County Hunter News

November 1, 2008
Volume 4, Issue 11

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation.

Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

The County Hunter News will attempt to provide you with interesting, thought provoking articles, articles of county hunting history, or about county hunters or events, ham radio or electronics history, general ham radio interest, and provide news of upcoming operating events.

We hope you will enjoy the County Hunter News. Feel free to forward, or provide links. Permission is given for copying or quoting in part or all provided credit is given to the CHNews and to the author of article.

County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and **7056.5**, with activity nights on 3556.5 on Tuesday evenings around 8-9pm Eastern Time. Also, with low sunspot activity, most of the SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188/7185 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.915.5, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18135 or 18.132.5 for occasional 17M SSB runs.

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at ch.W6RK.com

For information on county hunting, check out the following resources:

The USACA award is sponsored by CQ Magazine. Rules and information are here: http://countyhunter.com/cq.htm

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out: http://countyhunter.com/whatis.htm

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can find information on these awards and the rules at: http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at: http://www.wd3p.net/ch/netproc/netproc.htm

There is a lot more information at www.countyhunter.com . Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at www.CHNewsonline.com

De N4CD (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

1) Mobile Activity in October

Another great month for mobiles – in state QSO parties – first CA, then PA, IL. Busy! Lots of contacts and band counties to be had. Not much propagation on the higher bands. 17M has been disappointing – we sure need some sunspot activity. Things slowed down quite a bit during the month with the end of the summer vacation season, the slowing economy, and no holidays in the month for most.

I stayed close to home this month, with only a few short trips to hamfests and didn't put out any counties – but then again, next month is a big trip back east for Thanksgiving, so I'm just letting the car rest while the price of gas drops down for a while.

It's nice to see gas down to under $2.50 in most areas of the country – although that may result in significant consequences later.

2) Texas QSO Party results

Chuck, NO5W, reported that preliminary results showed that 247 of the 254 counties were activated in the Texas QSO Party in late September! The only

ones not on the air (or reported) were Concho, Delta, Hudspeth, Jim Hogg, Presidio, Val Verde, and Webb. K5OT, W3DYA, K5SF, N4CD and some other county hunters were all QRV along with dozens of other mobiles, portables and fixed stations.

Entries seen include AB7RW, DL3DXX, DL8USA, K4PBY, K4ZGB, KJ9C, KN4Y, KS5A, LY2ZZ, OK1APV, PA3ARM, W2CVW, W7GVE, W9LHG, WA2VQV, and lots more.

3) State QSO Parties in October

The PA and IL QSO party had several county hunter mobiles out (W9MSE, NN9K, WB2ABD, KA3QLF) and likely near all counties in both states on the air. Lots of band counties spotted with lots of activity on 75/80M in the evenings. CA QSO party was good if you had propagation.

Scott, KA3QLF and Paul, WA2ABD were spotted in the PA QSO party giving out counties. Logs noted in the PA QSO party web page include county hunters K9EN, PA3ARM, K4BAI, plus at least 100 other contest regulars.

In any state QSO party, there are about 100 stations that seem to turn up for each and every party, plus another 50-100 or more within the state that get on to activate their counties in the major state QSO parties like FL, TX, PA, GA, TN, 7th Area, CA, New England, IL, WI, MI. Other QSO parties seem to struggle with getting a small percentage of counties activated each year. It seems to be 'feast or famine'! And can change year to year – OK good one year, not so good. ARK good one year, and not so good next year(got wiped out by tail end of hurricane this year!). So it goes! You take what you can, and if you are in or near one of the states with a QSO party, go mobile and have some fun!

3) From Paul, WB2ABD, on the PA QSO Party:

"Saturday, I decided to start in Warren in order to avoid various traffic-congestive fall festivals in WNY. Ran into a big detour in McKean, which threw the whole schedule out the window. Interesting how active 80M was compared to 40M (20m was lousy the whole time).

Last county ran was Crawford just before the end of the contest. Heading home on I-79, I met up with a nice 6 point buck at 1:30 AM. Pushed the a/c condenser, radiator and tranny cooler into the engine compartment. Amazingly, there were no leaks and managed to drive it home w/o any ill effects. So I got to be busy Sunday, taking all the stuff out of the truck for an appt. with the collision shop (prelim $2700 estimate).

Of interest to all mobiles... the only item displaced from this at-speed collision was a spare logging pen. Everything else was secured well enough to stay put. No one plans to have an accident, but a little planned safety is worth the effort."

