

County Hunter News OnLine

July 2025
Volume 21 Issue 7

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in ham radio county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation. We also cover some park chasing activities these days. Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

The County Hunter News will provide you with interesting, thought provoking articles, articles of county hunting history, or about county hunters or events, ham radio or electronics history, general ham radio interest, and provide news of upcoming operating events.

We hope you will enjoy the County Hunter News. Feel free to forward, or provide links. Permission is given for copying or quoting in part or all provided credit is given to the CHNews and to the author of article.

CW County Hunter Frequencies are 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. There is SSB activity now occasionally on 7188, 14336., 18136, 21336, 28336 . The CW folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB . (21.336 and 28.336)

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at ch.W6RK.com

For information on county hunting, check out the following resources:

The USACA award was sponsored by CQ Magazine, which unfortunately has gone the way of the dinosaurs. However, like other CQ Awards, they are still available. CQ awards require confirmation of all claimed contacts.

Rules and information are here:

<http://countyhunter.com/cq.htm>

MARAC sponsors the US Counties Award which can be earned in increments of 500 counties. The rules for this award are at:

<http://marac.org/documents/usa-ca-rules.pdf>

This award requires log data only to earn.

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

<http://countyhunter.com/whatis.htm>

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can find information on these awards and the rules at:

<http://marac.org/awards.pdf>

There is a lot more information at www.countyhunter.com . Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at www.CHNewsonline.com

De N4CD, Bob Voss, Editor (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

1) Sunspots – Still have them. . Solar activity continues at a high level. 1 Conditions good on 15 at times but not there at all at times. Lots less QSOs being made. Lots of solar storms and geomagnetic disturbances.

At the beginning of June, K index hit 6+ and stayed there for several days. Horrible conditions on HF with 'poor' ratings all bands. Up and down next ten days. 15M very quiet. Almost no spots on POTA for CW or SSB. Some FT-8.

Didn't help the situation. Around the 13th, the following showed up:

Solar-Terrestrial Data - click to add to web site				
13 Jun 2025 1924 GMT	Condition	K-In	A-In	Calculated Conditions
SFI:142 SN: 134	Quiet	0-2	0-7	Band Day Night
A-Index:33	Unsettled	3	8-15	80n-40n: Poor Poor
K-Index:6 / Plntry	Active	4	16-29	30n-20n: Poor Poor
X-Ray:C2.2	Minor storm	5	30-49	17n-15n: Poor Poor
304A:126.1 @ SEM	Major storm	6	50-99	12n-10n: Poor Poor
	Severe storm	7-9	>100	Sig Noise Lvl: S6-S9
SFI>180 A<8 K<3=E-W open SFI>180 A<8 K>3=N-S open SFI>250 A>30 K>3=Aurora				
http://www.n0nbh.com - Copyright Paul L Herrman 2024				

Arrrg! A=33, K=6. Major Geomagnetic storm due to CME from sun. Not a day to be running counties or Parks, but some contacts will be made. Even worse if you are out in the 'west' over the Rockies, or up in MT, ID. Good luck in you picked this day to show up in AK or HI.

At sunspot peak, we are seeing lots of 'solar activity'.

Park spots on 10 and 15 have declined dramatically. There are very few on 15 and few on 10M. Some FT-8 activity remains.

2) **QSO Party Season** is over with two to go in June – then a big lull till end of July when AL QP occurs. Then another month till end of August.

3) **Double Diamond** – Mobiles out and running for Double Diamond counties. They need contacts on 2 bands to reach 500 counties. Otherwise a single contact with a Mobile Diamond holder will suffice. Help them out.

4) **Hawaii** - KB6UF might be headed to HI to finish up running all 3077 counties in June. Stay tuned. Kalawao HI – who needs it? In June, he's off to Maine for annual trip there. And back.

MARAC Counties Contest 2025

MARAC 2025 United States Counties QSO Party
Sponsored by Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club

from <http://www.marac.org/contests/contestrules.htm>

Dates/Times:

00:00Z July 26, 2025 to 23:59Z July 27, 2025

Objective:

To establish radio contact with as many U.S. Counties as possible in all 50 U.S. states with the emphasis on maximum scoring of mobile entries.

