

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information

Allen Pitts

ARRL

(P) 860.594.0328

(C) 860.798.9478

apitts@arrl.org

HAM RADIO OPERATORS TO RECYCLE EMERGENCY SKILLS AT THE BANK OF AMERICA CHICAGO MARATHON

Amateur Radio Emergency Service volunteers enjoy day at the races

CHICAGO (Oct. 6, 2009) – ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio® today announced that volunteers from ARRL's Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) program and other local Amateur Radio groups will be aiding race officials over the Bank of America Chicago Marathon's course on Sunday, October 11. From both fixed and roving locations the teams of Amateur Radio operators (often called "hams") will deploy a wireless communication network to pass information as the race unfolds. The hams will be using many of the same skills that they used in providing emergency communications following Hurricanes Katrina and Ike, 9-11 and many other disasters to enhance the communication structure that supports the Chicago Marathon.

According to the ARRL's Allen Pitts, FCC callsign W1AGP, Amateur Radio operators pride themselves in being able to quickly deploy voice and digital communications networks when other systems are damaged or overloaded. By aiding the Bank of America Chicago Marathon, an event that draws 45,000 runners and 1.5 million spectators to 26.2 miles of Chicago city streets, they have a unique opportunity to practice these skills in a major setting while also providing the community a real service. As Pitts stated, "The Chicago Marathon is unlike any other initiative we support in that it is a well-organized event planned many months in advance. This is one deployment we really look forward to."

While spectators focus on the racing participants, an army of support volunteers work behind the scenes providing logistical, medical, information and other critical services which are needed for an event as large as the Bank of America Chicago Marathon. From planning and preparations to activities on the course during race day, and even to helping spectators make their way home, these unseen and often unsung volunteers are the key to making the day go smoothly. Maintaining good communications is a critical part of the effort.

"The fastest way to turn a small incident into a disaster is to lose communications," said Pitts. "By enhancing their communication system with the support of our ham operators, the Chicago Marathon is continuing to set the bar in contingency planning and runner safety."

###

About ARRL

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) is the national membership association for Amateur Radio operators. The League represents Amateur Radio interests to regulatory bodies, provides technical advice and assistance to Amateur Radio enthusiasts and supports a number of educational programs throughout the country. ARRL is a non-profit organization with approximately 160,000 members.

About ARES

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is a program of the ARRL. Amateur Radio operators set up and operate organized communication networks locally for governmental and emergency officials, as well as non-commercial communication for private citizens affected by disasters. Amateur Radio operators are most likely to be active after disasters that damage regular lines of communications due to power outages and destruction of telephone, cellular and other infrastructure-dependent systems. Many national organizations have formal agreements with ARES including:

- Department of Homeland Security -- Citizen Corps
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- National Communications System
- Salvation Army
- National Weather Service
- Association of Public Safety Communications Officials

About the Bank of America Chicago Marathon

In its 32nd year and a member of the World Marathon Majors, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon annually attracts 45,000 runners including a world class elite field and 1.5 million spectators. As a result of its national and international draw, the iconic race assists in raising \$10 million for a variety of charitable causes while generating an estimated \$143 million economic impact to its host city. The 2009 race will begin at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 11. For more information on the event, visit www.chicagomarathon.com.