

W8JXN At The Jackson County Fair 2023

W8JXN has completed their 3rd public display of Amateur Radio at the Jackson County Fair. This year we filled the display cases with vintage radio gear, updated our QSL card display with LEDs and mounted our radio displays slightly above eye level for a better view. The better view allowed the radio operators to see the public and answer questions. Having the displays slightly above eye level generated more questions and attracted more people to the booth. Attendance at our booth appeared to be significantly lower than the previous years but the general fair crowd attendance also appeared to be lower.

We mounted three antennas on the Gumpert building roof. The triband trapped dipole was a returning antenna from the previous year used by the digital (FT-8) radio station. The reliable 4BTV vertical was also mounted at the top of the building and used by the CW/SSB station. Our new end fed half wave antenna that was debuted at Field Day, was the third antenna used by the SSB and the CW/SSB radios.

Radio conditions were not favorable with solar storms early in the week. All week long there was a local impulse noise raising the noise floor to S7-S9 levels in the mornings and reducing to an S5 level in the afternoon. The digital station was outstanding in these conditions generating 494 of the 520 contacts made. CW produced 12 contacts and SSB produced 14 contacts. Most of the SSB and CW contacts were made on 40 meters.

The radio display of vintage radios had a decidedly HeathKit look. We had an early model transmitter and VFO (gray cases), a green cased HF radio, a Seneca model 2 and 6 meter radio (AM and CW only) and a green cased 2 meter mobile FM rig. There were a tuner, SWR meter, audio oscillator and RF generator displayed also manufactured by HeathKit. We were also given a 4x1000 Eimac tube to display with the 4x250 and the pair of 813s. We had a "powerful" lineup of radios and tubes in our display cases.

The highlight of this year's display was getting a blind youth (10-12 years old) on the air over the repeater. One of the booth workers stepped outside with an HT and conversed with the young man for 5-6 exchanges. The giant smile on his face as he pressed and released the PTT button and had an over-the-air conversation with someone was a wonderful site. That one encounter made being at the fair for the whole week worthwhile.

We had thirteen different club members work the booth over the 7 fair days. We had 9 workers Monday and Tuesday and 8 workers on Saturday. We also had one day where only 3 people worked the booth. If you did not come to the fair and work the booth, you missed a great time. Plan to attend next year.