Contacts are good towards the various MARAC awards including the initial “Worked All Counties Award.”

Modes and Categories:

Eligible Modes: CW and Phone. See digital modes for permitted contacts.

All logs submitted shall be for Single Operators.

Multiple operators can participate from one station, but each operator submits an individual entry.

Fixed Categories:

CW/Digital - May be Home or Portable

Phone - May be Home or Portable

Mixed - CW/Digital and Phone Fixed - May be Home or Portable

If a portable station operates from more than one fixed location in more than one county, multiple logs may be submitted.

Portable stations are required to package equipment or stow antennas for travel.

Portable stations shall be set-up less than 3 days before the QSO party starts, and removed within 5 days of the end of the QSO party

USA Mobile:

CW/Digital - Single Operator Mobile

Phone - Single Operator Mobile

Mixed - CW/Digital and Phone Mobile

DX:

Mixed CW/Phone Overall Single Operator.

A qualified DX exchange shall be between USA and the DX station. No DX-to-DX contacts are allowed.

Contest Exchanges:

USA stations send RS(T), State and County abbreviation. All logs shall indicate the proper abbreviations for scoring.

Hawaii stations use state/county. Alaskan stations use Judicial Districts 1 through 4.

DX stations shall send RS(T) and “DX” for their exchange, and must indicate USA state/county abbreviations worked in their received log exchange.

A list of recognized State/County abbreviations are available in either PDF or DOC format:

CountyAbbrev-V4.PDF

<http://marac.org/contests/files/CountyAbbrev-V4.pdf>

CountyAbbrev-V4.DOC - Malware detector flagged this site.

Thanks to Larry, W0QE for Creating the original lists.

Hawaii stations use state/county, and Alaskan stations use Judicial Districts 1 through 4.

Operational Guidelines:

Fixed - One individual performs all radio operating and logging functions from a single location as defined by the ARRL Contest Guidelines.

A few fixed stations' footprint straddle a county line and must select one of the counties to exchange for the duration of the QSO Party. See MARAC General Rules for details.

Mobile - A station which is either in motion, or capable of immediately being in motion. This includes transmitter, receiver, power source, antenna(s), and logging equipment. Mobile stations may be moving or, if safely stopped, be capable of drive-a-way without lowering antennas or loading equipment.

Mobile class entrants shall use "Mobile" or "/M" appended to the call sign. Drivers are allowed.

Digital Modes: - Only digital modes that allow full 2 way exchanges between both stations are allowed, such as FT-4 with proper setup.

FT-8 is NOT an allowable mode since a grid square cannot define the county of operation.

Allowable digital modes shall count as CW contacts for scoring and duplicate calculations.

Bands:

160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2m are used in this contest.

Phone qso's only in the Phone sub bands, CW/Digital qso's only in the CW/Digital sub bands.

No cross mode, cross band, repeater, or satellite qso's permitted.

Suggested Freq's:

CW 50khz up from bottom of band

Phone 1850, 3850, 7250, 14341, 21341, 28341, 50135, 144.200 or 146.550 (FM) are suggested.

Mobile windows: 5 khz down from the suggested freq on HF. If you are a fixed station, please keep these freqs clear for mobile operations.

Saturday's contest period overlaps RSGB IOTA Contest, but their rules prohibit operation above 14.300 Mhz on 20 Meters SSB.

Scoring:

1 point for U.S. Fixed, 2 Points for outside U.S., and 15 points for U.S. Mobile.

Multipliers:

Total of U. S. Counties worked once per mode, regardless of band.

A CW or Phone only station has a maximum of 3077 mults. A mixed mode station has a maximum of 6154 mults.

Spotting and Planning:

Mobile Operators are encouraged to post their plans for operation on the K3IMC WEBSITE Planned Trips page

During the QSO Party one will find most county hunters follow the "Mobile Spot Page" at CH.W6RK.com

When posting on W6RK, please include the entire county name and the state abbreviation as mobiles change counties, bands or modes

Examples: single county Houston, TX county lines Cook/Lake, IL or
Hitchcock, NE/Rawlins, KS

Miscellaneous:

Connecticut eliminated counties in favor of eight "Planning Districts." For 2025 use the old county lines as guides using maps, gps, or remaining signs to determine location.

