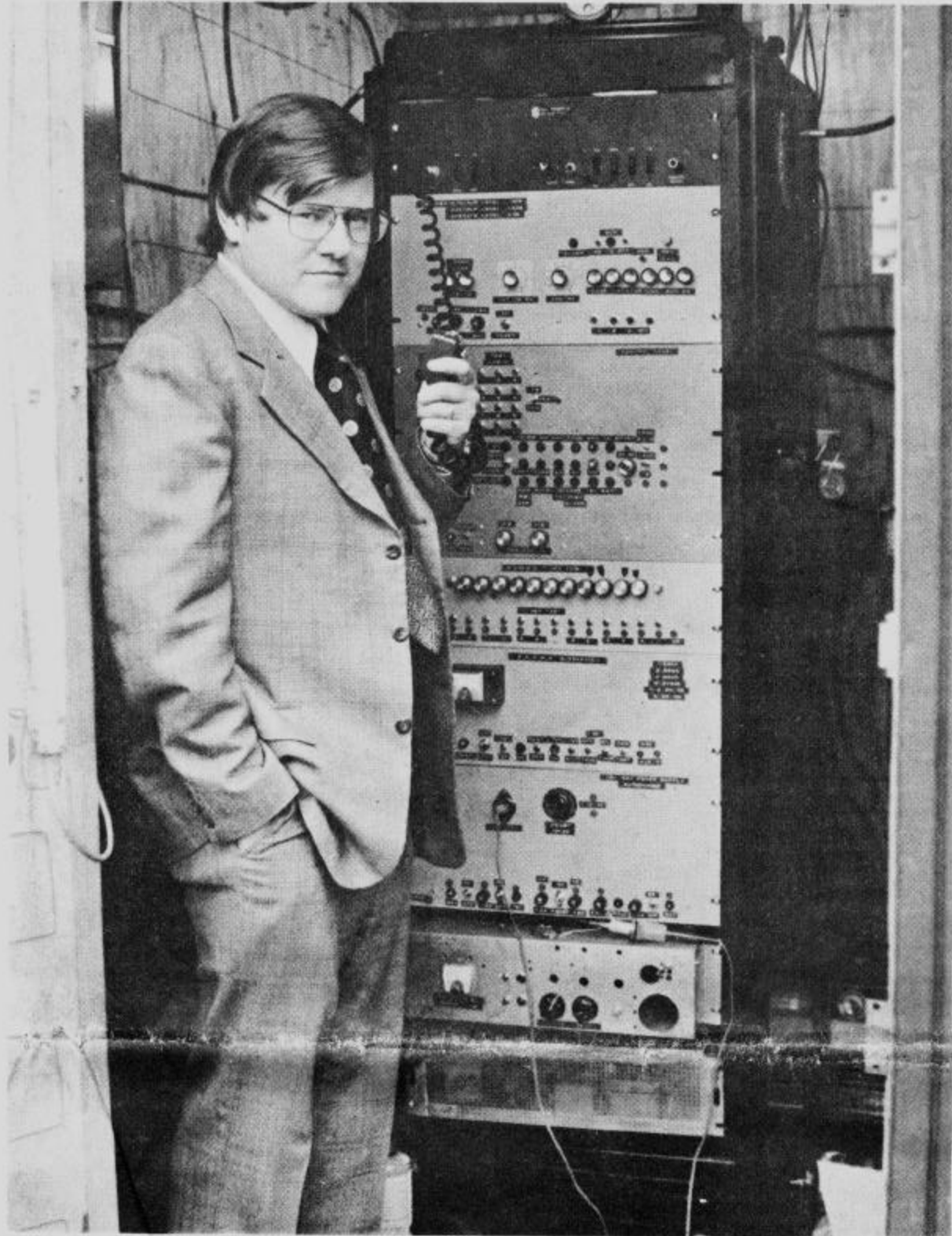


# THE FORSYTH COUNTY NEWS

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**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**—Cumming attorney John Shinall uses the Sawnee Mountain Repeater that puts Forsyth County residents in touch with the world during an emergency.

Shinall said this new piece of equipment located on top of Sawnee Mountain has put Forsyth County on the map nationwide.

# Forsyth Takes Part In National Test

A message went out last Saturday morning from the Forsyth County Civil Defense Department stating, "Several tornadoes have struck the county, a trailer park has been completely destroyed and blood is needed immediately!"

The Gwinnett County Civil Defense Department replied that a helicopter was on the way with supplies and blood for the injured.

If you didn't know what was taking place, you could have panicked. It was all part of a mock national communication exercise. The exercise was held nationwide from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Saturday.

According to Dennis Barrow, chief of communication for the CD department, "We simulated disasters to test emergency communication equipment. All normal communications were closed down and amateur radio operators were setup, sending all sorts of messages."

Barrow said this test is held once a year to test emergency systems which amateurs have and it puts us in contact with all major agencies such as the state and national Civil Defense units and the

American Red Cross.

CD Director Bob Lady was in charge of the local effort and expressed gratitude and delight at the success of the operations.

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One of the reasons that the local operation was such a success is due to something new in Forsyth County.

Located atop Sawnee Mountain, just outside the Cumming City Limit, is a new piece of equipment that according to local ham operator John Shinall, "Has put Forsyth County on the map nationwide."

Shinall said the new equipment is a two meter repeater. For those who can't follow the radio language, this equipment allows for people in Forsyth County to talk with people all over the world and will be especially useful if an emergency occurs here.

Shinall, a ham radio operator for 17 years, said this is the first repeater in North Georgia. "There are two located in Atlanta and there hasn't been anything between Atlanta and Chattanooga, until we set this up," Shinall added.

The Sawnee Mountain Repeater went on the air just before Christmas last year.

The project was started when 10 area ham operators got together and decided to set up an emergency communications system north of Atlanta. "We felt that Sawnee Mountain was the perfect site for this repeater and it has proved its worth in the short time we've been in operation," Shinall said.

The major function of the repeater is to give communications with Atlanta and provide reliable mobile communications over a wide area. It is strictly a public service operation, according to Shinall.

The Sawnee Mountain Repeater is a VHF communications system and due to the elevation of the site, local amateur radio operators can communicate with a wide area.

Shinall pointed out that the project could not have been completed without the complete cooperation from Jim Barker, who owns the top of Sawnee Mountain. "He's a very civic and public minded individual and wanted to help us any way possible," he said.

The trustees who organized and set up the repeater include: Dennis Barrow, Walt J. Barnwell, Jack Fisher, Rick Henderson, Morris Johnson, Arthur Laws, Steve Reynolds, Ed Terry and Shinall.

The repeater on Sawnee Mountain was installed by Steve Reynolds, an engineer with WXIA in Atlanta. He said this is the best repeater in the southeast with emergency power.