

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 pm by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Program:

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, presented a report and slideshow on ACARA's participation in ARRL Field Day 2025. He and Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, had served as Field Day co-captains for this annual event.

Paul reported that ACARA ran in the Class 2F, "two transmitter, Emergency Operations Center", and fielded the free VHF/UHF station and the free "Get on the Air Station". The club operated using SSB, digital, CW, WinLink.

Paul reported that a proclamation was presented to ACARA by Athens Mayor Steve Patterson and that representatives from the Athens County EMA and Red Cross visited the operation.

Paul provided a Buddi Hex antenna which was placed atop the Athens County 911 Center's 50' mobile crank-up tower. Power for the stations was provided by the Appalachian Renewable Power trailer which has new batteries this year.

Paul mentioned a few problems that were noted during the operation, the most significant of which was locking up of logging PCs when a station would transmit. Paul suggested we'll need to investigate chokes and filters for next year's event.

Attendance

John Bowes, K3JJB (via Zoom)
Ben Brewster, KF8DES
Linda Clark, KF8DQV
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Jeff Finlay, KD4CKX
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV (via Zoom)
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Bob Riordan Sr., KM4CRF
Robert Riordan, KA4VNK
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Dave Shields, GMRS callsign WSCM554

Corrections/additions of Minutes

Copies of the May 2025 meeting minutes were distributed.

A motion to accept the May minutes as published was made by Robert Riordan, KA4VNK. The motion was seconded by Tony Peric, KE8VFA. The motion to accept the minutes as published passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, presented the most recent financial report, which included the Trunkfest financials.

Drew stated he will be making his annual overseas trip in the next few months. His travel period includes the renewal-date for the club's Certificates of Deposit. Drew will arrange renewal of the CDs prior to his departure. Drew also reported there was a mix up in the deposit of the Trunkfest funds at Hocking Valley bank. Drew will get this straightened out in next few days.

The club holds \$2,128.53 in unencumbered funds at Hocking Valley Bank and \$5,160.19 in unencumbered funds at Atomic Credit Union. The Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Fund at Hocking Valley Bank holds \$272.98.

A motion to accept the treasurers report as presented was made by Ben Brewster, KF8DES. The motion was seconded by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. The motion to accept the treasurers report as presented passed without dissent.

The Treasurer's Report can be viewed online at https://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=37.

Old Business

VHF & UHF Repeaters

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that throughout much of July, what sounded like construction-site communications could be heard on the repeater. Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, had told Eric that he thinks these signals were due to intermod mixing, and suggests that the signals could have been Multi-Use Radio Service (MURS) in the 151 MHz or 154 MHz band. These signals have gone away.

On behalf of UHF Repeater Trustee Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, Eric reported that the repeater continues to operate as well as it has been.

GMRS Repeater

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club has received the signed Memorandum of Understanding from Meigs County EMA for the GMRS channel 20 repeater.

Eric reminded the membership that on April 18, the tallest of the three towers on the City of Athens Roosevelt tower site was severely damaged by a wind-event. As of the meeting date, the tower remains in place but is damaged and unusable. Because of the damage to the tower, ACARA had to postpone plans to install the club's channel 20 GMRS repeater to Roosevelt tower site.

Eric reported that Charles McClain, KE8YHE, had donated a communications rack for the repeater.

Eric reported that Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, and Ben Brewster, KF8DES, installed the club's channel 20 repeater at the Roosevelt site on September 11, installing the antenna on a short, temporary mast clamped to the chain link fence surrounding the pumphouse that houses the repeater itself.

Paul and Ben narrated a slide presentation showing the present state of the club's GMRS equipment at the Roosevelt tower site.

Rob Riordan, KA4VNK, commented that GMRS repeater with its temporary antenna can be in Coolville. Others reported that the repeater can also be heard in Meigs county and in Vienna, WV.

Old Business (continued)

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden WD8RIF reported that on June 10, Jane Patton of the Athens Red Cross gave permission for ACARA to proceed with the station cable pass-through project.

Eric reported that prior to Field Day, Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, arranged to install temporary PVC pass-throughs in the exterior wall of the Jim Cross Memorial Station.

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, reported that Stoncel Electric bored two large holes through the concrete block walls for the pass-throughs for feedlines, rotor cables, and emergency power. Paul lined these holes with PVC piping, and they were used in this configuration for ARRL Field Day.

Paul has received the copper-lined entry-panel box with installed lightning protectors and showed it at the meeting. This box will be mounted outside Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station, nested onto the existing feedline pass-through hole. Paul will install environmental, insect, and small-animal barriers on both feed-throughs.

Paul reported he will work work with Tony Stoncel to characterize the Red Cross building's grounding system. Currently, they think that the building sits on steel I-beams below the foundation that can be used for the station's ground.