Self-spotting as a fixed station is not allowed. Self-spotting as a mobile is permitted.

Drivers for Single Operator Mobile stations are permitted, provided they do not assist in any way with the contest on-air operations. Two people may transmit from a single vehicle and both shall enter individual logs.

County Line operations: As defined by MARAC, a stationary mobile may operate from one county line, and contacts with that mobile shall count as one qso, and 2 counties worked. Some part of the vehicle must be in both counties for the duration of the qso. Operation from more than a double county line is not allowed under MARAC General Rules. If a safe stopped position at a county line isn't possible, or if traffic is being slowed or blocked, operators should transmit from each county.

Independent city-a station must use only one county for use in the contest exchange, for the duration of the contest. If mobile in an independent city, the entrant may not use the adjoining county listed in the same independent city as a new county without actually moving to the new county.

Parks-On-The-Air and other award program stations are encouraged to participate. The basic information for MARAC must be exchanged to count towards MARAC scoring. The station shall enter the appropriate Mobile or Fixed and Portable class. Stations shall indicate in "Comments" if they are operating POTA, IOTA, US Islands, or other award programs. Each Portable log file shall be for a single county with WARC-band QSOs and mults removed from the log.

Awards:

Certificates will be awarded to top scoring entrant in each Category.
One certificate each for mobile, CW, SSB and Mixed.
One certificate each for fixed or portable CW, SSB and Mixed.
One certificate to the leading DX station.

Log submission:

Please note that the contest committee Will Not score your log. Un-scored logs will be

considered check logs only.

Please use this Summary Sheet and enclose a printed copy of it with your log, ONLY if you have a Mobile-Class paper log.

Fixed-Class logs and if possible, Mobile-Class logs, shall be emailed using Cabrillo (preferred), ADIF, pdf or MS Word/Excel. MARAC contest header is located [Here](#)

Logs must be received by September 1, 2025 to qualify for awards. Logs may be sent via email or USPS if using a Mobile paper log.

Email: Contest-Logs@marac.org

USPS: Lee Hallin - N7NU, 3413 Walton Ln., Eugene, OR 97408-4673

Please watch the contest section of the MARAC website for updated information. including Certificate sponsors, contest records, and planned trips for the contest. There are plenty of sponsorships available.

Please contact the Contest Coordinator (WA4JA) before the contest for details or for rule questions, Contest-Mgr@marac.org

On the Road with N4CD

The Road didn't go too far this month. A few things kept me near home.

Early June had the Ham Expo hamfest in Lewisville TX - 17 miles from the QTH. A remnant of the big, 8000 person size Hamfest we had for 20 years – but fell apart about 8 years ago when all the venues jacked up their rates to unrealistic levels. But any hamfest is better than none.

On Friday, I wandered over to the indoor area which opens at 1pm. The hamfest is held in a mostly abandoned massive mall - where the big department stores pulled out and now only 30 small retailers remain along with a small food court. 80% of the mall is deserted. It's about a 500 foot walk into the actual room where the event is held.

Inside there might be 40 tables of stuff for sale, and a local dealer – Ham Radio Outlet. Wandered around a bit, finding places to sit and rest. Well, did find some goodies. I've been looking for Hustler resonator. Hustler was part of MFJ – MFJ bought them. Then MFJ went out of business, and there was no more Hustler. Soon all the ham radio stores were out of stock on them. Your only options are screwdrivers and Hamsticks these days for mobile use. And legacy remains of W9UCW, K8CW and Hustler parts.

Well.....did find a goodie. 30M Hustler resonator – likely a few years old as price tag was \$28.95. I know they were up at near \$40 at the end. The seller had 2 of them. No other bands. Had dozens of Hamsticks. Those other band Hustlers would be long gone. Almost no one wants 30M other than a county hunter – hi hi. POTA folks are 90% SSB, 10% cw. The CW ops are usually using a 17 foot mast with tuner, or a wire thrown up in tree – usually half wave on 20M. Some tuners will match on 30M. Some might have a hamstick on mag mount. Almost no POTA folks use 30m resonators!

Negotiated a bit, and wound up with 2 brand new 30m Hustler resonators for \$30. Nice. New in plastic/cardboard. There were Heathkits and some newer type gear for sale but nothing that caught my attention. A few 'rig in a box' POTA type activator setups for sale. High prices. Left after about 90 minutes and headed home.

