

## **Dakota Division 2023 Annual Report to the ARRL Board of Directors**

### **Hamfests:**

During 2023 there were 23 hamfests in the division with 21 of them being an ARRL sanctioned hamfest. ARRL representation was at all 21 of the ARRL sanctioned events, being the Section Manager, Vice Director, or Director. While we saw one group discontinue their hamfest, a new group successfully started a new hamfest. I attended 14 events while Vice Director Lynn Nelson attended 5 events.

Another new hamfest this year was the SVARC Annual Hamfest in Minot, ND. This replaces the recently discontinued International Peace Gardens hamfest held at the International Peace Gardens on the border between North Dakota and Manitoba. Attendance drops started with the Covid shutdown and continued with related Covid border crossing issues. Then increased costs at the facility made it no longer feasible. Whereas the SVARC had a successful first year and was able to incorporate many aspects of the International Peace Garden Hamfest that people enjoyed. The SVARC hamfest will be back in 2024 also hosting the ARRL North Dakota Section Convention.

The highlight of the year was having three different groups to host ARRL State Conventions in their state. In the past we only had the one Division convention. The ARRL Minnesota State Convention was a brand-new event with excellent attendance in its first year out. The exciting thing about the event is 13 ARRL Affiliated Clubs joined together to put the event on. Their long-term goal is to bring the Dakota Division Convention to the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area, which is where many Dakota Division members live.

Looking ahead to 2024 we may have five ARRL Conventions, the division, 2 or 3 state, and 1 section. The ARRL Minnesota State Convention looks to expand on the full day of forums format that many enjoyed going from 4 education tracks to possibly 6 tracks.

### **Field Day:**

Continuing my quest to hit as many field days sites as possible in a weekend, I ventured to northeast Minnesota. I started in Ely, MN with the Vermillion Range ARC and headed south from there. The area travelled was northeast and central Minnesota finishing in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. At the end of the weekend 12 field day sites were visited and about 1100 miles was traveled.

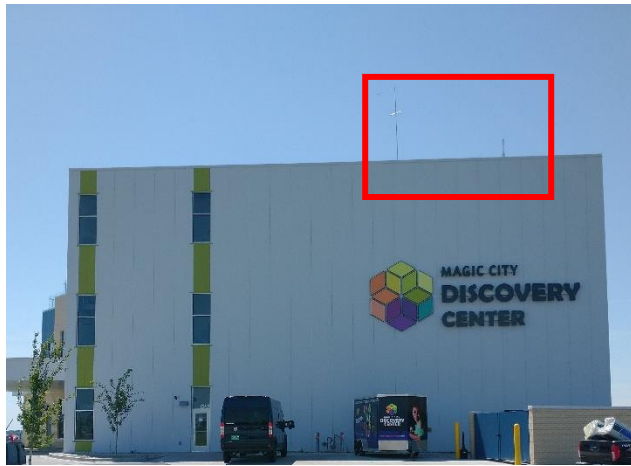
This was the third year I've done the field day site visits. I've been very pleased with the response from the clubs and members because of these visits. The visits will continue in 2024. Areas I haven't visited are the western Dakotas and southwest Minnesota. As the date gets closer, I'll work to see if I can visit sites in these areas that balances mileage and number of sites visited.

### **Clubs:**

This past saw club get more engaged with their members having programs that are of interest to their members. As a result, the number of presentations I made at clubs was roughly one-half of the previous year, or 6. However, I was present at another 6 club meetings and not asked to do presentation. Most of these were via zoom.

Last year I reported on a group formed by presidents from clubs in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. This group had a successful year hosting their first hamfest and the ARRL Minnesota State Convention. The group is now working on getting incorporated in Minnesota which will be followed by getting to be an ARRL Affiliated Club. The Minnesota Section Manager Bill Mitchell AE0EE and I continue to meet with the group 2 or 3 times monthly as they work on developing their organization and hamfest. They are also working on details for the 2024 ARRL Minnesota State Convention.

In Minot, ND the Souris Valley ARC was chosen to install an amateur radio exhibit in the new Magic City Discovery Center [www.magiccitydiscoverycenter.com](http://www.magiccitydiscoverycenter.com) . The exhibit includes HF, VHF, and UHF equipment. They are set up for satellites and the ISS.



**The Magic City Discovery Center with Amateur Radio antennas on the roof**

**Division Newsletter:**

In April we started both a bi-monthly newsletter and a weekly Division Happenings newsletter. The bi-monthly newsletter didn't attract much readership as people had to click on a link to read it. However, the weekly Division Happenings newsletter is very popular due to its email format. The weekly newsletter focuses on what clubs are doing in the division the upcoming week. This includes special event stations, VE test sessions, hamfest and other things of general interest to division membership. We keep making minor changes in the newsletter based on feedback the members are providing me.

I'll finish with a comment I've received from a member in North Dakota:

"Keep in mind that not so long ago, the Dakota Division never bothered to put out a newsletter, nor did they make much use of email or social media. Since your tenure as Division Director, communication has vastly improved!" Mike KBORIA.

Respectfully Submitted

Bill Lippert  
ACOW  
Director Dakota Division

Lynn Nelson  
WOND  
Vice Director Dakota Division