

Clay's Corner for January 2011

Welcome to Twenty Eleven.

Coming up at this month's meeting of Chapter 16 will be a very interesting program devoted to the changes coming to EAS in our State. As you know the FCC has not yet released their new-revised Part 11 rules as the Feds continue to stretch out the date when all of this is supposed to come together. As has been the case for many years, Washington State is NOT waiting for the Feds and is in the process of rolling out our own CAP (Common Alerting Protocol) based EAS system. This process started with the state placing about 75 new CAP/EAS Boxes in selected locations around our state. Additionally, a number of stations have already purchased new CAP capable EAS hardware and they are in the process of being connected to 'the system'.

This month we are fortunate to have Don Miller of Washington Emergency Management come to not only show & tell us how it works, but answer your questions. In addition to Don will be none other than Harold Price from Sage Alerting Systems. Harold is extremely knowledgeable about every aspect of the next generation of EAS and will explain how the various manufacturers have worked together to come up with the hardware to make it all work.

If you are responsible for EAS at your station....Yes Radio and TV...You need to be there. This is your time to get the answers you have been seeking. It is important to note that Don and Harold are NOT salespeople but rather tech-heads that can discuss this topic from a technical standpoint.

Our meeting will be at the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field at 12 Noon on Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup>. We have one small problem. The seating capacity of our room is limited. To help deal with this we are going to be asking our members to let us know who will be in attendance. If all the seats have not been taken, a couple of days prior to the 13<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will be opened to others that may well wish to take advantage of the opportunity to come and learn.

Looking at news and stuff from this past month.

Mother Nature has certainly been living up to the predictions of an 'interesting' winter. We have had our share of snow, ice, wind etc. As I write this, I can hear vehicles on my street having difficulty dealing with the white stuff. So far, those of us that go to West Tiger have not been forced to use snow-shoes or snow-cat...But ...Winter is just getting started.

I got to experience some interesting weather by going over to Tri-Cities to work on the installation of a new NV30 Transmitter for KFAE on Johnson Butte. Freezing fog, snow, ice etc. Was very pleased to come back to the 'wet-side' to see the color green.

The latest, 12+, ratings are out for radio in our town. A couple of things to note – KOMO-AM is up to #2. Nice to see an AM in the top 5 again. . KIRO-FM has proved that News-Talk does work on FM with that station coming in at #4. KUOW is at #8 demonstrating that you don't have to be playing music to command an audience. When

a non-commercial station is #8 out of some 40 stations listed, that's something. Other NCE's are doing well also with KPLU ranked #19. Nationally, it's reported that some 30 Million Americans are listening to Public Radio. 98.9, Smooth Jazz is gone, after 19 years, reflecting a change in musical tastes around the country where that format has not been doing so well of late. Locally the station was ranked #17. To say the least, the PPM has had a huge impact on radio.

It's interesting that KOMO-AM is going so well with their all news format. Consider the results of a recent survey that showed almost 20% get their news on their cell phone or other portable gizmo. 44% get their news, on-line, weekly. Then again radios ratings reflect their relative popularity between stations.

KCKA TV. On Crego Hill near Chehalis. Recently increased power with the installation of a new antenna. The old antenna's pole was stripped of it's spiral-wrapped radiator and was used as a support for the new, side-mounted, array. Understand that the work was done by Seacomm Erectors. Crego is also the site of KMNT-FM, KSWS-FM as well as a couple TV Translators.

Ford, who has been working with Microsoft and others to jazz up their cars with lots of high-tech gizmo's is one of the first I've heard of to offer a way for parents to block Satellite Radio channels due to their content. This has long been a feature for television.

I have often written about what's happening with our nearest star (the Sun) and it's rather strange behavior over the last couple of years. From what I have been reading, things are projected to change as the activity of the sun increases. For reasons that are poorly understood, the normal 11 year cycle has been hard to predict of late. According to the latest predictions, 2013 could be the middle of the next maximum activity phase. If you are a Ham Radio operator, this means exciting times. If you are the operator of a satellite or a power grid, it could mean time to fasten your seatbelt. History teaches us to be watchful and to be mindful that we have a whole lot more sensitive equipment working today that could well be negatively impacted. The term 'Sun-Outage' normally applies to a short period of time when your sat-dish is pointed at the Sun. This term could take on a new meaning. Are you ready?

The FCC appears to be moving toward a greater role in regulating the Internet after their historic ruling on Internet neutrality. This is going to be an interesting issue to follow, especially knowing that the majority of the public is opposed to the FCC trying to regulate in this area. The FCC has made its positions about Broadband well known as they try and squeeze everyone for more spectrum, at the same time, it appears that they desire to increase their level of regulation as well.

Did you happen to catch the news item about how a news chopper pilot for an Oklahoma City TV station rescued a stranded calf? Apparently a rancher called the TV station reporting his calf was stuck on a ice-covered pond. The pilot, who a couple of years ago rescued a deer in a similar predicament, flew to the scene and, with his choppers rotor blast, blew the critter to the edge of the pond where he could be rescued.