One seller had a bunch of resonators – but half missing parts – all missing the stingers, and hardware. He wanted to sell the whole bunch – a half dozen, different bands. Not interested. The 20M was broke. Most of these looked they'd been used for parts to fix others.

Saturday – The outdoor flea market was today. In Texas, things start early – 7AM. It's usually over by 2pm. Sometimes noon depending upon temps, but it can be 95 by 2pm and blazing sun. Wandered over there at 7:30. About 40 cars. Smaller than I expected, but it doesn't attract the crowds like the old hamfest did. Wandered around. Old boat anchors. Some newer stuff. Lots of near useless SWR meters. Some real nice Heathkit station equipment – the console, scope, etc for the SB line. Good prices, but who still collects them?

Did find some goodies. 20M low power resonator. 20M high power resonator. Bunch of stingers included with the package for the Hustler 24 inch mast (no mast). Figured they would work. If you used a short mast, instead of the 54 inch mast, you had to increase the stinger length on the resonators but 4-6 inches. \$20 for all of it. OK....found enough stuff to justify \$8 in tollroad fees, \$5 admission to hamfest, and \$3 in gas. Hi hi. Wish it was bigger hamfest. No forums – no rooms for it. That's a

problem since many want to hear updates for ARRL, Skywarn, DX info, POTA, etc.

So I'm set for resonators for a while. The Hustler 30M tend to get wet in rainy weather, slowly drift down in frequency. Back up when it dries out. They don't like being horizontal. W9UCW were better but that last one is along the road somewhere. Lost it. Not many W9UCW/K8CW ones show up at hamfests.

That's it for hamfest season here. Too hot for outdoor flea markets in July and August. The pavement sizzles and you can cook eggs easily on it with a frying pan.

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Only other activity was Wednesday trips to local park US-4423 to chase a few parks and work the CW Test 1900-2000 session.

Kentucky QSO Party

W4WKU County Expedition 67 cw 331 SSB

Operated POTA from US-10131, Gabbard Branch WMA in Butler County. Conditions were challenging, but still a fun contest. I'm already looking forward to the 2026 KY QSO Party!

N4NP MO Expedition 293 cw 231 ssb
Operator(s): KC3SJ N4NP

No comments

K4KCG Bonus Station 502 cw 721 SSB
Operator(s): KE4KY ND4Y

Thanks to all who participated in the Ky QSO Party this year. Conditions were challenging(especially on the ears) We hope everyone had a good time. K4KCG is the bonus station and we hope everyone had a chance to work us at least once. A big thanks

to our Kentucky ops who volunteer their time, sponsor a plaque, and/or get on the air and activate a County. County activation is the lifeline of the success of the Kentucky QSO Party.

73 to all and thanks again.

David ND4Y Glenn KE4KY

K1RO fixed NH 152 CW 35 ssb Mults76

What a great contest this turned out to be!

I was mostly interested in working new counties on CW but the weather was lousy here so I ended up spending the day chasing KY stations. 20 was great most of the day and into the evening, with workable signals from all areas in Kentucky. 40 wasn't productive for me until late afternoon, and even then signals were weak. 15 was spotty with some signals quite loud and others inaudible. Overall conditions were pretty good from here.

I was very pleased to work six new CW counties - N4TY in Fulton, KM4CH in Lee, Owsley, and Trimble, and special thanks to Juan, AC6ZM, who changed his route to include Russell and Adair. That just leaves Floyd and Knott...maybe next year.

Thanks to the organizers and the Kentucky stations for a fun day!

OM2VL fixed DX 121 cw 30 ssb Mults67

Thanks for the QSO and a nice mobile activity especially on 15m!
Condx was very bad and I had big problem to beat big USA wall on 20m. 15m was FB just 1 or 2 calls, but it closed here when DL3DXX still made QSOs, but later its opened again and it was open till the end of QP!
40m was also much more worst than in the previous years. I heard some few stations also on 80m, but no any QSO here

Most QSOs:

AC6ZM 36/12
N4TY 31/20

KM4CH 18/16
KM4FO 7/7
KY4KY 4/4

(6): K4KCG
(4): K4CUP, W5MX

73,Laci

DL3DXX fixed DL 105 ssb Mults54

Many thanks to all Kentucky stations for good activity. Special tks to all who came up to 15 meters because 20m was poor in Europe during the first 4-5 hours and lots of QRM from Field Day contest.

