

MERT

Marion County Emergency Radio Team



Marion County Sheriff's Office
Div. of Emergency Management

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

April 2022

MERT's primary role is to support all open Evacuation Shelters throughout Marion County during declared Emergency events. We also support EOC and emergency personnel along with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) with voice, image and data communications resources. "Call MERT.... When all else fails!"

Wow...What a busy Month!!

MERT Annual Meeting Update

The 2022 Annual Meeting featured presentations by three Guest Speakers sharing great information on their organizations and future activities.



Brady Nettina, Emergency Management Coordinator, MCPS

Brady Nettina

Emergency Management Coordinator
Marion County Public Schools

MERT welcomed Brady who shared his background (UF graduate in EM) including experience with Alachua County EM. He shared his duties and responsibilities in EM and current focus. We thank him for the excellent support and are excited about the future partnership with the MCPS.



Dave Welker, Hospital Emergency Team Coordinator

Dave Welker (W2SRP)

Hospital Emergency Team Coordinator

Dave's update included the reactivation of the Hospital Emergency Communications Team (HEC) with the improving pandemic conditions. His teams are beginning to be allowed access again. Dave shared these Medical Facility name changes:

Mark your calendars!

MERT Monthly Meeting

The April Meeting will be
April 16th @ 10:00 am at the
MCSO EOC (692 NW 30th
Ave, Ocala, FL 34475).

See you there!

- ✓ Ocala Regional Medical Center is now HCA Florida Ocala Hospital
 - HEC designation is “HCAO.”
- ✓ West Marion Community Hospital is now HCA Florida West Marion Hospital
 - HEC designation is “WM.”

The HEC Team also conducted its first exercise in 2 years at the hospitals on March 11th.

Please contact Dave for more information: dwelkerw2srp@gmail.com

We are looking forward to working with his team in 2022!



Hayden Kaufman, North Florida ARES
Emergency Coordinator

Hayden Kaufman (N2HAY)

North Florida ARES Emergency Coordinator

Meeting attendees were updated on the current and future North FL ARES activities. Hayden’s update on several different events and current ARRL news was also welcomed. It is good seeing ARES looking past the pandemic and restoring normal member activities.

MERT looks forward to working together in 2022.

MERT New Training Focus

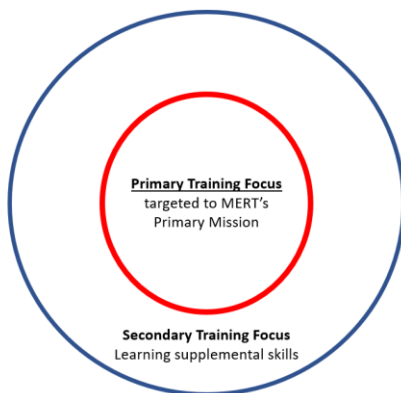
MERT New Training Focus

Primary Focus

Learning all MERT systems, radios, hardware, procedures and practices to effectively and efficiently support the Division of Emergency Management assignments as directed.

Secondary Focus

Learning supplemental skills which improve overall knowledge of amateur radio technologies and operations.



Bill Sobel (K1WLS)
MERT Training Manager




Bill Sobel (K1WLS), MERT Training Manager, announced a new training plan at the Annual Meeting focused on what MERT will need to do when activated for an emergency. The Primary Focus will be in learning all MERT systems, radios, hardware, SHREK Kit, procedures and practices to effectively and efficiently support the Division of Emergency Management assignments as directed. A Secondary Focus is learning supplemental skills which improve overall knowledge of amateur radio technologies and operations. This includes more Field Exercises practicing what is learned. This new approach will build the skills in every MERT member to support multiple functions

building depth in operating our radios, performing key functions (NET Control & Winlink) and backing up other members when extended operations require staffing rotations or shifts.

Preston Bowlin, Director of Emergency Management shares his goal to expand the visibility of the Division and refocus future work towards Emergency Management operations with the pandemic now fading into the past. Part of that focus will be on the new Mobile Command Center (MCC) and its expanded capabilities locally and regionally.

Thank you, Bill, for the new focus in helping MERT prepare for future activations!

