

# Radio hams laud NorthwesTel

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The Yukon Amateur Radio Association has 23 VHF repeaters, located along the main highways in the territory, including links to Haines and Skagway, Alaska and Atlin, B.C.

A simple handheld radio allows "ham ops" to communicate with any community from Whitehorse to Dawson, Mayo, Beaver Creek, Teslin, etc., provided there is a ham radio operator at these locations.

During the recent telephone outage at Whitehorse, we were staffing the EMO building at the Airport and were in contact with ham ops in both Haines Junction and Dawson City.

It's through facilities donated by NorthwesTel that we were able to do this. While YARA has many mountaintop sites, we also need assistance from partners where we can share space in buildings owned by NorthwesTel.

In the case of the power outage, a site near Carmacks was used by YARA for a repeater link to our northern network and on to Dawson City.

We are offered tower and building space, in a secure facility with backup power.

YARA has received assistance from NorthwesTel since 1976,

when I began the Yukon Amateur Radio Association. We have received technical help over the years from people such as retired radio tech Geoff Grant, VY1BG, who continues to be vital to our operations.

Grant was recently part of a team of six YARA members who rebuilt a repeater south of Haines Junction at an altitude of just over 2,000 metres. VY1BG helped to install new solar panels and upgrade the power system.

Rod Fortune at the NorthwesTel radio shop also helped YARA with technical advice and the provided surplus radio gear such as antennas and cable.

NorthwesTel also offers assistance to YARA as we offer safety and communications to the Kluane to Chilkat Bike race. We share a repeater site along the Haines Road, which gives a voice link all the way to Haines, Alaska.

YARA also offers safety and communications for the Sport Yukon Klondike International Road Relay from Skagway to Whitehorse (30th time this year.)

YARA also worked with NorthwesTel on communications issues during the recent Arctic Winter Games.

NorthwesTel has also offered engineering and computer advice from its radio shop and head office when required.

The Yukon Amateur Radio Association has several community partners including Yukon Energy, Yukon Electric, Parks Canada, EMO Yukon, Government of Yukon (Wildland Fire Management), Daniels Electronics, Community Development Fund, City of Whitehorse, Lotteries Yukon, Canadian Coast Guard, Nav Canada, Great Northern Ski

Society, and assistance from the helicopter companies at the Whitehorse Airport.

YARA has also donated repeaters to Yukon Zone Ski Patrol at Mt. Sima for radio communications, and the repeater used by the Whitehorse Cross Country Ski Club.

All in all, we would not have a complete amateur radio repeater system in the Yukon if not for the efforts of NorthwesTel.

Ron McFadyen

Vice-president Yukon Amateur Radio Association



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