Propagation was strongly affected by solar activity. 10m empty. 20m weak signals during day time. So 15m was the band to be from Europe side. Around 18z 20m improved but 15m kept open.

Around 21z 20m closed to Kentucky while US stations from West and East coast were still loud. But 15m was still open.
Haven't that seen before- strange!

One hour later 20m was back to business up to the end. The last hour 40m opened but unfortunately most stations from Kentucky had already disappeared to lower frequencies.

Unbelievable to work N4GO at 2124z on ten meters for my only 10m QSO. The last 15m QSO was 2315z deep after local midnight.

hope to be back next year

73 Dietmar DL3DXX

KA6BIM fixed OR 71 cw 22 SSB Mults62

Conditions were fair here with 20 meters being the only usable band from Oregon to KY for most of the day. I did manage a few 15 mtr qso.s Thanks for the qso's and a bunch

of new counties. Dave KA6BIM

WN4AFP fixed SC 38 cw 10 SSB Mults37

This was a tough QP for me due to limited prop into KY. Sigs were weak here and I'm sure mine was too. 40m was my only hope for contacts. It was extremely noisy and difficult to make Qs. Late in the contest, we were plagued with severe thunderstorms in our area. Had to QRT early on Saturday. I would like to thank all of the mobile ops and especially those to help me pick up some new counties in KY, including KM4CH for Owsley and N4TY for Washington. Let's try this again next year. 73 Dave WN4AFP

AC6ZM mobile 350 CW 53 SSB ran 10 counties

This was my first run of the KYQP. It was a great QSO Party despite the heavy rains during the opening hours. I was derailed from my primary route from the down pour of rain and washed out roads so I decided to go West first instead of North toward Lexington. I managed to hit 10 Counties (planned 22 counties distributed over 3 alternate routes just in case road closures etc. showed up in real time). I worked the K4KCG Bonus station (11 times) on CW and SSB. One issue that surprised me was I didn't realize I had ventured so far West that I was in Central Time (LOL) which ended the contest for me sooner than expected. The 40 meter band opened up very nicely in the last 2 hours and a few more Ops were able to join the fun. Thanks to the Kentucky Contest Group for hosting the party. Thanks to W5MX (Bryan) for letting me AirBNB overnight after the contest at the N4SS Radio Ridge Contest Station in Livingston, KY.

Time on-air: 6:39 hrs

Drive time: 5:21 hrs

RECOMMENDATION: KYQP committee should consider extending the hours to allow the West Coast operators to participate in the low bands. Another option is to start the contest later in the afternoon similar to NAQP which is a good model to follow.

OM2VL 35

K1RO 26

DL3DXX 21
W5MX 13
K4KCG 11

73
AC6ZM
Juan

KM4CH mobile 428 cw

no comments

N4TY mobile 698 CW

What a great QSO Party! Thanks to everyone in KY for attending and for ALL y'all for participating. We made 2 wrong turns and missed 2 counties as a result, because no cell service means guessing where to turn. IC-7100, Scorpion 680, N1MM+. See you next year!

KM4FO mobile 322 CW

no comments

West Virginia QSO Party

This was a mess. ARRL contest corral and QST listed the dates as the 3rd weekend in June. It was held earlier in the month. The confusion likely hurt participation. However, there was lots of activity. Looks like most out of state folks snagged 20 or less counties, with one entry at 21 countess worked.

There are 55 counties in WV.

No comments from mobile ops. W4GO was mobile with no post on 3830 reflector.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

KN6TVC was mobile and reported 314 SSB QSO. No other comments. Not sure he was mobile or just portable in one county. Filed under mobile category.

