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Antenna Donation Aids Emergency Communications

By Cathy Dausman



LARIG volunteers Dan Spisak, left, and Al Archangel install a multi-purpose antenna at 335 Rheem Blvd. Photo Cathy Dausman

Six antennas now sit atop Moraga's new Town Council Chambers at 335 Rheem Boulevard. The antennas and the two-way radios they are connected with link town employees or emergency communicators to police, public works and amateur radio operators across Lamorinda and throughout northern California. Moraga Rotary donated approximately \$1,700 a few years ago to purchase one of the antennas for Emergency Operations Center use, according to Rotarian Gary Irwin.

The radio setup allows the town of Moraga to connect with amateur radio operators across California and even around the world in event of an emergency. The donated antenna originally sat on the town hall roof; its signal was fed into the town's earlier Emergency Operations site, which was a small storage room in the planning department. Its recent placement atop the town chamber building by Lamorinda Area Radio Interest Group volunteers finally gives the antenna a permanent place, Police Chief Robert Priebe said, adding that Rotary members have been very patient with the entire process, from the original installation, its removal and current installation.

In November, LARIG volunteers completed the installation of six new rooftop antennas on Moraga's town chamber building. Each antenna connects with a two-way radio inside the council chambers. The antennas will eventually be painted "sky grey" to minimize their visual impact. Priebe says the Rotary-donated radio and antenna, no longer waiting for a place to go, will become "a major communications tool for gathering and dispersing information in event of emergency when time is always of the essence."

Lafayette and Orinda have similar two-way radio systems and antennas in use as well. Orinda received a monetary donation from Orinda Rotary toward the purchase of an amateur radio to be used for emergency communications, said Rotary and LARIG member Gene Gottfried. Orinda's antennas are situated above Orinda City Hall. Lafayette public safety and amateur radio antennas are distributed atop the city office building, the public works building and atop the Lafayette Community Center, said Fred Lothrop, chair of Lafayette's Emergency Preparedness Commission.

Reach the reporter at: cathy.d@lamorindaweekly.com

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