4) Other mobile activity

Guff, KS5A, was mobile in CA and OR in October.

In mid October, few mobiles headed to South Carolina. Frank, AA9JJ, and Kay, N9QPQ, ran quite a few counties getting there giving out the MP contacts on SSB. Jim, KB4XK, put out his route from NC down to SC on cw. Frosty, W0FP headed down there from MO. KA9JAC/KB9YVT ran counties down and back, along with K1SO on SSB. Lots of 40M spots, with counties spotted on 80M SSB as well.

Not much CW activity to and from the convention.

Randy, AA8R did the Hawaii circuit, putting out all the counties. More later. He made a few contacts on 17M – not much propagation.

5) W0QE reports: (from KK7X County Hunter Dot Com Forum)

On my recent trip which ended yesterday.....

3780 miles
4118 contacts
147 counties (28 contacts/county average)

I was able to operate CW on 8 bands and SSB on 3 bands but propagation did not allow such operation. I only made 6 contacts on 17m, 2 contacts on 15m, 0 on 12m, and 1 on 10m. However 80m CW was great with 659 contacts. Much of the success on 80m was due to the fact that I ran late in

the evenings. Working the entire country on 80m without relays was easy to do. On the other hand I made less than 200 contacts on 30m CW. 30m used to be the predominate CW band but on this trip I made more contacts on 40m, 20m, and 80m than on 30m. On SSB I made 4 times as many contacts on 40m as on 20m.

All contacts were made on the fly with the exception of the Greenwood/Elk, KS county line and Hamilton, TN where it was raining so hard that I couldn't see 50 ft. in front of the car. We pulled off the road until the rain subsided.

One thing that is becoming painfully evident is that no one can run all the bands without stopping. Even with taking only a few relays on CW there is just not enough time to work all the bands before running out of the county. The spots (which I dislike) make the problem worse as I would often have to call on a new band 4 or 5 times before getting any response (adding to the time of the run). Too many people are not listening to their radios and only watching the computer. If we ever get some sunspots I will be dropping some bands on future runs. 30m would seem to be the most likely candidate based on the current interest or perhaps only run CW if I wanted to do more bands. Either way there just isn't enough time to squeeze everything in. My 80m transmit county count is now over 400 but too few mobiles are operating on 80m. Is there anything "we" can do to encourage more people to try 80m? I only operate 80m while mobile because I like to work counties on 80m when at home. If 80m doesn't get a bigger following soon, 80m might be a better band to eliminate (especially throughout the middle of the day).

121 VAC AC Vehicle Power

de W0QE

from the KK7X Forum

I have been looking for a 12VDC to 110V AC converter for a while to keep from having to take multiple laptop batteries or buying 12VDC laptop chargers and for occasional other things such as powering a spectrum analyzer to make BPL measurements etc.

After buying 9 and returning due to RF noise I was able to get a distributor to get me in touch with the head design engineer at Samlex. He was super nice and talked with me for nearly 2 hours. Bottom line is that there are others who have these same requirements (such as ambulances with EKG equipment) and Samlex makes a line of converters under the Cotek brand name that are fully FCC part 15B compliant.

I bought a 300W (100% duty cycle) pure sinewave unit which according to my spectrum analyzer and current probes is very RF quiet. Unfortunately it was more expensive and heavier. However I hear ZERO noise from the unit on all bands with the preamp on.

For those who might be interested the unit was a Cotek S300-112, 9" x 6" x 3", weighs 8 lb., has 2 GFCI outlets and is in a completely RF shielded enclosure. Internally it has a monster toroidal transformer and several RF filters. The AC waveform is very close to a sine wave and the frequency is 60.00Hz. The distributor, http://www.donrowe.com, needed to get the unit from the factory but I still received it within a week. I paid $210 for it.

Added later:

The inverter I bought takes the DC and directly converts it to a 60Hz multilevel sinewave output which is then further filtered. Unfortunately this requires a large 60Hz transformer so the unit I bought weighs 8 pounds. The unit I purchased DOES HAVE AN FCC PART 15B number on it where nearly all cheaper units do not.