N8II Fixed WV 297 cw 762 SSB

After the WVQP Jim,KN6VTC paid me a visit. Jim put in a huge amount of effort to get here and activate Tucker County with poorer results than both us of had hoped. Judging by his low 20M SSB totals despite using a hexbeam at 20 ft I am guessing that the nearby mountains at Davis limited his signal to the west. We had a nice visit showing him some of the Potomac River scenery here and then visiting Antietam National Battlefield. A volunteer gave us a detailed history of the battle at the visitor center where we spent most of our time. FYI 23,100 casualties in a single day! The heat index is now 108 F at 3 PM. Despite that he was stopping in Harpers Ferry NHP briefly where we had planned to go. It was a near perfect QP experience for me, very few times when it was a struggle to run stations.

On 40 CW at the 16Z start many quite distant stations made it into my log in very NE WV. I was called by FL, WI, IL, MN, MO, OK, and several KS stations all good copy here! That would have been impossible a year ago due to more absorption with high SFI. On to 20 CW at 1622Z then 20 SSB at 1641Z I had a very good start with 133 Q's.

I noticed definite Es short skip to the south and some to W1 and the west but nothing extremely close. At 1718Z I decided it was time to try 15 and 10. I had an instant but only 5 minute pile up on 15 CW with loud W5/W0 stations and even a call from QC. Many of the same ops followed me up to 10 CW and 10 SSB, VE2FK called on 10. Even with a 17 minute lunch break I made 89 Q's. At 1755Z 15 SSB was still open with Es again with no really short skip closest calls from MI and NS with lots of booming W0'S.

20 was still productive with some Es (CT) at 18Z. VO1GO worked on 20 asked for 15 SSB, weak but in log there. 20 was open well to W1. 15 CW was still hopping at 1924Z with a brief but high rate run, still Es to GA and W0. 40 SSB worked well at 2006Z but only a short while, then a dozen Q's on 40 CW. The skip zone on 40 was long, difficult to hear north central WV and closer.

W4GO/M in WV was even weak from KANawha quite a distance from me. I chased a few DX spots for mults while 20 was in the doldrums. At 21Z I kept up a good rate into NA on 20 then 40 SSB. After dinner at 2225Z was fairly slow, but I noticed loud EU's on 20 so had an EU run and chased a few EU mults. I feared it might be a slow evening, but just after 23Z I had a very steady stream of callers from NA on 20 SSB. 23Z rate was 122 and 00Z rate was 137 the highest of the day half 20 SSB half 40 SSB. By moving around 40 and 75/80 on both modes, I kept up a good rate until quitting at 0311Z. 75/80M was very noisy; I probably worked too hard on weak SSB signals with many repeats. Some ops on 75 had booming signals, many weak ones must have had poor antennas. Even KN6VTC with a low EFW on 75M was 20 db over S9. My 02Z hour was 120 Q's, half 40 CW half SSB, amazing after so many prior Q's. KD4S was QSO NR 1000 at 0239Z. I chased SV2 on 40 and FM4 on 20 SSB to break 100 mults.

20 SSB overall was amazing, could have broken 500 Q's but wanted to give the low bands a decent effort. I tried to work all of the WV ops I saw spotted to give them a mult. It looks like maybe 23-24 counties were active. My main goal was a high QSO total to compete in the State QSO Party Challenge. Average QSO rate was 104/hr, very pleased with that. I was called by 48 states missing ND and HI (caught only one SD right before quitting on 20M). I didn't try to chase any W or VE mults. I worked all of the lower tier Canadian mults except VY2 and VE5. Many thanks to all who answered my CQ's and for spotting me. The casual non-QP ops make the day on SSB in the WVQP. It was a quite while ago when I may have made more Q's on 10 and 15 than this year. Thanks to all and see you next year. 73, Jeff

K0TRL reported working 37 cw 35 SSB for Mults20

Mobile Activity in June

At the begriming of the month:

K3IMC was running counties in GA for several days. Dozens of them.

K8TE was running counties in TX

K4YT was running counties in VA.. (GPS lady took him to dead end on supposed through road. Google Maps better – but still can miss closed roads). Put out dozens

N9JF ran park in OH. Then one in PA as he headed east. NY, RI to ME.

There was the WV QSO Party – county hunter KM4FO was active mobile.

W0GXQ went on another trip with N0KV. Started in NM. Ran dozens there over several days. Then into southern CO counties.

KB6UF headed from LA to ME running counties along the way. Took long route, through MS, AL, WV. While there, ran all of ME,

NA8W put out counties and parks in OH

K4YT headed to MN. There for a week putting out counties.