I well remember when I would write in this column about huge mergers and sales of broadcast stations. The weak economy really put the damper on that activity. Perhaps sign that things are getting better comes the news that two Southern California FM stations have been sold for \$35 Million. Then there is the \$2 Billion takeover battle between two of the largest radio outfits where Cumulus is trying to take over Citadel. Of course the big merger story going into 2011 is the one between Comcast and NBCU.

If you drive over to Eastern Washington you are immediately struck by how many huge windmills there are. Alternative energy production has certainly come a long way. For many years many of us have wondered when someone was going to harness the power of salt water. The power of the changing tides in the Tacoma Narrows is huge...It's just that everyone talks about it and nobody seems to ever come up with something that would harness this power. Normally the concern you hear about is how rotating propellers below the surface would do harm to sea creatures. Now there is another issue standing in the way of making kilowatts out of Puget Sounds Tides...Electro-magnetic interference from the power cables that would connect these devices to the grid. The fear is that the fields around these cables would interfere with salmon and other creatures that apparently use the earths magnetic fields to navigate. Meanwhile, there are some projects underway in the PNW. DOE is working with Snohomish PUD to install some turbines in Admiralty Inlet. If you look at what could be generated along the Pacific Coast of our country, the potential is huge. Some are saying that wave generators could produce 50,000 megawatts. (that's a lot of juice). Back to the Sound. Why not DC generators with inverters on land?

Before I leave the world of electricity....Prices are coming down on LED lamps. Recently I was in a local lighting store looking for a particular lamp. I discovered that the lamp makers have not yet incorporated into some of their designs the form factor of LED lamps. While talking with a salesman, I could not help but notice a couple came in asking about LED light fixtures. One of the new LED lamp consumes just 13 watts making it 75% more efficient than the 60 watt lamp it replaces and is reportedly available at under 30 bucks. High you say...It will pay for itself in 2 years via decrease energy use. I have to wonder about those commercial buildings that have relied heavily on lighting as one of their sources for heat. As we replace all those incandescent and fluorescents with LED's, will they have to add heating equipment? One of the biggest buildings, the Mall of American in Minneapolis (where it really gets cold). Has no furnace. Instead they rely on their customers to heat the building. Must be a lot of hot bodies there. If anyone needs a hard to find small incandescent lamp for that old tube type boat-anchor...let me know. I have quite a collection. #47's and 1829's will always have a warm spot in my heart.

One of the big stories that continues to unfold is about MediaFlo. We all remember reading about how this company was going around the country gobbling up channel 55's and building out a very impressive system in over 115 markets. Then the admission that things are not going well and they are going to shut down their system. Meanwhile, AT&T has offered a boat-load of bucks...Well just under 2 Billion of them anyway. Another story that we will be following in 2011.

Over on the radio side – progress is being made that will give radio something to see. For many years we have seen the adoption radios that display a stations call letters and

slogan and, in many cases, the program title and/or the name of the song being played etc. Now we are hearing about what's called Captioned Radio. This is a technology that will allow FM stations to additional textual information. What every happened to radios with real 'dial cord'?

While Radio is having difficulty getting traction with it's HD Radio ...TV is having no problem getting folks to adopt HD-TV. A new survey shows that over 60% of homes now have at least one HD Set and about 25% have more than one. Of course TV enjoyed having analog turned off as a means of encouraging the change over. Something that is not likely to take place with Radio. 3-D TV is the next challenge. Like most issues like this, it's all about compelling content and the costs associated with getting it there. Radio has a similar problem with most stations not willing to spend the money to put compelling content on their HD Channels. Meanwhile, VW has joined those automakers announcing that HD Radio will be available in their cars.

As the FCC make their move to try and squeeze TV stations to try and gain band-width for Broadband. The FCC is trying to squeeze in more FM stations into what many view as an already overcrowded band with the approval to permit adding more low powered FM Stations. What makes this a bit disturbing is the FCC's 3<sup>rd</sup> adjacent channel requirements. Unfortunately the FCC is becoming increasingly 'complaint driven'. Just as they did with HD Radios recent power increase, where they relaxed the rules letting complaints drive what used to be a technical process....so they are doing with the new LPFM changes. Many of us long for the old FCC.

This month I feel compelled to note the passing of a voice that many of us remember very well. Fred Foy was best known for his work as announcer for the Lone Ranger. I can here him say..."A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty Hi-Yo, Silver." to this day. Foy was 89.

Well the 'calm act' is now law. The President has signed into law legislation that requires TV providers to coordinate audio levels of commercials with their associated programs. Now the FCC has to write the rules to govern the issue. For the next year...Its loud spots...before the new rules take effect. Anyone still have an old CBS Loudness Controller?

That's it from this end. I sincerely hope that Twenty Eleven is great to you and yours.

See you all at the next Chapter 16 meeting – January 13 – Noon – at the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field.

Clay

