

Quartzsite and Cellular in 1998 - Les, W6TEE

This was recalled after cellular at the Quartzfest was talked about on the Sunday SRH Zello net.

I was invited to Quartzfest in 1997 because of my web page about mobile operating but didn't go until 1998, needing material for my new HF Mobile column in WorldRadio magazine. My son, attending college, didn't go with me yet. Besides mobile rigs and HTs on several bands, I took my 1992 Motorola cellular bag phone and a new PocketMail device that was held next to a telephone handset for email. Wow! The photos of those are generic, but just like mine.

In camp, my cellular bag phone made crazy sounds and couldn't place calls. But I found 7 pay phones in town and got in a line after dark to do my email. The free 800 number was cheaper anyway than the \$0.60/min for cellular. The reason there was a line was the cellular system was gridlocked by all the RVers. Hadn't occurred to me before. Cellular was 1G analog, with no data. It was 2005 before I routinely used cellular around Quartzsite. Digital cleared up lots of the congestion. Most pay phones disappeared.

I met the Sam's Radio Hams on that trip. They camped in town, not at the Quartzfest where I was. Frank, W6GZI, and others, had emailed me after seeing the WorldRadio column, explaining SRH. I already knew about the group but had no luck in contacting them before.

