

## Obscure scanner targets

Some people would consider utility companies and highway departments obscure things to listen to. For me, I've always researched both of these and listened to them. Highway departments are especially useful in areas where it snows a lot, like where I live. On the road I think they are indispensable as they usually go into more detail about traffic conditions than highway patrols do, plus here in California they use repeaters while the highway patrol does not. Then there are those occasions when traffic is being directed at a maintenance project and I listen in to see what the situation is and how it affects me.

As for utility companies I want to be able to listen to them when the power goes out, which in a rural area is more frequent than in an urban area. I listen to them quite frequently in order to be well versed on how their radio systems work with call signs, company organization (being able to tell where districts are and who serves what area) frequency use, terminology, and the like being things which take some time to figure out. In that way I am able to figure out what is being said when I need it the most when my lights go out. I also listen to them when a major storm hits the west coast as I'm served by Southern California Edison and they patch their trouble talk groups together and I'm able to hear the effects of a storm over a wide area of the state.

Tow truck company frequencies can often have information about a highway incident which police, fire, and highway department frequencies don't have. The same applies to other businesses which provide service in the field. Just like utility companies, you have to listen to their routine traffic to understand what frequencies to listen to and how to understand that traffic when an event occurs where monitoring them will provide additional information.

Knowing the frequencies of highway construction contractors alerts me to how long I might sit when traffic is being controlled by flaggers or how slow the traffic is on a detour.

Another set of frequencies I keep track of is ski areas. If I'm at a ski area and a chair shuts down, listening to them allows me to know what the problem is and if it will affect my plans, like when I'm sitting on a chair lift and it stops. I can also hear trail and grooming conditions being called in.

At amusement parks I can listen and avoid the longest lines and most congested areas, and know when a shut down attraction is coming back up. In hotels I can listen to what is going on if there is a disturbance, plumbing problem, or even hear the staff talking about me when I ask for service.

I've been in busy large restaurants and been able to figure out when I might be seated as the host

or hostess is talking with people out on the floor, most often using a boom mike and earphones. I've been in line waiting for a room to be cleaned at very busy lodging establishments while listening to housekeeping talk with the front desk about their progress.

If I'm at a large public event I like to know the frequencies being used as I can often tell what is happening around me such as when a float breaks down at a parade. Often at sporting events I can hear about why something is being delayed, among many other details that are things everyone around you is wondering about but have no means to find out. I've even been in theaters and found out why the movie or the play has been stopped or is delayed in starting.

If you look around and see radios being used you will be able to come up with more situations than I have listed. The possibilities seem endless.

In public places I wear a very discrete earphone and the scanner is hidden from view as I think scanner use in many places is more obnoxious and rude than public cell phone use.

When things are happening around me, be it at a public event or at home, I'm often called by phone or asked by people around me what is going on. I'm surprised at how many scanner hobbyists are among those people because many tend to listen to law enforcement and some fire traffic almost all the time and miss a lot because they don't know the "obscure" frequencies.

I must admit that the thrill of scanning to me is that I can listen to almost any two way radio being used around me. If I see radios in use anywhere at any time, I have a strong desire to tune in no matter how trivial the traffic may be. I just have to know. However, I think you should be able to see by my post that there is definitely a useful side to this interest.