Propagation

I'll vote for that….more and more of propagation. The latest from ARRL propagation bulletin

"Finally, we are seeing Cycle 24 sunspots that don't emerge one day, and evaporate the next. That's right -- sunspots, as in two or more. On Friday, October 10 sunspot 1005 emerged at high latitude over our Sun's eastern limb, and that day's sunspot number was 12. On the following day the sunspot number rose to 16,"

"On Sunday, Monday and Tuesday -- as the spot progressed toward the center-north of the solar disk -- sunspot numbers were 16, 15 and 14 as the dark spot began to fade. On Wednesday the sunspot number faded another point to 13, but on Thursday, October 16, sunspot 1006 emerged, but this time in the southwest corner, about to rotate out of view. The sunspot number for Thursday jumped to 24."

"On Wednesday of this week a reading of activity on the side of the Sun facing away from Earth found another possible sunspot. This was detected using a method called helioseismic holography, which depends on pressure waves bouncing around our Sun's interior."

"Sunspot numbers for October 9 through 15 were 0, 12, 16, 16, 15, 14, and 13 with a mean of 12.3. 10.7 cm flux was 68.7, 68.9, 70.8, 70.1, 70.9, 70.4, and 70.9 with a mean of 70.1."

Note de N4CD – We are going to need to see the flux numbers well above 70 for much in the way of 17M propagation. Let's hope the sun continues to spin out sunspots quickly now!

ARRL Action

ARRL OPPOSES DIGITAL RBROADCASTING ON 40 METERS IN ALASKA

The ARRL is saying no to Digital Aurora Technologies proposed operation in the 40 meter band.

On Monday, October 20th, the League filed a Petition for Modification or Cancellation of Experimental Authorization with respect to license WE2XRH. This is an experimental license issued to Digital Aurora Radio Technologies that proposes to test digital transmissions in 4.50 to 5.10 MHz, 7.10 to 7.60 MHz and 9.25 to 9.95 MHz bands for a terrestrial digital radio service to the citizens of Alaska.

The ARRL says that its interest in this matter is limited to the fact that the experimental license includes the band 7.1 to7.3 MHz. This is a spectrum parcel that is allocated domestically exclusively to the Amateur Radio Service.

The ARRL says that in its view that there is a 100% certainty of severe, continuous, harmful interference from Digital Aurora Radio Technologies operation of the facilities as authorized by the Commission to ongoing Amateur Radio operation in the 40 meter band. It says that this authorization must be modified immediately if not cancelled completely. This, so as to delete the band 7.1 to 7.3 MHz from the experimental license application.

Update de N4CD: The FCC quickly modified the allocation to no longer include the amateur band after receiving a ‘request’ from the ARRL Legal Council, admitting it had made ‘an error’. ARRL officials noted that ever since the ARRL victory in the lawsuit against the FCC for the BPL (Broadband over Power Line) decision, the FCC has reacted quickly to input from the ARRL.

Randy/Pattie Do Hawaii

Randy, AA8R, and Pattie, W8TAX, took a nice leisurely trip to Hawaii to put out all the counties. Here are a few pics from the trip.

On Kauai, Randy and Pattie stopped by to visit long time county hunter Clarence, KH6G (formerly AH6CG) and wife, Maverline KH7DL. Both were employed by Roberts - the big tour bus operator in Hawaii – so they are great source of info on what to see, and how to see it (to avoid to crowds of the tour buses!). Clarence is once again chasing counties on cw and with improving propagation, you should be hearing him a lot more often!

In front: KH6G, Clarence AA8R, Randy

In rear KH7DL, Maverline Pattie, W8TAX

Here is pic of Randy on the Kalawao/Maui line. There are gigantic tropical trees all around soaking up the RF, making a tough county even tougher.

Randy ran this on 40M and 75M on evening.

Now, if you see snow flying, the heat is running, and winter is descending, image yourself at the following QTH – watching the surf as you enjoy the weather in shorts and tee-shirt, with a nice over water path back to the mainland USA.

AA8R mobile in the rental car – twin hamsticks

Solar Power

1) New Material

Columbus (OH) - Researchers at Ohio State University have accidentally discovered a new solar cell material capable of absorbing all of the sun's

visible light energy. The material is comprised of a hybrid of plastics, molybdenum and titanium. The team discovered it not only fluoresces (as most solar cells do), but also phosphoresces. Electrons in a phosphorescent state remain at a place where they can be "siphoned off" as electricity over 7 million times longer than those generated in a fluorescent state. This combination of materials also utilizes the entire visible spectrum of light energy, translating into a theoretical potential of almost 100% efficiency. Commercial products are still years away, but this foundational work may well pave the way for a truly renewable form of clean, global energy.

