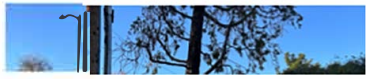
Technical Article: Park Hill Repeater by Ron Ross KD6ZXG

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The main repeater for the SBCARA is the Park Hill repeater located on top of Park Hill near downtown Hollister. This was the first repeater for our group that came on line in 2007. Our group was able to participate in grant funding sponsored by the County Office of Emergency Services which paid for the equipment and the installation. Originally it was installed on top of the old County jail building along with several other public safety radio systems. In 2014 it was relocated to Park Hill along with the repeaters for Hollister Fire, Sheriff and county transit. This repeater serves the northwest part of the county and is tied to the other three ham repeaters that are located in southern San Benito County. A discussion of the other repeaters will be in future newsletters.

Because there is only a limited amount of radio spectrum available, repeater frequencies are reused as you move to different areas in state. Generally, the repeater coordination process will provide ample distance between repeaters of the same frequency to avoid interference with each other. The repeater coordination is done by the Northern Amateur Relay Council of California (NARCC). It is an all-volunteer organization comprised of hams from northern California. Locally, Jack Kirk (W6KRK) sits on their board of directors. NARCC has a very informative website and it can be viewed at www.narcc.org.

The use of a CTCSS tone (often called "PL") on the repeater's receive frequency will limit rebroadcasting of signals it hears to only ones that are transmitting the proper tone. Along with distance, this helps separate repeaters especially in crowded areas such as this part of the state. The nearest repeater using the same frequency is located in the Santa Rosa area. Occasionally when conditions are favorable, you might hear radio traffic from this distant repeater.

Some of the local hams have programed the repeater's CTCSS tone (94.8 Hz) on the receive side of their radio. By doing this, they will eliminate the possibility of hearing distant repeaters when their radio is tuned to the Park Hill frequency. By doing this, however, their radio will not receive the "courtesy tone" that is the short beep at the end of each transmission. By listening for the courtesy tone before transmitting helps ensure that you will not cut off the last part of someone else's transmission. So if you do program a CTCSS tone on the receive side of repeater frequency on your radio, be sure that the previous person has stopped talking and the repeater has "dropped out" before transmitting.

In the next newsletter we will discuss the South County Repeater, which was the second repeater that was placed in service.