

Field Day is a great opportunity to talk to the public about what we do. Take advantage of it!

Let's talk about the Field Day Public Information Table:

"7.3.4. Public Information Table: 100 bonus points for a Public Information Table at the Field Day site. The purpose is to make appropriate handouts and information available to the visiting public at the site. A copy of a visitor's log, copies of club handouts or photos is sufficient evidence for claiming this bonus. Available to Classes A, B and F."

If you are going to try to get the points for a public information table, you could just set up a small card table off to one side, toss a stack of flyers/brochures on it and call it good. It fulfills the basic stated purpose, but not much else. It's dull and you'll probably have about the same number of flyers at the end of Field Day as you did when you started.

Instead, we should use this table to engage the non-ham public, elected officials, representatives from served agencies, and the news media. So make it something that 1) grabs people's attention and pulls them in, 2) imparts a great impression about ham radio, and 3) gets people interested in becoming hams.

First, set this table up somewhere that the public is going to see it right away. Other than roaming operators on handhelds, this should probably be the most public facing position of your set-up.

Second, staff it with intelligent and presentable operators. If you have younger operators, women, or minorities, get some of them out there in order to combat the "old White guy's hobby" stereotype (yes, I am an "old White guy"). If you have club shirts, wear them. You want your best sales people out in the front, which is not the same thing as your subject matter experts.

Make an interesting, inviting display. Cover that folding table with a table cloth. Put up a bi-fold or tri-fold display of pictures. Have a working or static display radio. Have some good, professional looking brochures. Maybe build a mock-up of a CubeSat and have it on display.

Have something interactive for adults and for kids. A working demo of digital modes like APRS or Winlink is often good as you can send a message to someone's cell phone. You can have blank 3x5 cards for kids to write their names in Morse Code.

Coach your staff on some of the things to hit on like ARISS, STEM, SKYWARN, ARES/RACES, etc. One common mistake to watch out for is ARRL stands for AMERICAN Radio Relay League, not Amateur Radio Relay League. And make sure your staff knows to use plain language and no technical jargon.

Have people sign in and have them include contact info like a good email address if they are interested in more info.

Finally, have business cards ready to hand to people before they leave.

Some swag to give away never hurts either.

Start your information table planning now so you can gather the supplies you need: Canopy, Table(s) and chairs, Banners, Brochures/Flyers, Business cards, Table cloth, Static and Interactive displays, etc.

Put forth the effort to make a great first impression -- you only get one chance to do so.

Good luck!