A complete study of the team's work appears in the current issue of "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences" (PNAS).

Fluorescence and phosphorescence

Traditional solar cell materials use a property called fluorescence to gather electricity. Energy from the sun strikes whatever material they are made of resulting in a momentary "dislodging" of electrons into an excited state. The excited electrons exist due to a property called fluorescence. They last only a dozen or so picoseconds (trillionths of a second) in this state, which is also called a "singlet state." The many picosecond dwell there is fairly typical among traditional solar cell material in use today.

The new material, which was accidentally discovered using supercomputers to determine possible theoretical molecular configurations, causes not only fluorescing electrons in the singlet state to be created, but also phosphorescing electrons in what's called a "triplet state."

These triplet state electrons remain in their excited state of phosphorescence for scores of microseconds (up to about 200 microseconds, or 0.0002 seconds). With such a long lasting state of free electron flow, their ability to be captured is theoretically significantly greater than existing technologies.

And if the research team's current efforts (of using only a few molecules of the hybrid materials suspended in a liquid solution) can be extended into practical real-world scales, then products yielding nearly 100% solar efficiency may soon be achievable.

2) **Solar cell technology**

Today's best solar cell technologies utilize several material layers to convert the infrared, ultraviolet and visible portions of the spectrum into electrical energy. This equates to about 61% efficiency in the furthest extremes of the technology, though something around mid-40% is far more typical. Solar cells like these are also incredibly expensive, fragile and impractical for mass production, making them useful for projects like satellites. They have no real potential to become real alternatives for the base consumer's energy needs.

Quite recently, plastic solar cells have been created which achieve between 7% and 11% efficiency. While this may not sound like a lot, such products and materials are extremely inexpensive to produce in bulk quantities, costing about $3 per square meter. The idea of having a rooftop covered by plastic solar cells in place of tar-based shingles has drawn many a consumer's thought since being first reported in 2007. Commercial consumer products based on the technology, which could offer up to 14% efficiency if theories are to be believed, are promised within the next five years.

3) Alternate forms of using solar power

One of the biggest downfalls of using solar energy on the Earth's surface is that it only works when there is strong sunlight. If it is overcast or if there are clouds, then the resulting efficiency drops sharply and much less power is generated. Also, on most places during most of the year it is dark about 50% of the time. This means some kind of battery storage system must be used to gather the energy during the sun's brilliance in daylight hours, only to then rely on batteries during the night. This adds expense and complexity to solar cell solutions and produces a solution which has peaks and valleys of available power.

Another form of solar power, however, has bypassed some of those limitations. A phenomenal heat absorbing material (made primarily of sodium) uses a relatively simple technology to power itself. By directing the sun's rays through a large array of mirrors which focus the sun's heat and light onto a single spot of the material, it quickly heats up to a few thousand degrees. The material's properties allow it to absorb and store much heat,

and then release it slowly over time.

Building technologies around this solution have allowed the sun's direct energy to continue to give off power during darkened times, much like a battery solution but without the need of a battery. The heat is stored in an insulating container, only to be tapped to power steam turbines or some other form of heat-sensitive motor technology.

Still not enough, more to come

The materials these researchers have created is not ready for prime time. Only a few molecules were created through a joint effort of the Ohio State University team and a team of chemists from the National Taiwan University. They synthesized enough of the material to carry out preliminary tests. And while these early findings are truly remarkable, there are still more on the horizon.

Supercomputers are enabling an entire new area of materials. No longer do scientists have to physically create samples of every possible material in the lab, only to test and document everything they find about it. Today they can set up a series of parameters and instruct a supercomputing machine to find the one that best aligns with their desires, wants and wishes. And while such computations often takes many days or even weeks for each trial material, it's more economical and feasible than the old route. Plus, it enables materials like these which were, in this context, accidentally discovered using computers.

The materials analysis these supercomputers carry out is only as good as they are properly designed, and the machine is powerful. Technology sciences like semiconductors and machine manufacturing are quickly overcoming every aspect of limitations regarding the machine's power. And ironically, faster computers are allowing research teams to develop better and more comprehensive models for materials research.

