



2007 SKYWARN™ Recognition Day



SKYWARN™ Recognition Day (SRD) was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service (NWS) and the American Radio Relay League. It celebrates the contributions that volunteer SKYWARN™ radio operators make to the NWS, and ultimately, to the general public during significant weather events.

Along with over 100 NWS offices across the country, 2007 SRD was celebrated at the NWS Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Ruskin, FL on Friday and Saturday, 1-2 December, 2007. The event was a huge success, as numerous SKYWARN™ volunteers and amateur radio operators visited the Ruskin WFO for tours and to help operate the amateur radio station, WX4TOR.

In addition to offering tours to local SKYWARN™ volunteers, one of the main components of SRD featured communications with amateur radio operators all over the world. Their goal was to try and contact as many NWS stations as possible. The Ruskin WFO logged 206 contacts and reached radio operators as close as right next door to as far away as the country of Estonia.

SKYWARN™ is a program consisting of trained weather spotters who provide reports of severe and hazardous weather to local NWS offices. SKYWARN™ spotter reports provide vital "ground truth" to the NWS. The reports serve the NWS mission of protecting life and property by assisting forecasters in present and future warning decisions, confirming hazardous weather detected by radar, and providing verification information which can be used for future research efforts. Any adult (18 years or older) may become a spotter, and can take NWS sponsored training to become a certified SKYWARN™ spotter. For more information about SKYWARN™, please visit our SKYWARN™ Web Page.

Most spotter reports are phoned into the NWS. However, many spotters are also amateur radio operators and use their wireless communication equipment to report severe weather to the NWS. You can learn more about amateur radio by visiting the American Radio Relay League's web site at <http://www.arrl.org>.

This year's SRD would not have been possible without the help of many volunteers, especially Ken Young, K1KEY, who put in a lot of time organizing the event schedule, creating special QSL cards, helping with the set up and take down of the equipment, and providing much of his own radio equipment for the WFO to use for this event. On top of that, he even stayed at the Ruskin WFO for the full 24 hours to operate the WX4TOR station!

The Ruskin WFO also thanks Kelsey Young, K1KLC, Paul Toth, NA4AR, Jason Triolo, KD4ACG, Bill Barron, W1WAB, T.J Avalon, AJ4CY, and Geoff Avalon, KJ4AFV for their help in operating the WX4TOR station and providing numerous contacts during this year's SRD. Finally, a big thanks goes out to WFO Ruskin Electronics Technician Dave Chaffin, and Information Technology Officer Tony Harper, for their technical and logistical help.

by Nick Petro, TBW Amateur Radio Focal Point and Trustee of WX4TOR

The following photographs were taken at the Ruskin WFO during the 2007 SKYWARN™ Recognition Day:



Ken Young, K1KEY (top left) making contacts via Echolink. Paul Toth, NA4AR (bottom middle) and Jason Triolo, KD4ACG (top right) both working HF bands



Ken Young, K1KEY (top left) making contacts via Echolink. Paul Toth, NA4AR (bottom middle) and Jason Triolo, KD4ACG (top right) both working HF bands.



Left to right: Geoff Avalon, KJ4AFV, making contacts via Echolink and Ken Young, K1KEY working HF bands.



Left to right: Nick Petro (WX3H and TBW Forecaster) showing Ryan Sharp (TBW forecaster) how to use HF ham radio gear. Kelsey Young, K1KLC (Ken Young's daughter) working the HF bands.



Numerous extra antennas were brought in and set up outside the WFO for this year's SRD. Antenna shown here is a Buddipole HF portable vertical antenna. Thanks to Ken Young, K1KEY, for providing the extra equipment

and antennas.