

February 2019 Public Information Coordinator's Message:

It Only Takes 30 Seconds...

Every one of us, no matter who we are or what position we hold, (EC, AEC, PIO, SM, DEC, club member, etc.) should have a memorized 30-second “elevator speech” ready to offer when someone asks us about Amateur Radio.

Most of us are extremely passionate about our great hobby, but when it comes to explaining that hobby in a short concise capsule... most of us fail. We can give our location, signal report, grid square, Lat/Lon, model of radio, type of antenna, cat's name, and all 16 grandkids names in 30 seconds, but ask us what ham radio is, and we draw a blank; or worse, we ramble on for 15 minutes about the ionosphere, sun spots, moon bounce and how poor propagation has been for the last 3 years. (Well some exaggeration there, but you get the idea).

When someone asks you what Ham Radio is, or why you have all those antennas on your house or vehicle, you need to have a 30-60 second concise answer that stirs interest – sort of a sales pitch about your hobby. You need the response to be memorized so that it comes to you immediately, but at the same time, you need the answer to be natural so that it is YOUR response and does not sound memorized.

Some things that you might want to include are:

- Why **you** got involved in Ham Radio,
- What ‘Ham Radio’ is,
- Who your organization is – Amateur Radio Club, ARES, RACES, etc.,
- Agencies that your club or organization supports (EOC, Police Department, Fire Department).

Again, the key is to make this “speech” sound like it is naturally you...not rehearsed, not mechanical, but natural.

Your speech may be something like this:



“I became interested in ham radio as a kid. One day, the car with my best friend, his dad used his ham radio to make a phone call to my mom to let her know that we’d be late. I was intrigued at the ability to do this, but it was not until 2011 that I decided that getting my ham radio license would help me serve the public in a very unique way. Ham radio allows me to contact others, both locally and around the world, when all other methods of communication (internet, cell phones, land phones, etc.) have failed. Our Amateur Radio Emergency Service organization has supported our county in events such as Hurricane Matthew and Irma when storms knocked out land and cell phone services.”

Of course, your speech will be different and may include different details. I have a couple different “speeches” that I used based on the person I am talking to and how they phrase their question. I have these speeches nearly memorized but work to keep them sounding totally “me.”

When composing your speech, remember that it takes practice. Write your speech down and rehearse it – over and over and over and...well, until it feels natural to you. Practice it in front of a mirror so that you can see yourself giving the speech. Learn what needs to stay in the speech and what needs to go. Learn what you can add on the fly if the conversation or situation will allow, but always keep your speech between 30 and 60 seconds.

What is an “Elevator Speech?”

An elevator speech is a short pitch or speech that is used to generate interest in what your organization is and does. An affective elevator speech should last no longer than a typical elevator ride of 30 seconds, hence the name. It should be interesting, memorable, and succinct. It also needs to explain what makes your organization unique.

What is your elevator speech? Feel free to type it out and send it me (kk4ecr@gmail.com). I'd be interested to see what others have put together for their "elevator speech."

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR

Northern Florida Section Public Information Coordinator (PIC)