It won't be too long before supercomputers light the way for the truly revolutionary form of renewable energy generation. Who knows, it may come from a bacteria inside the digestive tract of a beetle. But, if you believe anything in science then you must believe it's out there. We just have to find it. And tools like supercomputers, and efforts like these at Ohio State

University, are proving time and time again how valuable they are in increasing man's knowledge.

http://www.tgdaily.com/html_tmp/content-view-39807-113.html

4) With the slump in oil prices, brought on by tremendous drop in demand for oil from around the world, one has to wonder how much money now will be funneled to 'alternative energy sources'. The price of ethanol is now so low that many ethanol refiners may go bankrupt. Funding for expansion of the industry is near impossible to get in today's environment. Venture capital firms are now reluctant to fund start up companies until they see better prospects for making money. It is going to get interesting.

County Hunter Forum Back

Don, K3IMC, has restored the County Hunter Forum back to normal operation. Please feel free to responsibly use the forum to post messages about county hunter topics of interest.

The County Hunter Dot Com forum has successfully filled in, so please use both to post relevant information to spread news and information. Both are useful resources to the County Hunting Community.

Peak Oil Update

This has been an interesting few months to say the least in the world oil supply. As economies worldwide went into a slump, the demand for oil was reduced by over 5%. If you recall, oil is a very 'inelastic' demand commodity. What that means is that when supplies run short, and there is inadequate supply to go around, the price of oil might have to rise by a factor of 5 or 10% to reduce demand by 1%. That is a 5 or 10: 1 ratio.

On the flip side, when there is a reduction in demand, below what is available, the price of oil can fall by the same amount – that is a 1% drop in demand can cause a 5 to 10% decrease in the price of oil. Needless to say, with the economy dropping and people here using less gas (and the US uses 25% of the world's oil supply), the currently available oil means prices will have to drop for that oil to be sold.

Two things happen then – people go back to using more oil again – they can afford more – and the suppliers try to limit how much oil is available to the market to drive prices back up. It also turns out that many holders of oil future contracts had to sell things to meet margin calls (pension funds, hedge funds, insurance companies, investment houses, Russian oligarchs, and many, many others), and there were few buyers with cash. So prices of all commodities dropped. Oil is the MOST traded commodity in the world, both in number of contracts and dollar value of commodity.

OPEC has promised production cuts. We'll see how effective they are. In 2009, there were several new major fields coming on line, that would have supplied just a bit more oil to the markets from non-OPEC countries. China is still using more and more oil each year, despite the current downturn. For them, it means instead of 10 or 11% growth, they will only have 7 to 8.5% growth. They will still need more oil each year. Asia is not cutting back, at least yet, on growing economies.

Now the downside. Gas prices are low. Refineries are now losing money and will begin to cut back. Many new planned projects are shelved – either temporarily or permanently. Many others are not able to be financed. It typically takes 8 to 10 years to bring new production on line.

Ethanol refiners, despite gigantic federal subsidies (tens of billions) are nearing bankruptcy. Ethanol from corn costs so much, and suppliers can get so little for it, that without federal mandates for YOU to have to buy it, it would have failed from day one, and would fail today unless supported by the better part of a dollar a gallon subsidy (from you, the tax payer). It also takes as much energy to make as it provides when burned, and ethanol from corn process emits more CO2 than if you did not use it. So ethanol is in big trouble, now, too and will take ever increasing subsidies (from you) to keep running. Expansion of ethanol to meet ever increasing amounts required by

federal MANDATE may never happen. Who wants to finance a money losing proposition these days?

However, even worse if the bleak picture with current low oil prices. Most offshore oil costs per barrel to produce are over $60/bll, with $70 being typical for places like Angola, the latest 'big find' that already seems to be peaking. Who in their right mind is going to take a gamble on oil being well over that, so the company can make a profit?

Russia is cratering in its economy, and most of its oil production is through 'joint ventures' and financing by western financiers via debt offerings. The Russian stock market is down over 75%, no one trusts the Russians to honor any new deals, and Russia demands an $85/bbl tax on exports – so you get the picture. No one is going to invest a dime in Russia – and the Russian government isn't going to have the resources. Russia is the world's largest producer of oil. Hundreds of billions have been lost there by western investors. Who wants to lose more?

Looking the Hugo Chavez in Venezuela – he is in big trouble, saying that he needs $85/bbl to keep his economy alive. His 'social redistribution' programs have grown so large that it takes high oil prices to pay for them. If you note previous CHNews articles, production in Venezuela, since 'nationalization' of the oil companies there, is actually falling year after year. Internal oil consumption is up. Why not? Gas is 15c/gal there!

