For Immediate Release:

**Gov. Snyder Declares Amateur Radio Week**

**National Emergency Preparedness Drill to be Held June 25-26**

(Lansing, MI—June 10, 2016) – Governor Rick Snyder has issued a proclamation declaring that June 20-26, 2016 is Amateur Radio Week in the State of Michigan. In doing so, Governor Snyder is recognizing the untold hours each year that the enthusiasts, known colloquially as “hams” donate, without compensation, to provide a cadre of skilled communications specialists for emergency service organizations to draw upon during disasters and emergencies on a local, county or state-wide level.

During Amateur Radio Week, ham operators across Michigan will put on demonstrations, give talks to community groups and take part in other activities to raise awareness about Amateur Radio. The week culminates with the annual nation-wide preparedness exercise called “Field Day,” June 25 and 26. Field Day is organized and sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association for Amateur Radio.

During Field Day, operators set up in local parks, at shopping malls, or even in their own backyards, and get on the air using generators or battery power. Field Day is designed to test operators’ abilities to set up and operate portable stations under emergency conditions such as the loss of electricity. "We want the community to know that in the event of an emergency, we will be ready to help in any way we can," says John J. McDonough WB8RCR, Emergency Coordinator for the Michigan Section of the ARRL. "While people often think that cell phones or other communications technologies have replaced ham radio, we provide an important communications service that others can't. In the last decade, events from tornados to hurricanes to earthquakes have all shown how vulnerable normal communications systems can be. In each of these instances, ham radio has worked when other systems didn't."

Each year hams spend hours training how to integrate into various emergency departments’ command structure, drilling in passing critical messages whenever needed by non-traditional means and building and maintaining the equipment and radio networks needed to do the job, all without a single dollar of taxpayer money.

Field Day is a serious test of skill, but it has a fun side, and is billed as the largest "on-air" operating event of the year. During the weekend, radio operators try to contact as many other Field Day stations as possible. In 2015, 2720 clubs, groups and individuals across the US and Canada submitted score-sheets to the ARRL, who sanctions and conducts the exercise. These logs recorded participation by 35,369 individuals all over the world--over 1.36 million two-way contacts were reported during the all-too-short 24-hours of the event.
Radio clubs across Michigan will start setting up their antennas and equipment in public Friday evening and Saturday morning to be ready when the contest begins promptly at 2:00 pm Saturday, and continue operating straight through until approximately noon on Sunday. "We hope that anyone who is interested in seeing what Amateur Radio is all about will come out for Field Day," says McDonough. "We'll be glad to show everyone what we do and how we do it. We'll also have facilities available to put visitors on the air under the watchful eyes of one of our hams and give them a taste of what ham radio is about." If you'd like to visit a local club and see what Ham Radio is all about, you can find the activity nearest you by logging on to the Field Day Site Locator at http://www.arrl.org/field-day-locator.

Today there are nearly 21000 licensed Amateur Radio Operators in Michigan, more than 738,000 Amateur Radio operators in the United States and upwards of 2.5 million worldwide. To find out more about Amateur Radio or how you can get started, contact the American Radio Relay League, 229 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111 or by calling 1-800-32-NEWHAM or at www.arrl.org/newham.

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