

NEWS RELEASE

"Hams" in Manitoba assist with Severe Weather Tracking

Winnipeg, Mb July 14, 2010– While most Manitobans watched the darkening skies with trepidation a dedicated group of radio amateurs were helping Environment Canada to gather information of approaching storms through the CANWARN system.

Many Amateur Radio Operators (or "Hams") have been trained by Environment Canada to act as Severe Weather Observers. When a Severe Weather Warning is issued Ham radio volunteers may man VE4WWO - an Amateur Radio station in Environment Canada's downtown office. Any CANWARN-trained Amateur that spots funnel clouds, large hail or other dangerous weather can pass that information directly to the staff at the weather office by Amateur Radio.

People who have not attended Spotter Training who spot such weather can also report it via phone to 1-800-239-0484 .

This is one of the many public service functions Amateurs provide including communications support during floods and public events like the Manitoba Marathon. The value of Amateur Radio was recognized by the government who exempted the operation of Amateur Radio equipment from the new restrictions on using electronic devices while driving.

To help increase the numbers of hams available for weather spotting and other emergency support the Winnipeg Amateur Radio Club (WARC) is running a course this fall through Red River College's

Continuing Education division to prepare interested individuals to pass the Industry Canada exam and become licensed operators. More information can be found at <http://www.mts.net/~warc/> and <http://www.winnipegares.ca/>

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