

# MERT

Marion County Emergency Radio Team



Marion County Sheriff's Office  
Div. of Emergency Management

## COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

July 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!"

Mark your calendars!

### **MERT Monthly Meeting**

The July Meeting will be July 17th @ 10:00 am at the MCSO EOC (692 NW 30th Ave, Ocala, FL 34475).

See you there!

### **Monthly Meeting Update**



Leon Jurcyszyn  
(K8ZAG) MERT  
Technical Advisor

***Another busy month for MERT!*** The June Monthly meeting was conducted by Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG) past MERT Coordinator and current Technical Advisor who shared the following updates.

- **MERT Equipment Delivered**

Great news! The Rig Expert Antenna Analyzer, Power Meters, data cables, microphone cables and replacement of the 8-year-old radio backup batteries has been completed. (We thank Preston and Erin for the outstanding support in replacing the worn and faulty equipment!)

- **MERT Storage Resources Expanded and Improved**

MERT now has a unified and centralized storage area for our SHREK kits, spare equipment, supplies, spare cable, antennas and radio backup batteries. The location is near the entrance to the EOC and allows 24x7 access in maximizing our ability to quickly respond with all needed equipment to any **MERT activation** by the Division of Emergency Management. Our thanks to Preston Bowlin for making this available!



Replacement 35 Ah  
AGM radio batteries

"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

- CERT Rodeo Exercise Review

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, MERT Members participated in an innovative and fun “CERT Rodeo” event conducted by the Div. of Emergency Management. Event details and photos at the end of this month’s Communications Update.

- SHARED RESOURCES (SHARES) HIGH FREQUENCY (HF) RADIO PROGRAM authorization has been **APPROVED** on June 27<sup>th</sup>.



**“Station: \_ \_ \_ \_ \_**

***Welcome to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Shared Resources HF Radio Program - SHARES.”***

MERT is extremely proud to announce the Marion County Division of Emergency Management has received authorization to participate in the national security SHARES program.

The SHARed RESources (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio program provides an additional means for users with a national security and emergency preparedness mission to communicate when Internet, landline and cellular communications are unavailable. SHARES members use HF radio resources to coordinate and transmit messages needed to perform critical functions, including those areas related to leadership, safety, maintenance of law and order, finance, and public health.

The SHARES HF Radio Program, administered by Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS), provides **MERT** authority to use unique frequencies to communicate with other SHARES authorized stations that includes other EOC’s, State, Federal & Military organizations on frequencies only authorized by the DHS. (Note: These frequencies are outside FCC licensed and authorized bands.)



SHARES authorization is a new level of support to the Division of Emergency Management in expanding **MERT’s** ability to get messages **PASSED....** even in high-traffic emergencies when all HAM bands are congested.

With our ICOM IC-7100 (station #6) modified in May, MERT can soon begin participating in monthly National NET’s (11 – 1 PM) and Regional NET’s (12 – 1 PM) over SHARES frequencies. Plans are underway in preparing training classes on SHARES and the required procedures of operation.



- MCPS Shelter Manager Update

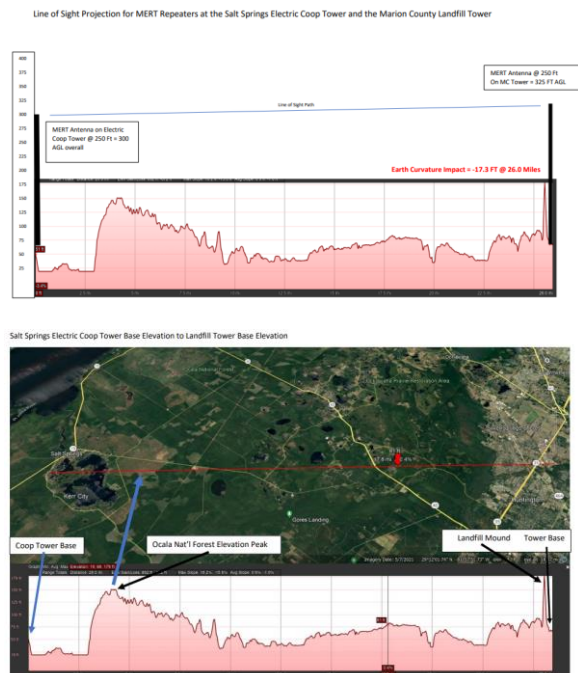
MERT participated in two Shelter Manager Training events held by the Marion County Public School District on May 31<sup>st</sup> at the EOC and Marion Technical Institute.

Brady Nettina, MCPS Emergency Coordinator invited MERT to share who we are, who we report to, what we do along with other key information on MERT's role during Shelter activations.



(L-R) Brady Nettina and Barbara Dobbins, MCPS

MERT Coordinator Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) created and distributed a "Shelter Manager Update" document detailing key information for 30+ participating Shelter Managers and Assistant Managers. Our reference is now included in the new MCPS "Shelter Manual". This is the first ever opportunity for MERT and we are very grateful to Mr. Nettina and his Manager, Barbara Dobbins, Executive Director – Operations & Emergency Management for their invitations to join.