Old Business (continued)

ACARA Nets

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA's weekly and monthly nets continue to do well except for the weekly System Fusion nets which have seen falling participation. He reminded members of the current net schedule:

- 2m FM Net, Mondays, 7pm, 145.15 MHz
- 70cm FM Net, Mondays, immediately following the 2m net, 442.100 MHz
- 10m SSB Ragchew Net, Tuesdays, 5pm, 28.375 MHz
- 6m AM Net, Sundays, 5pm, 50.4 MHz – since 2003
- 2m System Fusion Net, Thursdays, 5pm, 145.15 MHz
- 70cm System Fusion Net, Thursdays, immediately following the 2m System Fusion net, 442.100 MHz
- 2m FM Simplex Net, first Thursday, 7pm, 146.400 MHz

Eric extended thanks to all those serving as net-control and to all those participating in the club nets.

A brief discussion took place regarding the possibility of adding an ACARA GMRS net to the schedule now that the ACARA GMRS repeater is in place. Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, is willing to host such a net. A day and time will be identified.

Old Business (continued)

Social Event: ACARA June Picnic

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the annual ACARA June Picnic took place on Tuesday, June 17, at the Dairy Lane picnic shelter. Eric reported that attendance was excellent, with fourteen members and family in attendance.

Operating Event: ARRL Field Day

Event Date: Saturday-Sunday, June 28-29, 2025

Event website: <https://field-day.arrl.org/>

Event Report: <https://www.ac-ara.org/?p=2673>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, and Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, had served as Field Day co-captains and that the club ran in Class 2F using renewable power.

More details about the event we provided by Paul in his presentation at the start of the meeting.

Public Service Event: Athens Gravel Challenge

Event Date: July 26, 2025

Event Sponsor: Team Athens Cycling

Event URL: <https://www.ohiogravelgrinders.com/event-listings/2025/7/26/the-athens-gravel-challenge>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA had been planning to support the Athens Gravel Challenge on July 26 but, due to weather and trail conditions, the event was canceled by the organizer on July 24, two days prior to the date of the event.

Run Baileys

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club provided communications support to the Run Baileys event on August 9.

Ben Brewster, KF8DES, worked the event and reported that the event went well.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Summer Trunkfest

Event Date: August 30, 10am-2pm

Event Location: Athens Masonic Lodge

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the third annual Athens Trunkfest took place on August 30 at the Athens Masonic Lodge. The event was small but had good turn-out, both in terms of sellers and buyers. The club sold nearly one hundred raffle tickets for the \$50 cash prize and four ARRL gift certificates and made a net-profit of \$36. Jan Slattery, KD8PUJ, and her Eastern Star team made \$100 through their food concession; this money is to be donated to Athens Stand Down that serves homeless and struggling veterans.

The Trunkfest VE session served two candidates. Brenda McClanahan earned her Technician license. Beth Edwards, KF8ESH, upgraded to Amateur Extra. The VE team consisted of Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV; John McCutcheon, N8XWO; Andy McDonald, K8FO; Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ; and Brian Taylor, KZ8U. This was the first session for Kirk and Brian as a Volunteer Examiners.

Old Business (continued)

Operating Event: PCARS Ohio State Parks on the Air

Event date: Saturday, September 6, 2025

Event URL: <https://ospota.org/>

Event Report: <https://www.ac-ara.org/?p=2661>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA activated Strouds Run State Park at Bulldog Shelter for Ohio State Parks on the Air (OSPOTA). Eric presented a slideshow of images from the event.

Eric reported that the weather was a bit cool but, otherwise, very pleasant for the event. For various reasons, including an OU vs WVU home football game that took place at the same time, participation was lower than might have been hoped.

The operation took place under the ACARA's club callsign, W8UKE. The station consisted of ACARA's Elecraft K3 transceiver, WD8RIF's Elecraft KX3 transceiver, an 80/40m fan-dipole, and ACARA's Chameleon EMCOMM 3 end-fed antenna. The logging PC and generator were provided by Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, helped Eric erect the mast and 80/40m fan-dipole before he had to leave.

Several club members (listed alphabetically) participated in the operation. Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, made two SSB QSOs. John McCutcheon, N8XWO, made eleven SSB QSOs. Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, made two SSB QSOs and forty-five CW QSOs. Len Tough, W8VQ, made seventeen CW QSOs.

The 5pm potluck was attended by several members and guests: Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ; John McCutcheon, N8XWO; Eric McFadden, WD8RIF; Miles McFadden, KD8KNC; Vickie McFadden, KC8MAJ; Heidi Tough; and Len Tough, W8VQ.

Eric submitted the required documentation to OSPOTA. Carl Denbow, N8VZ, submitted the log to Parks on the Air (POTA) so that ACARA as a club (W8UKE), Eric McFadden, and Len Tough all received credit for valid POTA activations of Strouds Run State Park.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Ohio Mountain Bike Championship Series Race

Event Date: September 7, 2025

Event URL: <https://www.ombc.net/race-to-the-hills>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA provided communications support to the Ohio Mountain Bike Championship Series race at Lake Hope on September 7. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, served as net-control. Andy McDonald, K8FO, covered Four Points Crossing. Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, covered Grouse Point Trailhead. Ben Brewster, KF8DES, and Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, set up and configured the Athens Bicycle Club's new portable GMRS repeater and worked the trails bicycle-mobile.

