating the three primary repeaters—K6BJ, WR6AOK, and W6TUW—we enhanced system resilience. A refined net structure further streamlined communication: distributing the test message as an early bulletin allowed operators to focus solely on reporting neighborhood tallies. This reduced on-air congestion, improved clarity, and made participation smoother for everyone involved.

Each test strengthens our readiness—building a faster, clearer, and more dependable emergency communications network for our community. Momentum is growing, and we will continue to advance these capabilities at our next exercise in August (date to be announced).

EchoLink: Bringing Ham Radio to Your Smartphone

EchoLink is a powerful tool that blends traditional amateur radio with modern internet technology, allowing ham radio operators to connect using their smartphones. By using the EchoLink app, operators can communicate with repeaters and other users around the world—without always needing a full radio setup.

Some of the biggest benefits of EchoLink are accessibility and enhancing emergency preparedness. In disaster situations where traditional communication systems may be compromised, having multiple ways to connect is critical. EchoLink can serve as a backup pathway, allowing operators to check into nets, relay messages, or coordinate with others when RF conditions or equipment limitations make direct radio use difficult.

While it does not replace traditional radio, EchoLink is a valuable complement. It extends the reach of amateur radio, making communication more flexible, accessible, and resilient in today's connected world.

How to Use EchoLink

1. Download the EchoLink app (iOS or Android).
2. Register using your amateur radio callsign and complete verification.
3. Log in and browse available stations or repeaters. K6BJ's node is 354814.
4. Tap a station to connect and start talking (use headphones for best audio).

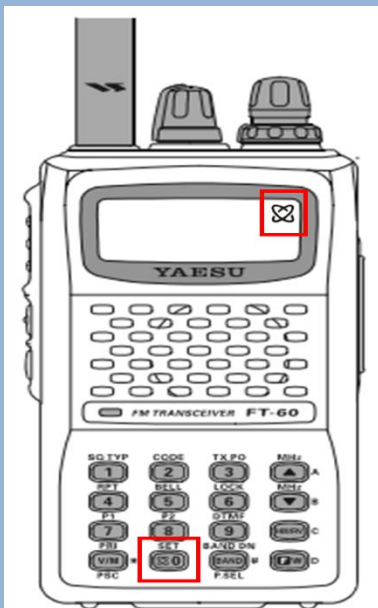


Resources

- Website: <https://xczcomm.com/>
- Reporting volunteer hours: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ARES-of-Santa-Cruz-County-Ca-296232310799866>
- Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/431308973875528>
- PIO Articles: <https://arrlsantaclaravalley.org/news/> or <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/news/>
- Submitting personal information such as DSW application, personal data update, education certificates, PDFs of deployment documents: email to EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov
- Santa Cruz Communications Support offers four loaner kits for ham operators: two for vehicle deployment (mobile dual-band radio, mag mount antenna, battery, kneeboard) and two for stationary outdoor use (vehicle kit plus tripod antenna, lighting, and pop-up). To borrow a kit, contact John (N6QX), Roberta (AJ6KN), Stephen (KM6NEP), or Dan (N6RJX).

Disabling Wires

1. Verify radio is unlocked.
To unlock—Long press #6
2. Press the F/W key (lower right button) then immediately press the 0 key to enter the menu mode.
3. Rotate the Dial knob to menu 23 – INT MR.
4. Press the F/W key then rotate the Dial knob to select a memory (d1 through d9) that is empty, i.e., it contains ●●●●●● (six dots) = no tone.
5. Press the F/W key to store the setting.
6. Rotate the Dial knob to menu 21 – I NET.
7. Press the F/W key then rotate the Dial knob to select INT.MEM.
8. Press the F/W key to store the setting.
9. Press the PTT button to exit the menu mode.



Yaesu WIRES

(A repeat article from July 2024 - it is left here as a resource)

So, you bought yourself the Santa Cruz County ARES recommended Yaesu FT-60 Handi-talkie. You programmed it to our frequencies. Then you start participating in Nets and events. And you try to transmit. Either you are not heard at all, or the first part of your transmission is cut off. Net control asks for a repeat of the information, but this time hears a DTMF tone at the beginning of your transmission. Net control or other listeners may chime in and state the station (you) has “Wires” turned on. How did that happen? *Very easily*. Most of us have experienced this phenomenon with this radio.