Our Mission

<p>MERT MISSION</p>  <p>Director Preston Bowlin Emergency Management Director pbowlin@marioncountiesos.com</p>	<p>Marion Emergency Radio Team (MERT)</p> <p>The MERT Program is designed to provide communications support to areas such as Shelters, Healthcare Facilities, Point of Distributions, and more during times of disasters. They assist with moving valuable communications between agencies and locations about storm information, resource needs and requests.</p> <p>The MERT Program combines many types of radio and communications devices into one program providing numerous sources of information and communication.</p>	<p>MERT PRIMARY ROLE</p> <div data-bbox="878 737 1105 827"><p>Marion County Emergency Radio Team</p></div> <div data-bbox="1182 716 1312 842"></div> <p>Our primary role is to support all open Evacuation Shelters throughout Marion County during declared Emergency events.</p>
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Our Mission is complex, challenging and vital to the MCSO Division of Emergency Management. They share it on their website for all to see... because it is important! But nothing is more important than MERT manning the Emergency Shelters when activated. Please help when an emergency arises. MERT needs your support. Thank you for all your participation and energy helping us meet our Mission.

Harlan Cook (KNVRM), MERT Coordinator

"The broadest, and maybe the most meaningful definition of volunteering:
Doing more than you have to because you want to, in a cause you consider good." ~Ivan Scheier

School Testing Update



Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG), MERT Technical Advisor

Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG), MERT Technical Advisor shared wonderful news on the MERT Shelter visits testing our facilities achieved its goal during the MCPS Spring Break Week! We performed cable/antenna SWR tests along with multiple frequency & power voice test and Winlink data messages. He reported 8 Shelters passed, one site failed and one site was not accessible (to be coordinated with MCSO).

The new Shelter inspections were performed to confirm all technical performance requirements were being met in verifying MERT facilities are ready for the 2022 Hurricane season starting in June. [Note: Our last inspections were in 2017/18.] In the next 3 months, we will complete inspections/tests at the remaining 5 Shelters along with repairs at the Belleview Middle School [Note: Antenna/cable SWR was over 3.] A Special Thanks to Bill Gillespie (KW5BG) and Bill Sobel (K1WLS) for manning the EOC Radio room along with Paul Blystone (WB4QQN), Jerry Mucci (KK4GMU) and Steve Kenney (KB4SDB) who participated at the Westport and Dunnellon High Schools. A very special thanks to Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG), who joined Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) in testing every site. This was a major task requiring a full week of testing with over 200 miles driving time. MERT salutes all the testing participants who pitched in! Thank you!!

MERT Thanks all Attendees!

MERT extends its sincere Thanks! to the 25 Members, Guest Speakers, HEC, ARES and CERT attendees who participated.

We all are looking to the future in hopes all our organizations will be returning to normal operations and activities in 2022!



MERT 2022 Annual Meeting

MERT Secretary Position Open

The position of MERT Secretary is open. Interested Members please contact Harlan Cook at harlancook6@gmail.com or 210.331.3240.

New Member Introduction Jerry Mucci

MERT welcomes new member Gerald (Jerry) Mucci (KK4GMU). Shortly after retiring from 34 years in the community development profession in 2008, Jerry received his Tech license supplementing his interest in Skywarn, a volunteer group of severe weather spotters for the National Weather Service. Being a near life-long Florida resident, weather was an interest since helping his dad plotted hurricanes in 1950's Fort Lauderdale.



Jerry Mucci (KK4GMU)

His ham hobby was put on hold for a few years as he devoted much of his spare time to instrumental music in The Villages. Two years after moving to On Top of the World in 2019 Jerry responded to an ad placed in a local paper by Bruce Twiss, a co-resident of On Top of the World and MERT member, inviting hams to consider joining MERT. His reaction to the ad: "What a great excuse to re-engage my former ham hobby."

It helped that Jerry is a consummate "gadget guy" who loves to explore tech gizmos. He explained, "Researching the best equipment for the job, setting up the shack and fine-tuning antennas has been a blast. And help from other hams like Leon Jurcyszyn, Harlan Cook, Bruce Twiss, Paul Blystone and others has made the experience even better." His "shack" is currently comprised of an Icom IC-7100, Kantronics KPC-2 Plus TNC, a Jetstream power supply, an RSPdx software defined receiver, and assorted other components.

Jerry is also a news junkie, probably a throwback from his Army Intelligence years monitoring civil disturbances in the late 60's - keeping his eye on current events. While MERT is primarily focused on emergency communications related to storm events and community shelters, Jerry is also motivated by concerns that world events may raise the level of importance of ham radio and MERT-type emergency communications.