Line of Sight path analysis between the Coop tower in Salt Springs and the MERT facilities at the Marion County Transfer Station tower.

- New Repeater Study

Leon Jurcyszyn shared the preliminary findings of MERT's review of adding a new repeater on the Clay Electric Coop tower in Salt Springs, FL.

This study is being undertaken to analyze solutions in resolving the very limited communications capabilities MERT has into NE Marion County.

Additionally, this location may also open up a 2 Meter band communications link into the Putnam, Flagler and Volusia County EOC's. This objective would improve Marion County's Emergency Managements regional communications capabilities as part of the Florida Division of Emergency Management Region 3 and 5 communications plans.

- **Mobile Command Center (MCC) Update**

An update on the ongoing design review for radio equipment for use in the future MCC (delivery in 2023) was shared.

MERT's analysis of several options suggests our best mission capabilities will be met by having a portable "Go Kit" type resource. This design will be deployable in many different types of activations from the MCC to Point of Distributions (POD's) and other varied field deployments.

The current effort is now focused on identifying available providers meeting our design requirements.

One firm of particular interest is Hardened Power Systems (a USA company) who sells the "Commander 7100 Portable Power Solution for Icom IC-7100". This design uses the IC-7100 which MERT has determined to be the best and most capable radio meeting our multi-band requirements. Members viewed a brief but interesting video about the product. More information at:

<https://portableuniversalpower.com/store/Commander-7100-p268399319>  
portableuniversalpower.com

We recognize Member Bruce Twiss (KI4NFA) for his continued work on updating the design outline and resources available. ***Thank You Bruce for taking on this task!***



A special ***Thank You to Leon Jurcyszyn*** for leading the June Monthly Meeting while MERT Coordinator Harlan Cook and Assistant Coordinator Bill Gillespie are out of state.

Another Thank You to Gray Moffett (KC3DWY), MERT Secretary for his notes and photos for this months Communications Update. ***Thank you Gray for your work supporting MERT!***



Commander 7100 radio "Go Kit"

Preston Bowlin, Director of Emergency Management was interviewed for an article printed in the Ocala Star Banner (June 1, 2022) discussing the 2022 Hurricane season preparations. In it, he shared MERT's activities and role in supporting Marion County Emergency Managements operations.



Ocala Star Banner June 1, 2022 edition headline



Preston Bowlin, Director of  
Emergency Management welcomes  
attendees to the 2022 Hurricane  
Prep. Workshop

The Marion County EOC Hurricane Preparation Workshop for the communications unit was held at the Emergency Operations Center on June 8<sup>th</sup> reviewing this year's planning and activities topics.

Preston Bowlin, Director of the Div. of Emergency Management and Erin Miller, Executive Director co-chaired the meeting with attendees from several departments of Marion County, the City of Ocala,

Marion County Public Schools and others discussing individual plans and coordination efforts.

This was a valuable opportunity to learn about each organizations inter-operations preparing for the hurricane season and MERT appreciates the invitation to join.

**MERT** participation was excellent with 12 Members attending. They were: Kraig Pritts (KA2LHO); Bill Sobel (K1WLS); Leon Jurczyn (K8ZAG); Bill Cummings (KC2ZRZ); Bruce Twiss (KI4NFA); Carl Berry (KC5CMX); Jerry Mucci (KK4GMU); Bill Gillespie (KW5BG); Gray Moffett (KC3DWY); Paul Blystone ((WB4QQN); Clint Stockton (AG0K); and, Harlan Cook (KN4VRM).

Also attending was ARES Marion County Coordinator Hayden Kaufman (N2HAY).

**MERT is a volunteer organization of the Marion County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management. Your active participation attending meetings and training events is vital in meeting our Mission.**

## **MERT Supports the..... CERT “Rodeo” Exercise**

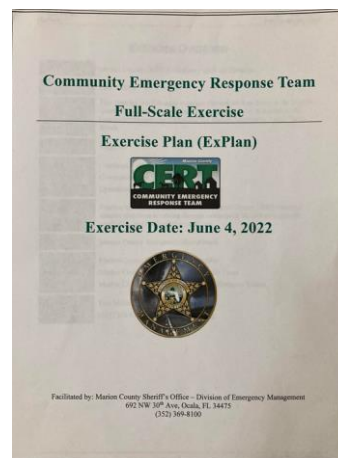
On June 8<sup>th</sup>, MERT participated in the “CERT Rodeo” Exercise from 9:00 – 1:00 PM at the Marion County Emergency Operations Center. The exercise was organized by the Division of Emergency Management to improve the skills and experiences of certified Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members. The CERT Rodeo is a multi-part training exercise having these "stations" that CERT participants rotated through:

- Bandaging/Triage/Basic First Aid (Trainer: Henry Velthuisen, Marion Co. CERT Coordinator)
- Fire Extinguishing (Trainer: Troy Slattery)
- Hazmat Materials Identification and Response (Trainer: Preston Bowlin, Director, Div of EM)
- Damage Assessment (Trainer: Beverly Case, Past Marion Co. CERT Coordinator)

MERT’s assignment was to join each of the four CERT Area Teams as the “Communications Leader”. Members with the four Area Teams will be prepared to report "emergency events" determined by the CERT participants over MERT comm’s.... into the EOC radio room. The exercise included 911 support requests for ambulance support, fire/rescue help, hazmat contamination and chemical exposure injuries. At the MERT EOC radio room, Members received the reports from the Communications Leaders via our assigned frequencies on ICS-213 forms.

A written MERT Performance Report with 26 pages of attachments were created and submitted to Preston Bowlin and Erin Miller, Division of Emergency Management. The report documented that MERT personnel met the exercise objectives consistent with their amateur radio knowledge, ICS training and MCSO Emergency Management procedure training. Additionally, four action items are also noted for additional training and improvement.

**Overall, this was a very good exercise for practice and improvement!**



Preston Bowlin welcomes everyone to the “CERT Rodeo”



Station 1: Bandaging, Triage and Basic First Aid

These MERT Members are recognized for their attendance and active participation in the exercise: Clint Stockton (AG0K); Kraig Pritts (KA2LHO); Sharon Malik (KM4SMM); Brian Purdy (W3AVR); Gray Moffett (KC3DWY); Paul Blystone (WB4QQN); Bruce Twiss (KI4NFA); Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG); and Harlan Cook (KN4VRM).

MERT Guest Observer: Katelyn Manresa (KM4SDH); Guest of Brian Purdy



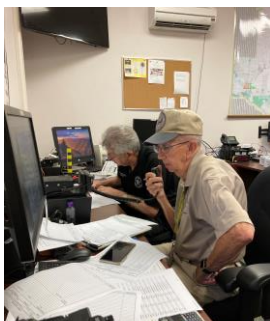
Station 2: Fire Extinguishing



Station 3: Hazmat Materials Identification and Response



Station 4: Damage Assessment



EOC Radio Room

CERT Rodeo Exercise was good practice, a positive experience and fun event!

## July Reminder..... WebEOC Class

*The WebEOC training class is scheduled for July 20th, 9:00 to 10:00 am.*

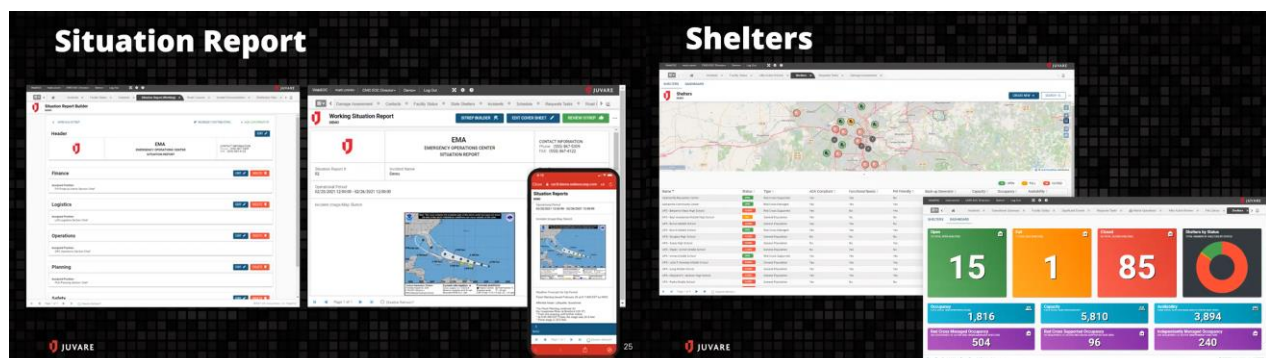
### What is WebEOC?

WebEOC is the incident management program used by the Division of Emergency Management for declared emergencies and incidents by the Marion County Sheriff's Office. This resource is specifically designed for Support Personnel, Emergency Managers and Incident Commanders in Federal, State and Local agencies.

**Is this class important?** YES! As a MERT Member supporting the Division of Emergency Management, we are responsible to learn and use critical resources during declared emergencies. WebEOC documents information, reports, requests, directives, actions and times of details to/from Incident Commanders of the Marion County Sheriff's Office.

**Who should participate in this MERT training?** ALL MERT Members. This is a required information/training event.

**RSVP required by July 16th 12:00 Hrs.:** Confirm your attendance by sending an email to: KG4NXO@marionso.com (Your name and email address is required in creating LOGIN credentials in advance of the class. These are very important and should be documented in YOUR records for use during an actual MERT activation. Be prepared and be ready!)



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

**Interested in learning more about MERT? ... Visit <https://kg4nxo.com/>**