

Advice for new or prospective Hams 7/26/06

Get yourself a scanner or 2 meter handheld radio. Find a local repeater serving your area (146.85 Mhz FM or 147.21 or 444.100 are good ones in the Twin Cities). Listen in. Find out what is going on in your area. Repeaters are listed in the ARRL Repeater Handbook - in Minnesota it's the Minnesota Repeater Council. Buy a copy of a license book "Now You're Talking" is a good one- there are others. Study up or take a class. Find a local volunteer (VEC) exam team (www.arrl.org or W5YI or other sources for that) . Once you have your license, please do not just rely on people you meet on local voice repeaters for your exposure to the hobby. Repeaters are privately owned, and may or not be hospitable to newcomers and only represent a subset (small) of the 11,000 licensed operators and amateur radio modes and frequencies in Minnesota as an example. HF is usually the best place to meet fun hams. Local clubs can be as well- choose carefully based on your interests and how you like the folks. Hamfests are a great place to meet other hams and to socialize. The www.arrl.org website has lists of clubs, hamfests, etc.