

Spotlight – Rulon Swensen K7BTU

Rulon Swensen grew up on a farm in Taylorsville. His early days were filled with farm chores, then afterwards exploring the mountains and deserts of northern Utah with his friends. His interest in communication began when he was 16, starting out with a CB radio he purchased from Radio Shack. Although he and his CB buddy only lived across the street from each other, they loved the novelty of talking to each other over radio.

Rulon also enjoyed listening to stations all over the world on shortwave. An uncle who was a TV repairman gave Rulon an old shortwave radio. His uncle said the radio needed some repair work, so Rulon took it to his high school electronics class and fixed it.



After high school graduation, Rulon joined the Army and served six years with the 19th Special Forces Group as a supply sergeant. He was proud to serve this country, and says that the training and opportunities to learn new skills played a big role in his life experiences. Rulon says that earning his wings as a paratrooper was a highlight of his life. On one jump with full equipment, he packed a PRC-77 radio and antenna in his gear. As a supply sergeant, part of his duties included the responsibility for radio equipment used in training, so he had some opportunities to use some of the radios himself.

Soon after they were married, Rulon and his bride moved into their first house. A neighbor across the street just happened to be a ham radio operator, and Rulon became interested in what he was up to. He remembers his neighbor handling messages during the 1976 Teton Dam failure. The neighbor encouraged Rulon to get his ham license, but Rulon struggled with Morse code and gave up.

When the Morse code requirement was lifted some 35 years later, Rulon became licensed as KE7OJX. After purchasing a 2-meter radio and listening a few hours, Rulon made his first contact. Rulon got his General ticket in 2014. Having worked in the refrigeration industry for 25 years, the thought of obtaining a call sign with BTU as the suffix crossed his mind. He applied for and received the vanity call sign K7BTU which he holds to this day.

Rulon feels that it's important to do something with his ham radio skills. So, he keeps his radios in good operating condition, to be ready to be used at a moment's notice. He's been active in emergency preparedness communication with Taylorsville for the past 19 years.

Rulon uses a Yaesu FT-991A transceiver for most of his radio communication today. He has a 35-foot Rohn tower at his home, with a Comet "Super 22" antenna for the 220 band, an Arrow 2-meter/70-cm J-pole, and a vertically-polarized 6-meter Hamstick dipole antenna. On a separate mast he has a Cushcraft AR-10 vertical 10-meter "Ringo" antenna. He's got a weather station sensor mounted on the mast as well.

Rulon has two boys and a girl. One of his sons and a grandson have their ham licenses, his son with a General Class license and his grandson with a Technician license. The three of them enjoy participating in local nets, including the 10-meter Net on Tuesday evening and the 6-Pack Net on Friday nights. They're also active in club activities.



Besides being a member of UARC, Rulon is a founding member of the [Taylorsville ARC](#), and is that club's station trustee. He is also involved with [Salt Lake County ARES](#). He has a website (www.hamradioworks.org) for sharing information and articles on ham radio. We're grateful to Rulon and all his contributions to amateur radio.

– 73, Linda Reeder N7HVF