Yaesu’s WIRES stands for **W**ide-coverage **I**nternet **R**epeater **E**nhancement **S**ystem. It is an internet communication system that allows amateur radio repeaters to connect over Voice over IP (VoIP). WIRES uses DTMF signaling to connect, so any radio with a DTMF encoding keypad can be used to establish an internet link. When your radio sends out the DTMF tone, it simultaneously mutes your voice audio (or lowers it significantly). That is why Net Control, and the rest of the Net cannot hear you! When you are saying your call sign, the radio has muted or lowered your voice signal. Additionally, most repeaters automatically mute the audio when they hear DTMF tones, cutting off the user. The person making the transmission has no idea what is happening other than a small, easy to miss indicator on their display.

WIRES is a feature that is well used elsewhere but has had challenges in getting a foothold in the US. According to some, the introduction of Echolink or Allstar may have influenced this.

On the FT-60R, which uses WIRES-II technology (and not the current X version), the key that is used to turn on WIRES is the “0 Set” key, located on the bottom row, second from the left (see diagram to left). Press it momentarily to turn WIRES on (or off). You might do this by accident if you want to enter Set mode and forget to first hit F/W key. You can tell WIRES is on if the small ‘atom’ symbol appears in the top right corner of the display. When participating in an event, we encourage locking your radio after setting your frequencies for the event and verifying the WIRES is not active.

If you do not plan to use this feature, consider an alternative way of handling it by following the steps in the left-hand column. After performing the steps, it is still possible to ‘activate’ the WIRES and the symbol will appear, *but it will not send tones over the air and mute your audio!*

Activities – Save the dates

2026 SCC ARES Events

Date	Event	Approx. or confirmed date?	Description
June 22 - 26, 2026	Santa Cruz Regional Active Shooter and Casualty Care Response Training	Confirmed	This event is sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's department and provides first responder training for an active shooter. ARES along with CERT provides perimeter monitoring in maintaining a closed event location. Signup here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/2026Active
July 4, 2026	Aptos 4th of July Parade	Approximate	We provide monitoring of the public to provide information to the Sheriffs
July 26, 2026	Wharf to Wharf	Possibility	Discussion if radio comms is needed
8/16/2026 (est)	Race through the Redwoods	Approximate	Race through the Redwoods is a 10K foot race that starts and finishes at Roaring Camp but the majority traverses the redwoods in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. It is promoted by the Felton Business and Community Association. ARES provides monitoring of runners positions and safety for the organizers.
9/20/2026 (est)	Santa Cruz Triathlon	Approximate	Santa Cruz Triathlon is a non-profit that donates proceeds to various athletic programs in the county. ARES provides monitoring of participants positions and safety for the organizers.
October 30, 2026 (est) 1530 - 2030	Halloween Trunk or Treat 5200 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz	Approximate	Trunk of Treat is organized by the Santa Cruz Sheriffs. ARES provides monitoring of participants along with closed road staffing and shuttle parking location.

2026 Other Radio Events for Ham Operator Participation

Date	Event	Approx. or confirmed date?	Description
Each Wednesday 10am - 12pm	Loft Coffee 2701 Cabrillo College Dr, Aptos		Gathering of general interest, sharing of ideas, getting some elmer help
2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month 10am	C.A.K.E. @ Loft Coffee 2701 Cabrillo College Dr, Aptos		C.A.K.E. = Coffee/Caffeine Assisted Knowledge Exchange. Gathering of general interest, sharing of ideas, getting some elmer help
1st Saturday of each month [6/6/26] 10am - 2pm	POTA	Approximate	Play radio at a scenic park near by. Not formal and any mode can be used. Emails sent prior to event to indicate the specific park.
June 27 - 28, 2026	Summer Field Day	Confirmed	

Do not Miss It: Field Day Is Nearly Here

110th Anniversary Celebration

Santa Cruz County San Lorenzo Valley AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



SATURDAY
JUNE
27-28

10:00-17:00

End of Old Dominion Ct. in
Aptos, just past the Seacliff Inn



Saturday
10:00

Ham Radio License Testing

Saturday
13:00

Education Sessions

- Instructional Classes
- Radio Operations
 - Phone
 - Digital
 - CW
 - HF
 - VHF/UHF
- Satellite
- Winlink
- Make your first contact with Get-on-the-Air!

Free & Open to the Public • 10:00-17:00

Camping for operators available



Monkey - Monkey - Monkey



Talk-in on 146.790 MHz, -94.8 Hz, 36.9799, -121.9126

SCCARC.org and SLVARC.org

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