Mexico can't get its act together. Production down 10% in last year. Exports down 18%. The government 'owns' the oil company and the constitution via amendment forbids foreign participation. (that after they nationalized the oil companies there). Unless they someday revise that, and that is not likely because the liberal socialists run the current government, Mexico will cease to be an oil exporter in the next five years.

Barack Obama claims he wants to 'redo' NAFTA. Great, since Canada now is under obligation to ship us one third of their oil output and one third of their natural gas output by NAFTA. They would LOVE to get rid of that clause and ship it to the highest bidder, maybe China? That is the FIRST thing they will put on the table. So who knows? We'd get an agreement that says that they'll pay their people minimum wage, and they get out from under the oil provisions. Or maybe they'll require us to pay everyone minimum wage, and collect taxes from the 10-20 million illegals to prove

that point, and then they'll agree to sell us 'some' of their oil if they like us that month. Who knows?

One thing currently in our favor – the dollar has strengthened – which means that oil, in dollar terms, is less expensive. Likely a third of the drop in prices is due to the dollar gaining in value – which means you buy more for less – or the price of a barrel is now less in dollar terms.

The financial crisis in part was brought on by the high price of oil. We imported over 700 billion dollars a year in oil. We needed to 'pay that money'. It also meant, because we are Walmart shoppers and buy most of our stuff from China and India, that we sent them lots of dollars. That meant that a lot of folks had dollars to invest. We happily sold them Mortgage Backed Securities from Freddie and Fannie. You know the rest of that story. They also bought lots of US stocks and other financial instruments (Credit default swaps0. Now the panic starts, they sell, our stock market tumbles, the dollars come back our way as US investors bail out of foreign stocks and assets which are falling even faster. So the dollar is 'stronger'. For a while. But how much of the crisis was brought about by having to have so much paper from Freddie and Fannie made available to let folks 'buy them' for the dollars we had sent them for oil and 'stuff'? And how far did Freddie and Fannie go to have ever increasing amounts of paper (more and more loans to less and less qualified people) to satisfy the foreigners holding our dollars we happily sent them? Good question for scholars to study for the next 50 years.

So what's the bottom line? As long as world economies stay in a slump, and if Asia has 'reduced' growth such that total world demand does not increase, the world will get by. Prices might rise as OPEC flexes its muscles by reducing output. But at some point, as economies recover, the delayed projects will mean that 'peak oil production' will hit with a vengeance not too far in the future.

Each year, the depletion of existing fields (drop in oil production) is somewhere between 2.5% and 8%. No one really has the data to define it. That is the scary part. Most feel it is toward the 'high end'. At the low end, that is bad. If the high end is true, and no projects come on line continuously to replace the drop in output of other fields, then you get a sudden, ever increasing worldwide shortage that brings on a gut wrenching economic catastrophe that will make the 'financial meltdown' look like a

cakewalk. It might not even take a recovery – the world may suddenly find even a reduced production level cannot be maintained.

Today, there are groceries in the food stores. There is gas at the gas stations. Airplanes fly everywhere. The roads are full. Now imagine 10% less gasoline or 15% less gasoline worldwide. Just to start. And few alternatives that work. Then realize that the price elasticity of oil means the price will climb through the roof. People 'have to get to work'. People 'need to drive' to do their work. Trucks need to run to get food to the stores. The post office, police, fire, emergency, ambulances, military need to have fuel to function. Jobs depend upon energy to make everything in the economy go.

Then imagine what the price of the available oil will be. Even when gas was $4/gal, most people drove 'all they needed to drive'. Only a few cut back. Now imagine $8 or $10 or $12/gal gas. Or 'out of gas' signs. Remember, the 'shortages' of the 1970s were caused by a 3% shortfall in oil needed in the USA.

Gas lines – odd/even rationing – limits on how much gas you could buy – and that for a 3% shortfall. Maybe our credit crisis was, in part, caused by only $140/bbl oil. What happens at $250/bbl oil?

Don't be complacent. Peak Oil is coming your way. It's just a matter of when.

The latest Mathew Simmons presentation at:

http://www.simmonsco-intl.com/files/MPBN.pdf

County Hunter Toplist Challenge

One of the county hunters sent me an email about the County Hunter Toplist Challenge. He had gotten a message in Logger. He wrote:

" I've been wondering what this "County Challenge" thing is. In my book summary in the logger program it shows that I got 6,994 and need 6 to finish. What do I need 6 of ??Thought that maybe you might be able to clue me in on this."

Aha….well, I suspect that quite a few of the county hunters are unaware of the two things going on.