Jerry's recent hobbies have included radio-controlled model trains and model cars. While those were engaging activities for a time, they didn't serve any real purpose. His involvement with MERT demonstrated that a hobby with a purpose can be more fulfilling. Much like a great Christmas dinner, Jerry enjoys "ham with a purpose."

Jerry, Welcome to MERT!

MERT Update at CERT Leaders Meeting

MERT made another presentation to CERT in March. We joined the CERT Leadership meeting held by Beverly Case, MCSO CERT Coordinator and shared the "CERT – MERT Ham Reference Sheet" explaining the benefits of becoming a Ham in CERT communities. During the meeting, MERT Member Allen Abbott (KB1QCE) spoke to emphasize the importance of having amateur radio capabilities along with the importance of keeping MERT's document readily available for all.



CERT – MERT HAM Communications Reference Sheet

This reference provides important information and resources on communication processes between Marion County CERT's, the Marion County MERT and other key organizations. CERT personnel with Amateur Radio licenses from the FCC can use the following information to communicate, monitor and verify established procedures are followed receiving, reporting and documenting incident information during drills and emergency conditions.

Marion County Emergency Radio Communications Team (MERT)

General Information – MERT was established to provide communications support to the Marion County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with locations and groups such as Area Shelters, Hospitals, CERT communities and other key groups during times of disasters.

They assist with moving valuable communications information between agencies about storm conditions, resource needs and important reports or requests. To learn more what MERT does, copies of the monthly newsletters can be found online at: <https://3rdline.com/mert-cert-newsletters/>

CERT-MERT HAM Reference is available to any CERT Leader or Member.

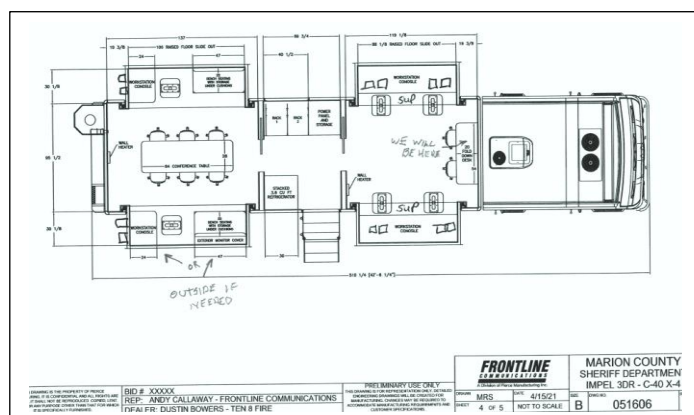
If you know any CERT Leaders or CERT communities, copies of the “CERT – MERT Ham Reference Sheet” are available free to them. Please email: KG4NXO@marionso.com for more information.

Mobile Command Center (MCC) Update

It is official! The MCSO Division of Emergency Management is ordering a new MCC. Preston Bowlin confirmed the news at a recent visit with MERT. The new MCC will be constructed on a large chassis used for fire ladder trucks. Designs will start soon.



Proposed MCSO type of new Mobile Command Center.



MERT’s proposed station is positioned immediately behind the cab where all radio equipment will be accessible for operation. While we don’t have all the details, we do have a preliminary drawing showing the interior layout. With this update, our efforts to start an equipment list proved to be a wise task to start!

All MERT Members are encouraged to contact Bruse Twiss (KI4NFA) with your equipment suggestions and recommendations asap to include on the spreadsheet he crafted tracking all input.

MERT Coordinator Harlan Cook shares he will be selecting a committee to begin the review process for all suggestions very soon since it is important to finalize.... and begin the design process for presentation to Preston. Please contact Harlan if you are interested in serving on the committee.

New Shelter Updates - North Marion High School Activated!

MERT Coordinator Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) shares all Contractor work on the installation of MERT’s new radio facilities at the North Marion High School Cafeteria has been completed and tested on March 23rd. This brings the Marion County Shelter total to 15 locations... with another Shelter to be added later this year at South Ocala Elementary.



Marion County Public Schools
"Helping Every Student Succeed"

We want to thank Brady Nettina, Emergency Management Coordinator for his logistical support and Tim Hudgens, Construction Superintendent for the support his team provided during the construction and installation. We compliment Tim's team as all work was exceptionally well done in meeting all MERT specifications.



150 MPH Hurricane rated mounts and mast used.



Harlan shows the Diamond X300A is ready for installation.