N3MRA ran in AL.

AI5P ran a few in AR.

W4SIG popped up in ID.

Toward the end of the month, KB6UF headed to Nantucket. Then headed down through RI, Hit a few in PA, VA, NC, on his way back to LA Still on trip at end of reporting window.

End Date of mobile reporting 6-26

The 'Station Wagon' – Some History

The term "station wagon" has a rich history, evolving from early utility vehicles to become a popular family car. Here's some history from various web sources.

Here's a brief overview:

Origins and "Depot Hacks":

The term "station wagon" emerged in the 19th century, referring to horse-drawn carts used to transport passengers and luggage to and from railway stations. Of course, they were horse drawn. They would carry passengers and cargo, either open air or enclosed.

In the early automobile age, similar vehicles were used and were initially known as "depot hacks" (short for hackney carriage, a type of taxi), "carryalls," and "suburbans".

These early automobiles, like the Ford Model T Depot Hack introduced in 1910, were initially considered commercial vehicles.

Rise of the "Woody Wagons":

The earliest station wagons often featured wooden bodies, with wooden panels for the passenger compartments and benches for seating. These "woodie" wagons required considerable maintenance, including regular varnishing and bolt tightening.

The Stoughton Wagon Company was an early builder of wooden wagon bodies, fitting them onto Ford Model T chassis. This is the 1910 era. The Model T ended in the mid 1920s with the production of the Model A.

Transition to Steel Bodies and Popularity:

By the 1930s, station wagons began to evolve into more well-equipped and even luxury vehicles. The first all-steel station wagon was the 1935 Chevrolet Suburban.

However, woody wagons remained common until after World War II, when advancements in steel production made all-steel bodies more practical and affordable. However, even after 'steel bodies', some 'station wagons' had wood panel sidings, or accents, or even fake 'wood' sides or side trim.

The 1946 Willys Station Wagon was the first mass-produced steel-bodied station wagon.



1940s Pontiac wagon



Picture courtesy of
Greg Gjerdingen from Willmar, USA - 1950 Plymouth Woodie Station Wagon, CC

The 1950s and 1960s marked the "golden era" of the station wagon in the United States, fueled by the baby boom. During this time, station wagons were offered in various configurations, including two-door and four-door versions.



1996 Buick Roadmaster Limited Edition

They would seat 6 comfortably, and some had a 3 row of rear facing seats for up to 9 passengers.

My family in the 50s and 60s had two station wagons. They would haul 4 folks and a lot of camping gear. He'd head out from NJ on 3 or 4 week trips to the west.. If just a quick overnight, we could sleep 4 in the car- parents in rear, sister and brother on seats. Otherwise, the roof top carrier held the big tent for 4, all the camping gear for longer stays.

Back in the 50s and 60s, folks didn't worry about gas mileage. It was 13 to 15 mpg typically with big V8 engines. Oil changes every 3000 miles. Tires that lasted 20,000 miles. Exhaust systems that need to be replaced every 2 years along with shocks, generator brushes, fan belts. Six month 'tune ups' – points, plugs. Yep, those were the days. We had a lot of fun and tens of thousands of miles. A car typically lasted 5 to 7 years.

After the kids went off to college, my folks bought 'regular cars' after that.

Now for the rest of the story:

Decline in Popularity:

The 1973 oil crisis and rising fuel prices negatively impacted the popularity of larger, less fuel-efficient station wagons. Gas prices more than doubled. Odd/even rationing, stations running out of gas, limits on how much gas you could buy – maybe 8 gallons max. Gas guzzlers went 'out of style' quickly. Folks reconsidered their need for station wagons that got 12 mpg (or worse).

Also enter Japanese competition. Now you could buy a Honda, Nissan, or other car getting 25 mpg. About the same time, the 'baby boom' for many had ended. Families were downsized.

Also a factor was the rise of the 'trailer'. Now you could haul your vacation 'home' behind a regular car or pickup truck. Get better mileage the 48 weeks you weren't on vacation.

Cars became more gas efficient. New models appeared like the Ford Mustang appealing to a more gas efficient crowd. Now, instead of the gas guzzling Pontiac GTO, you had more choices.

