

County Hunting

Larry Benko, W0QE

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County Hunting

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Where county hunting fits into ham radio

- n DX, rag chew, contest, nets, emergency service
- n HF, VHF, UHF, microwave, LF , VLF
- n CW, SSB, AM, FM, RTTY, digital
- n Experiment, build equipment & antennas
- n Fixed, portable, mobile ops
- n Operating awards

Operating Awards

- n County hunting is primarily an operating award
- n ARRL Awards: WAS, DXCC, WAC, 5-Band WAS & DXCC, VUCC www.arrl.org
- n CQ Magazine awards: WAZ, USA-CA, WPX www.cq-amateur-radio.com
- n Clubs offer county awards
- n MARAC (Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club) has many county awards

Award history

- n ARRL (QST) and CQ Magazine both have operating awards
- n The USA-CA Award began in 1962 and the current custodian is Ted, K1BV
- n The first to complete USA-CA was K9EAB in Aug. 1965
- n As of Dec. 1, 2007, USA-CA has been earned by 1164 people

USA-CA

- n USA-CA award is the starting place
- n USA-CA award can be applied for in increments of 500 counties with band, mode, mobile and other endorsements
- n Counties must be confirmed either by QSL card or MRC (mobile reply card)
- n Many MARAC awards can be worked for at the same time

County Hunting Basics

- n Tracking 3077 counties requires careful record keeping
- n Computer logging, paper notebooks, spreadsheets have all been used
- n Specialized logging programs KwikWin and Logger (must be MARAC member)
- n ALL your contacts count with no time or geographical constraints for USA-CA
- n Confirmations must be unambiguous

Getting Started

- n Determine your tracking method
- n Process all your existing QSL cards (everything counts)
- n There are CW nets on 3+ bands, SSB nets on 2+ bands, and PSK31 nets
- n Listen to the nets and understand the protocol

Getting Started (cont.)

- n Begin working counties on the county hunting nets, state QSO parties, contests, general contacts, any other nets, etc.
- n Use the spots and consider operating on multiple bands and modes
- n Go mobile with a regular county hunter

Importance of the mobiles

- n 3077 counties and only ~800 are on interstate highways
- n Not all counties have active hams on HF
- n HF mobile is a lot of fun
- n HF mobile on multiple bands and modes can be very challenging
- n Those who help others get helped more quickly

What to expect

- n Time to work all 3077 counties can vary from under 1 year to forever
- n Using multiple bands, state QSO parties, and being quite active ~2-4 years
- n Use MRCs, MRC/QSL bureau, SASEs if direct, & QSL with first MRC
- n Remember to do what it takes to have fun

References

- n CQ Magazine
www.cq-amateur-radio.com/usacarul.html
- n MARAC (Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club):
award rules, general reference, database, nets,
spots www.marac.org
- n K3IMC: forum, planned trips, needs lists, award
holders www.cquest.com/ch
- n KK7X: forums, links to chat rooms, MRC
bureau and spots www.countyhunter.com

References (cont.)

- n W5UGD and W6RK: IRC chat rooms, IRC spots, web spots, cluster spots, cell phone text alerts (both networks share spots)
- n N4UJK: “Coloring Book” and MRC’s www.cquest.com/ch/n4ujk.htm
- n PDF wall map: Can zoom and print http://ftp2.census.gov/geo/maps/general_ref/us_base/stco2003/stco2003.pdf
- n PDF state maps: www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/stco_02.htm

Questions?