1) Several years ago, Risto, W6RK, created the Top List Challenge. You can see the current standings at:

http://www.w6rk.com/ccatoplist.htm

There are multiple sections to the listing.

The first is 'mixed' – where you list the counties you have worked on each band, regardless of mode. At the current time, Ed, KN4Y is in the lead.

The second category is CW – where again KN4Y is in the lead.

The third category is Phone, where Chuck, AD8W, is in the lead.

The fourth is digital, where KD7KST,Bill, is currently ahead.

The fifth is 'combo' , which counts Phone, CW, and digital per county – so you can have 3 per county if you operate all three modes. Larry, W0QE is in the lead here.

The listings are updated monthly by Jim, ND9M. The rules are listed at the bottom of the page along with a handy form to update your numbers or submit your numbers.

Risto offered this ‘award’, which he started, to MARAC. Marac then created the County Challenge Award.

2) MARAC County Challenge Award

from the MARAC award page:

County Challenge Award

OBJECTIVE: To encourage county hunters to work and activate counties on as many bands as possible and to work as many counties as possible on the following bands: 160m, 75-80m, 40m, 30m, 20m, 17m, 15m, 10m, and 6m.

SPECIAL RULES: The number of counties worked for the award is the combined total of counties worked on each band. For example, if 500 counties are worked on 80m, 1500 on 40m, 2000 on 30m, and 3000 on 20m, the County Challenge total is 7000.

AWARD LEVELS: Each one thousand (1000) counties worked is one level of the award. For example, a CC total of 7,000 counties would be eligible for CC Level #7.
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The MARAC County Challenge Award uses the first part of the TopList Challenge to offer awards for ever increasing number of ‘band-counties’ worked.

The purpose of both is to stimulate mobile activity, and to see mobiles and fixed stations get on different bands. While you may have the county on 20M, maybe you need it on 30M or 40M or 80M? Maybe you’ll get on 75M to chase counties or 3556.5, or get on during state QSO parties to chase those new ‘band counties’? Or ty 17M or 30M?

MARAC Logger now seems to be tracking the band counties, so if you get a message ‘only six needed to reach 7000’ for the County Challenge award – it means you only need 6 more band counties to qualify for the next level of County Challenge Award!

Also of interest – the WARC bands DO count for the CC Award – no reason not to try to stimulate activity on seldom used bands now (at least cw). With the return of sunspots, bands above 20M should be prime territory for working counties toward all awards. I recall back in 1999/2000, at the sunspot peak, ten and 15 meters were the best bands to work Hawaii!

Awards

USACA #1172, KE4TTS October 7, 2008.
Second Time #386 AC0B October 16, 2008

Only a few awards issued this month. Maybe its time to check and see if you can't help some of the others finish up soon. Quite a few only need a few or 10 or 20 to be done! It's still good weather in most areas of the country for putting out some counties. The holiday season is coming up with opportunities to head to visit the relatives via some rarer counties along the way.

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

Only one 'countyhunter' event in November

Kentucky QSO Party (RST and serial or KY county) wkdxa.com/page2.html

8 Nov 1400Z - 9 Nov 0200Z CW 1.815, 3.54, 7.04, 14.04, 21.04, 28.04, 50.08; SSB 1.855, 3.82, 7.24, 14.28

However, November is Sweepstakes Month – CW and SSB

1. 2.1. CW: First full weekend in November (November 1-3, 2008).
2. 2.2. Phone: Third full weekend in November (November 15-17, 2008).
3. 2.3. Contest Period: Begins 2100 UTC Saturday, ends 0300 UTC Monday.
4. 2.4. Operate no more than 24 of the 30 hours.(if you submit log)

1. 2.4.1. Off periods may not be less than 30 minutes in length.
2. 2.4.2. Times off and on must be clearly noted in paper logs. Do not indicate off times in electronic log files. The log checking software calculates it.
3. 2.4.3. Listening time counts as operating time.

Full rules at: http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2008/novss.html

Lots of opportunity for band counties – but for phone ops – beware – the bans are mighty congested if you want to be out mobile. For CW – very crowded but at least there is 30M CW to avoid the contest QRM. Folks can always work the SS stations for band counties, although one must use care – some stations operate from other locations (at a contest station using their own call) which does not give an accurate indication of their county when you look them up! There is no longer any FCC requirement to sign portable when you are operating fixed from some other location.

See you next month! Happy Turkey Day!