Upcoming Public Service Event: Baileys Dirt Fondo / Funduro

Event Date: Saturday, September 27, 2025

Event URL: <https://baileystrailsystem.org/baileys-dirt-fondo/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA will support the Baileys Dirt Fondo / Funduro on Saturday, September 27.

Because this event falls on the same date as Blue Blazes Festival, which the club has also committed to support, Eric asked Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, if the Athens Bicycle Club could take over communications support using GMRS and the bicycle club's portable GMRS repeater. Paul replied that the bicycle club probably couldn't provide communications due to lack of operators.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has sent emails asking for volunteers to work this event.

Upcoming Public Service Event: Blue Blazes Festival

Event Date: Saturday, September 27, 2025

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA will be supporting the Blue Blazes Festival on Saturday, September 27. The course is now out-and-back, and will require a net-control station plus two other operators

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has sent emails asking for volunteers to work this event.

New Business

Officer Nominations

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that September is the month in which the club takes nominations for club officers to serve the following year, with ballots to be distributed in time for a count at the October meeting.

Current officers:

President: Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Vice-President: Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Treasurer / Membership Chairman: Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Secretary: Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Newsletter Editor / Webmaster: Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Repeater Trustee: Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Packet Node Trustee: Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ

Eric reported that current Secretary, Tony Peric, KE8VFA, will not accept a nomination for another term as secretary.

Having already spoken with her, Eric nominated Linda Clark, KF8DQV, for Secretary.

Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, nominated the existing slate of officers except for the current Secretary.

Eric stated that he would send an email to all members asking for additional nominations, and that he would generate a Qualtrics survey to distribute to members to serve as an electronic ballot. Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, will mail paper ballots to those members who don't use email.

A comment was made suggesting that the position, "GMRS Repeater Trustee", should be added to the list of officers. Paul Schulz, WD8SUV, said he would consider such a position. It was pointed out his long career as an Athens City Firefighter had gained the respect and trust of city leaders. This has allowed the club access to city properties which are secured and usually not accessible to other organizations. Ben Brewster, KF8DES, also expressed interest in the position.

New Business (continued)

Upcoming Public Service Event: Bobcat Trail Marathon and Half Marathon
Event Sponsor: Western Reserve Racing / Joe Jurczyk
Event Date: Saturday, November 8, 2025
Event URL: <https://www.westernreserveracing.com/races/bobcat-trail-marathon-half-marathon/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club will be providing communications support to the Bobcat Trail Marathon and Half Marathon on November 8. He added that communications will be conducted on two-meter simplex and, given the size of the event and the many trails making up the two courses, many operators will be needed.

Watch for emails with more information from Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, as the date of the event approaches.

Upcoming Operating Event: ARRL Field Day 2026
Event Date: Saturday-Sunday, June 27-28, 2026
Event website: <https://field-day.arrl.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, suggested that it is not too soon to begin planning for ARRL Field Day 2026. Eric said he will be out of state on Field Day weekend for a family function, and asked Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, if he could again serve as Field Day Captain. Paul responded that he might be in Wisconsin for Field Day 2026, adding that his brothers have made the long trip from Wisconsin to Athens for several ACARA Field Day operations without hesitation.

Paul said more help is needed, whoever serves as Field Day Captain, and such help is always appreciated, adding that for 2026, the club might consider returning to the one-transmitter class, without a GOTA station, instead of running in the two-transmitter class.

Paul reminded the membership that the HF antennas currently installed at Athens Red need to be evaluated and repaired or replaced, suggesting the club might want to consider replacing the current roof-mounted Hustler BTV vertical with a multiband 1/2-wave HF vertical. This should be done well before Field Day in June.

New Business (continued)

Upcoming Social Event: ACARA Annual Holiday Dinner

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that the club annually holds a holiday dinner at a local restaurant in December in place of the monthly meeting and asked if Tuesday, December 16 would work as the date. The consensus was that the 16th would be fine. Eric then asked for suggestions for a venue. No suggestions were given, but one member commented that Applebees, the venue used the past few years, works well except that seating arrangement limitations hinder broad conversation.

Upcoming Operating Event: Winter Field Day
Event Date: Saturday-Sunday, January 24-25, 2026
Event URL: <https://winterfieldday.org/>

Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, reminded the membership that Winter Field Day Association's "Winter Field Day" will be held in January and asked if the club plans to participate, suggesting that it might be fun to do a true outdoor operation.

Discussion ensued and the consensus was that the club will participate in Winter Field Day, but inside, at the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station at the Athens Red Cross.

Planning will continue at upcoming meetings.

Following a motion by Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, and a second by Tony Peric, KE8VFA, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.