

Welcome from the Chairman of WRTC2014

Welcome to all competitors, referees, visitors, volunteers, and *NCJ* readers involved with WRTC2014! It is a pleasure to welcome you to this prestigious event. We hope that everyone has an unforgettable experience.

When we began the preparation for WRTC2014 back in September 2010, we had three goals. First, we wanted to insure a fair competition. This began with a completely open and transparent team selection process. The number of teams was determined by historic WRTC geographic allocations, current contest activity, and a desire to have all US call areas represented. When the final list was completed, we had 59 teams, which seemed like an auspicious number. Dan Street, K1TO, painstakingly tracked the results of all entrants in 49 qualifying events and normalized each to the top score in each category in each selection region, including tracking all the individual operators at multiop stations.

The next element in creating a fair competition was to find 59 locations with equal RF-performance characteristics. The New England region is characterized by hills and valleys, and the only level terrain is either densely populated or very far from the tourist locations. Nonetheless, Tom Frenaye, K1KI, managed to find 16 suitable properties in Eastern Massachusetts, each capable of accommodating multiple WRTC2014 station sites. Rich Assarabowski, K1CC, created *HFTA* terrain analysis models for each location and a matrix to evaluate each station's HF predicted propagation performance in the key directions. Two-thirds of the station sites were tested in 2012 and 2013, with data collected from the Reverse Beacon Network to determine if the stations had reasonably equal signals in Europe and across North America. It was comforting to find how closely the *HFTA* modeling correlated to the RBN data. One site was eliminated as a result — the model predicted a stronger signal to Europe than other sites, and the RBN data confirmed the prediction.

We are also building six spare sites, just in case some sites experience noise or other problems. All sites will be equipped with the official WRTC2014 antenna system organized by Mark Pride, K1RX,

consisting of the Cycle 24 TX38 triband Yagi and inverted V dipoles for 40 and 80 meters. Contest scoring and log-checking of the contest will be performed by a team led by Larry "Tree" Tyree, N6TR, using rules developed by Andy Blank, N2NT.

The second goal of WRTC2014 is to create an environment for making and renewing friendships among radio amateurs from around the world. The organizers of the first WRTC (Seattle, 1990) were somewhat surprised to find that social side of the event was as important as the competition. Participants in past WRTCs often remember the tours, meals, and late night gab sessions as much or more than they remember the actual contest. WRTC has become a place where hams with a specific interest in radiosport get the chance to meet in person, often after decades of short QSOs several times per year. The Hospitality Committee, headed by John Dorr, K1AR, has done a terrific job organizing group tours and activities for the WRTC Week.

The Boston area is home to numerous sites of historic importance in American history, including one of the earliest colonial settlements and the site where the American Revolution began. It is also the home to many radio/communication-related milestones. The telephone was invented here. The first commercial transatlantic wireless station was here. The first wireless voice transmission originated here. Samuel F. B. Morse was born here. And in 1914 Hiram Percy Maxim and Clarence Tuska founded the ARRL in nearby Hartford, Connecticut. Countless innovations in computers, medicine, and software have taken place in the region.

Boston is also home to some of the world's most highly-regarded colleges and universities, including Harvard, MIT, Boston University and many more. And of course, Boston is home to successful sports teams, including the legendary Celtics (basketball), Bruins (ice hockey), Patriots (football), and the World Champion Red Sox (baseball).

The New England region is one of the most beautiful in the world. The coastline varies from the sandy beaches of Cape Cod to the lighthouse-dotted rocky shoreline of Maine. Inland, the mountains of New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont offer

wonderful opportunities for camping and hiking adventures. We hope each of you find time to enjoy the area.

The third goal of WRTC2014 is to generate publicity for ham radio in the New England region and around the world, with a focus on the sport element of the hobby. Talking to the media has been interesting. When we mention "ham radio" to most of them, the typical reaction is, "Do people still do that?" Some are aware of the public service and emergency communication capabilities that hams often provide, but none are aware that there is a sport side. When we describe radiosport as being like a massive online computer game with tens of thousands of simultaneous participants, it is an eye opener.

Hams who are not involved onsite can track the progress of their favorite teams using the online real-time scoreboard developed by Dave Pascoe, KM3T, and Bob Raymond, WA1Z. Of course, WRTC is unique among sporting events in that every ham in the world has a chance to get on the field and join the game by working the competing teams. Everyone who works the teams becomes a valued part of the event.

The success of WRTC2014 will be the result of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, including many local amateurs who are not active contesters but who have sensed a unique opportunity to be involved in a once-in-a-lifetime event. Tom, K1KI, and Mark, K1RX, have worked tirelessly to organize the volunteers who will install 65 complete sites in less than 72 hours. Many other volunteers will help with transportation, publicity, photography, video, and many more tasks that go on behind the scenes.

A project this large could not happen without careful controls around finances and expenses. Dick Green, WC1M, kept the books and served as a careful steward over the money provided by donations and sponsors. We owe a great appreciation for the support of individuals, radio clubs, foundations, and equipment suppliers that have made WRTC2014 possible.

On behalf of all of us on the WRTC2014 Organizing Committee, a sincere welcome to all competitors, referees, volunteers, and visitors. We wish you all an exciting competition and memories that last forever.