

January 18, 2007

Hello MWA land.

With the MnQP just three weekends away, I want to share with you how W0ZQ/m goes HF mobiling. I hope this inspires others to give HF Mobiling and the MnQP a try as it sure is a lot of fun. My approach is "rover lite" It's all temporary. If you want to install a significant mobile system, by all means do so, but here is one story that shows that you do not have to drill a bunch of holes in your car or invest significant \$\$\$ to have fun mobiling. If you are thinking about giving this a try, the time is NOW.

1. If you have any interest whatsoever in trying mobile operation, start now, not Feb 2 after work.
2. Power. Most cars have extra holes in the firewall between the engine compartment and the passenger area that are typically plugged with a rubber grommet. You can run a 12vdc power cord directly to your car battery. Fuse both sides of the power cord right at the car battery. I use Power Pole connectors for everything. A 100 watt rig should not be a significant load to your cars electrical system although having a "heavy duty" alternator is good. I have never had any problems with this simple approach.
3. Rig. Your choice. Needs to be able to run on 12vdc. For the first year I ran an FT100. I now use a FT-897.
4. Antennas. Hustlers and Ham stick DO work do not believe those who say otherwise. However, for best performance, do not mount them on your car bumper it is to close to the car body. Mount them on the roof. The automated antenna systems work great to. My message is that Ham sticks (low cost) and Hustlers work - key is to mount them away from car body (on the roof) and to get a good ground bond to the car body at the antenna.
5. Antenna mounts. Be careful with magnetic mounts the magnets are plenty strong, but cars have less and less metal to get them to stick to. I use 3/8" mounts bolted to a Yakima roof rack system very cheap and strong and no holes in the roof. I route my coax in through my rear brake assembly. For a truly temporary setup, you can route them in through the window or car door seal.
6. Antenna Grounding. Drilling an antenna mounting hole is best for bonding, worst with the XYL. Look at your roof system to find a mounting bolt. I found on my Subaru that the hinges that are used to hold on the rear lift gate could be easily loosened and a grounding lug slipped under it and then re tightened. I have about a 5" grounding wire that runs from the 3/8" mount on the Yakima rack to this grounding lug.

7. Bands. 40m, then 20m, and then 80m. Last year I made 520 mobile QSOs, 380 on 40m, 105 on 20m, and 35 on 80m. The 80m contacts came right at the end (5:30pm) and were lots of fun. I'm going to try to pay a bit more attention to 80m this year. If you looking to spend minimal \$\$, go with 20m and 40m. Definitely 40 !

8. Logging. Paper is OK, high reliability. It's my backup system. I use an old DOS based laptop running NA. I have my files for each county that I plan to operate in preset so when I drive into that county I simply bring up that contest file (tip from AD & IJ). At the end of the contest I transport all the individual county files into Excel.

BONUS - If you get your mobile system together and play in the MnQP on Feb 3, you can also play next month, March 11, in the Wisconsin QSO party ! Last year was my first WiQP and it was great fun highly recommended.

In 2006 we have 10 MnQP mobiles out and about. Mobiles generate tremendous activity and, speaking as one of those mobiles, it sure was a hoot! For those who are not overly interested in lots of driving, you do not have to run willy nilly about the country side to have fun if you read the MnQP rules you will see that there is no minimum requirements for the number of counties that you have to activate. Last year I activated 11 counties as a sole rover just out to have some fun. Heading to some of the more rare counties makes you VERY popular, and then a drive over the county line makes you fresh meat all over again.

If anyone has any mobile or MnQP questions, I'd be glad to help as much as I can. There are many others on this reflector with at least as much, or more, experience in this area than I have. It would be tremendous if we could get 15 or more mobiles out for this fun event.

73, Jon
W0ZQ/m