

# AOPA

## Radio owner drops in at Narco, finds door locked Bankrupt firm's landlord awaiting court OK to return radios

By Dan Namowitz

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*Keaton Surratt with his aircraft, "Mouse", leaving S29 in June 2010.*

When Keaton Surratt learned in April that Narco Avionics of Fort Washington, Pa., had declared bankruptcy, he wondered if he would ever get back his Narco Nav 121 VOR receiver, now locked up in the defunct company's factory.

Now there is hope that he and other owners of equipment behind that locked door will have their radios returned in a few months.

With no one answering the phone and bankruptcy proceedings about to end, there was only one sure way for Surratt to find out what was going on at Narco: Go knock on the door. But the door is in Pennsylvania—and Surratt lives in western Montana, about 85 miles from the Idaho line.

As frequently happens when a bankruptcy case generates collateral damage, Surratt's was a case of bad luck compounded by bad timing. The nav unit from his Beech Musketeer had needed some hardware replaced. His Tucson, Ariz.-based technician suggested that the factory could do the job at the lowest cost.

Surratt gave the nod, and the technician sent the radio to Pennsylvania. But when the radio came back from the factory, it didn't work. The technician returned the radio to Narco around March 26.

"We never heard from them again," Surratt said.

A few weeks later Surratt was in New York City, getting ready to drive a rented U-Haul van back to Missoula, Mont. He punched Narco's address into his GPS. It came up with directions, plus time to the destination: one hour and 45 minutes.

Surratt decided that he would drop by Narco.

He didn't know what to expect. He had been keeping track of the legal proceedings, had filed a claim as an unsecured creditor, and had spoken to the trustee handling the no-assets bankruptcy case, which was about to conclude. (AOPA reported May 19 that a [creditors meeting](#) was held in the case, but no creditors attended.)

The trustee referred him to a Philadelphia attorney, but Surratt decided that the cost of pursuing his 1982 radio that way didn't make sense.

So he took the direct approach, and followed his GPS.

"It took me right to the front door," he told AOPA. (Try that with a VOR.)

But, the front door was locked.

Walking around in search of help, Surratt ran into Mike Haines of [ESD Inc.](#), another of the building's

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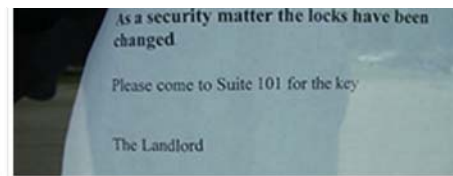
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## Notice

tenants. Haines told him that as soon as the bankruptcy court grants permission, he will be able, acting as agent for the building's owner, to help Narco customers recover their detained equipment.

"Unfortunately, the landlord's representative couldn't do anything until the bankruptcy case was closed, but he assured me they would work to get all equipment returned to customers without attorney or legal intervention," Surratt said.



Haines confirmed those plans in an interview with AOPA. Once the necessary court approval is forthcoming, AOPA would be notified of procedures for owners of Narco radios to follow to recover their property.

"We're trying to do it so customers don't have to go through a lawyer," Haines said. "We're trying to bypass all that."

Gilbert Toll, an attorney who represents the building's owner in Narco-related proceedings, described a multi-step process that could take several months before merchandise is returned "upon reasonable proof of ownership." The landlord is also seeking assurance of not being "liable for the claims of other people" when taking on the job of returning radios to their owners, Toll said.

Surratt, who is an electronics technician for a Montana school district, said he just wanted to share the news about his side trip to Fort Washington.

"I came up with the idea of contacting AOPA as a means of spreading the information in hopes it might help others," he said in an email message.

As of June 15 the [Narco website](#) showed a message urging owners of radios still at the factory to take prompt action to recover their goods. The message directed them to a local law firm.

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June 15, 2011