

How do I?



An occasional series

This week: Alaska! Or What County Did I Just Work?

Long time readers of this space will see there are many articles on radios, antennas, and other tips and tricks for operating. See <https://www.radioclub-carc.com/resources/> for more articles.

Alaska! The 49th State! Seward's Folly! Alaska has been a state since January 3, 1959 – a little over 64 years. That, and because it is not contiguous with the lower 48 states, has kept Alaska as a DX entity. So making a confirmed contact with Alaska can help with your Worked All States (WAS) award, or increase your DXCC (100 or more confirmed entities) count. That, plus Alaska being sparsely populated, makes it challenging to work and fun when the SO arrives!

There is a niche in the hobby called County Hunting. This seems to have peaked maybe in the 90s or early 2000s. Not sure, but the County Hunter Dot Com website was founded in 1997. The *County Hunter Award* was sponsored by CQ Publishing. The page to apply for the award returns a 404-page not found error. The County Hunter nets no longer exist. And I find when I work someone and give them my county and state, 99% seem to have no clue why I would tell them what county I am located in. It is 'kinda' sad.

There are 3,077 counties in the United States. You can track them in the N3FJP Amateur Contact Log software. I discovered County Hunting perhaps 15 years ago, when the County Hunter website was still a going concern. Jim K4CGY in over 50 years has worked every county-twice! He worked them in the late 60s or so through (I think) the early 90s, then after he retired he needed something to do, so he worked them all again. I will never accomplish that, but I still enjoy discovering I have a new county confirmed.

Most states have "properly named" counties. Alabama for example has 68. The range from Autauga to Winston, wandering through place names like Montgomery and Tuscaloosa to early politicians and military leaders like Morgan, Pickens, Randolph, Shelby, St. Clair (someday we need a whole How Do I on St. Clair. Maybe try to start "St. Clair's on the Air") and Sumter. Then into the American Revolution with Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Hale, Henry, then into the War of 1812 with Lawrence, Madison, Perry, Pike, etc.

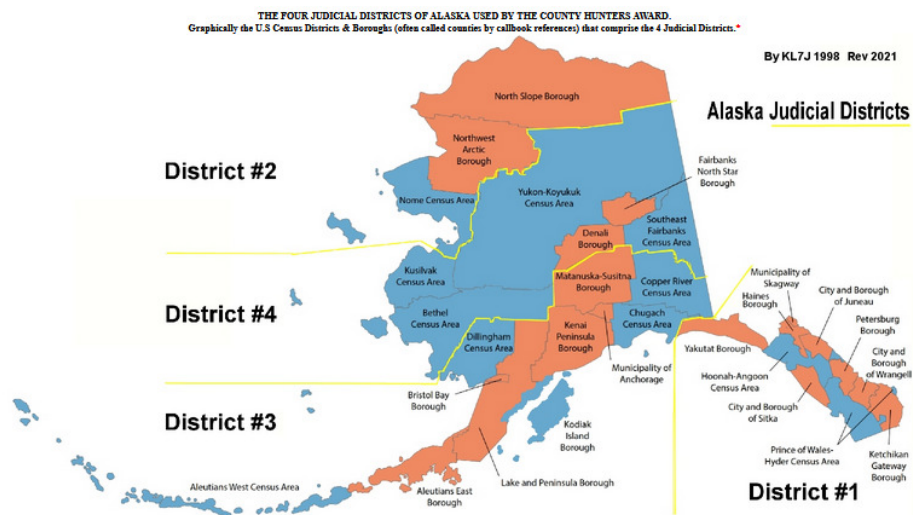
But Alaska is different. N3FJP and other sources use Judicial Districts for the counties. The issue is, no one ever seems to say, or put on QSL cards they live the 1st Judicial District. The use of Judicial Districts as "counties" seems to have started with the County Hunters Award.

Counties			
Worked	0	Remaining	3077
		AK 1st (SE)	
		AK 2nd (NW)	
		AK 3rd (SC)	
		AK 4th (C)	

One of the groups.io forums to which I belong discussed this and someone posted this link:

<https://www.qsl.net/kl7j/county.html>

Probably the most common and easiest to work Alaskan District is the First. It includes Juneau, Sitka and Skagway. The Second District includes Nome and the Third has Anchorage. The Fourth has Denali, Yukon and Fairbanks. Alaska legally has no counties, just boroughs. I suspect perhaps the borough system developed after the County Hunters used the Judicial Districts, or more likely, using Alaskan Boroughs and requiring hunters to work upwards of 200 boroughs would make working all Alaska impossible, as well as open the door to people wanting to use all 2,500 or so Pennsylvania boroughs for the award. For most, getting four Alaska Districts is a major achievement!



See - You thought you were going to learn about radio and got a geography and history lesson instead! Isn't radio fun?

Catch 'ya on the air!