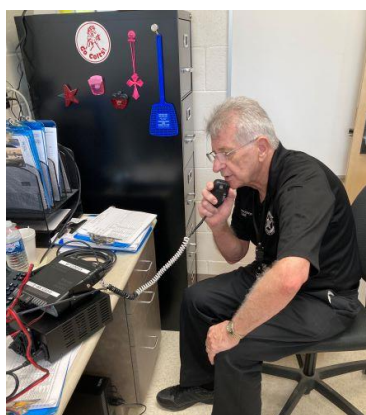
An excellent grounding grid was provided.



Installation completed!



MERT facilities on NW corner near Cafeteria Mgr. office.



Leon completes the first radio test at the Shelter.



Leon compliments Superintendent Tim Hudgens on the excellent installation.

KJ4CLL Added to Repeater Book Listing

Ocala, Florida Amateur Radio Repeaters

9 REPEATERS FOUND AT OR NEAR OCALA

● = On-Air
 ● = Off-Air
 ● = Testing
 □ = Unknown

Click on the frequency for additional details.
Click on a header to sort. **Note:** Sorting does not carry through to exports!

Frequency	Offset	Tone In / Out	Location	County	Call	Use	Modes	
29.6800	-0.1 MHz		Ocala	Marion	KA2MBE	OPEN	FM	●
145.1700	-0.6 MHz	123.0 / 123.0	Ocala	Marion	KG4NXO	OPEN	DSTAR	●
145.2700	-0.6 MHz	123.0 / CSQ	Ocala, MRMC	Marion	WA3YOX	OPEN	FM	●
145.4300	-0.6 MHz	141.3 / CSQ	Ocala	Marion	KD4GME	OPEN	FM EchoLink	●
146.6100	-0.6 MHz	123.0 / CSQ	Ocala	Marion	K4GSO	OPEN	FM EchoLink	●
146.7900	-0.6 MHz		Ocala	Marion	KK4DFC	OPEN	DSTAR	●
147.2100	+0.6 MHz	123.0 / 123.0	Ocala	Marion	NA4DA	OPEN	FM Fusion WIRES-X	●
442.7750	+5 MHz	CC1 123.0 / 123.0	Ocala, Downtown Ocala	Marion	NA4DA	OPEN	FM DMR	●
444.0250	+5 MHz	123.0 / 123.0	Ocala	Marion	NX4Y	OPEN	FM	●

MERT Coordinator Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) shares the "Repeater Book" did not have repeater KJ4CLL listed. That has now been corrected with the required data submitted for review. Our repeater data should be included by mid-April.

Marion County Days

We want to sincerely thank the Silver Springs Radio Club for inviting MERT to share their booth space with us at the 2022 Marion County Days on March 26th. It was a beautiful day where we enjoyed seeing several MERT Members.

We also thank Bill Gillespie (KW5BG), SSRC President and Elbert Wilkinson (KQ3K) SSRC Former President for their wonderful hospitality.

Special recognition to MERT Members Bruce Twiss (KI4NFA) and Gray Moffett (KC3DWY) who volunteered in joining Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) helping staff the MERT table. MERT thanks both Members for stepping up and helping!



MERT's table.



Bill Gillespie, SSRC
President



Bruce Twiss and
Harlan Cook



Gray Moffett and
Harlan Cook



Tracy Laudenslager visits
MERT wanting more
information.



Darren Bruner, MCSO Pilot, says
Hello to MERT!



Old Glory proudly flies

MERT Helping CERT

From MERT Member Bruce Twiss (KI4NFA) at OTOW: MERT members Jerry Landrum (KO4TMS) and I set up the HAM equipment radio according to established protocols by

the local CERT group during a surprise tabletop exercise at the March monthly meeting. Also, HAM's will be identified in the community with stickers for safety helmets and vests, or armbands.

Also, on March 24th, Jerry and I went to the HAM radio set up at the Recreation Center to install a speaker and trace antenna cables. Cables found but more problems uncovered, including the discovery of a generator hidden outside in bushes. An OTOW maintenance worker in the building did not know what the generator served so more work is needed to help CERT.

Thanks to these MERT Members for continuing support of your local CERT team.

Radio Active Day

Details of the first **Radio Active Day** event will be published in the May Communications Update.

Invitation to Attend

MERT meetings are open to all interested Amateur radio enthusiast, CERT, ARES, Skywarn members and the General Public who are interested in learning more about participating in this important volunteer Amateur radio organization.

Interested in learning more..... or becoming a MERT member?
Visit <https://kg4nxxo.com/> and click the