End of the station wagon:

After low sales, the Chevrolet Caprice and the Buick Roadmaster, the last American full-size wagons, were discontinued in 1996. Smaller station wagons were marketed as lower-priced alternatives to SUVs and minivans. Domestic wagons also remained in the Ford, Mercury, and Saturn lines. However, after 2004, these compact station wagons also began to be phased out in the United States. The Ford Taurus wagon was discontinued in 2005, and the Ford Focus station wagon was discontinued in 2008. An exception to this trend was the Subaru Legacy and Subaru Outback station wagon models,

Imported station wagons, despite remaining popular in other countries,[59] struggled in the United States. European car manufacturers such as Audi, Volvo, BMW, and Mercedes-Benz continued to offer station wagons in their North American product ranges (marketed using the labels "Avant", "Touring", and "Estate" respectively). However, these vehicles had fewer trim and power train levels than their sedan counterparts. The Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG in Estate trim is a performance station wagon offered in the U.S. market. The station wagon variants of the smaller Mercedes-

Benz C-Class line-up were dropped in 2007, and the BMW 5 Series Touring models were discontinued in 2010 due to slow sales in the United States, with only 400 wagons sold in 2009.[60] In 2012, the Volvo V50 compact station wagon was withdrawn from the U.S. market due to poor sales.

The Minivan - 1983

The introduction of the minivan in the 1980s further eroded the station wagon's market share. They were more gas efficient. Hauled a family easily with room for lots of 'stuff'.

They were built on a car chassis and were wildly popular.

You can still buy a Minivan vehicle from Honda or a few other brands. Or a big people hauler/cargo hauler like a Chevy Suburban – re-imagined station wagon of old. Or Toyota Four-Runner.

Then the SUVs:

While there had been a few vehicles along the way, like Jeeps and International Scouts – with 4 wheel drive capabilities, or the Ford Bronco.....the next step was the SUV.

SUVs, classified as trucks under CAFE standards, gained an advantage over station wagons due to less stringent fuel economy regulations. A station wagon was a 'car' and required to get better gas mileage by the standards, or face per vehicle penalties.

By the 1990s and 2000s, SUVs and minivans had largely replaced station wagons as the preferred family vehicles. By then, there was only one or two models and they faded quickly.

They were built on a 'truck frame' to avoid the higher rewire mileage target. (really doesn't make sense, does it – but that's the government for you.)

Alter, the 'cross over appeared' – half way between an SUV (higher clearance) and a car – lower road clearance.

Legacy:

The station wagon was a stop along the way to the current SUV and crossovers. Easy

access to large rear storage. Some come with seating for 8 or 9. Now, your smaller SUV hauls up to 5 easily, lots of stuff in the rear – and larger SUVs haul the same as the 'station wagon' of old. Add in hybrid drive trains and you're getting 20 mpg for the larger ones, 30 to 40 mpg for the smaller ones.

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The average car of this era of the 50s and 60s cars – lasted about 80,000 before they were 'really old'. Few folks drove them further than that before trading them in for a new model. Plus, up north, they rusted out in five to seven years. Like many baby boomers, I grew up in family that had 'station wagons'. Now families have SUVs for the family stuff, maybe another vehicle for commuting to/from work. Back then in the 50s and 60s, most families couldn't afford two or more cars. They'd have to save up for the next car in a few years. Every five or six years.

Now, the average car on US roads is 14.5 years old. How times change.

Awards Issued

Roadrunner Award:

W0GXQ attained 1725 last counties, he received #4

W0GXQ attained 1750 last counties, he received #4

N0KV attained 1050 last counties, he received #13

K4YT attained 1050 last counties, he received #14

K4YT attained 1075 last counties, he received #13

KB6UF attained 2400 last counties, he received #2

KB6UF attained 2425 last counties, he received #2

5 Star Award:

K3IMC completed the award and received #84

Combo Award:

AB7NK completed the 1X3 combo and she received #26

County Challenge:

W0GXQ attained level 22000 and received #3

Events for County Hunters

26 1500z to 27 0300z

3.5-28 **Alabama QSO Party CW Ph**

RS(T), AL county or SPC

alabamacontestgroup.org

MARAC CW Contest – see above.....full description

That's all folks – See you next month.

