

## Press Release

6 December 2009

In amateur radio lore towers are to best climbed in the worst weather. In that vein, last Saturday's climb was near perfect. Six members of the Atikokan Amateur Radio Club braved -20 degree weather to move antennas at the repeater site.

Warren Paulson climbed while Vic Prokopchuk, George Kora, Paul Johnson, Jason Johnson and Margaret Sumerleigh helped as ground crew (mostly retrieving gloves that Paulson dropped off the tower). The Atikokan repeater is co-located with the Atikokan Weatheradio station, which is maintained for the Town by the club. The repeater provides radio coverage over a fifty kilometre radius, allowing radio amateurs to stay in contact. The repeater is also linked to other repeaters in the region via the Internet, providing easy access to amateurs in Dryden, Fort Frances, Kenora, Sioux Lookout, Sioux Narrows and Thunder Bay.

The purpose of the tower work this weekend was two-fold: remove an unused antenna for use at Town Hall, and re-direct a beam antenna to Upsala. The Upsala antenna will be used to connect this repeater to another repeater located in that community. This will provide an improved emergency communications link for radio amateurs travelling east. Funding for this link project was provided through a Local Initiatives Grant provided by the AEDC.

The antenna being moved to Town Hall is part of an emergency amateur radio station setup there. This is a joint project between the club and the Atikokan Fire Department. This radio station is capable of providing local, regional and province-wide communications during emergencies. It can be used to transmit voice, e-mail and global position information.

Amateur radio is an interesting hobby and a vital communications tool. The club will be holding a Basic Licence course early in the new year. If you are interested or would like more information on the course, contact Warren Paulson (597-6989) or Vic Prokopchuk (597-6201).