

# MERT

Marion County Emergency Radio Team



Marion County Sheriff's Office  
Div. of Emergency Management

## COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

### September 2023

**Editor**  
Pat Davis  
KQ4BRW



**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!"

*Please check the calendar for changes to the meetings scheduled the rest of this year. <https://kg4nrxo.com/mert-calendar/>*

**Mark your calendars!**

### **MERT Monthly Meeting**

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

**See you there!**

### **"We got Lucky... Again!"**



**Harlan Cook (KN4VRM)**  
MERT Coordinator

These words were shared by Preston Bowlin, MCSO Director of Emergency Management when he was wrapping up his closing remarks about the Hurricane Idalia activation at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

I know everyone living in Marion County feels the same! During the 6-8 hours before making landfall, the forecast path slowly shifted West. Thank goodness, that forecast held true which significantly reduced the potential damages in Marion County. I can't imagine what a 125-mph wind can feel like but after seeing the scenes from Madison County, I know the havoc it can cause.

Most importantly, I acknowledge these MERT Members who supported our Mission by volunteering for Activation:

**Pat Davis** – Westport High School

**Gray Moffett** – Forest High School

**Bill Sobel** – EOC Radio Room

Acknowledgement for last minute MCC Testing: **Bill Gillespie** and **Leon Jurcyszyn** who worked for many hours testing the repaired HF antenna confirming it was repaired.

"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

In addition, I acknowledge the participation and contributions Marion County ARES Coordinator Hayden Kaufman made during the activation. Following new procedures made after last years Hurricane Nicole, the ARES Incident Commander (IC) will now join the MERT Radio Team in the radio room to enhance organizational communications.

I am proud and thankful for everyone's support of MERT!

*HRCK*

MERT needs the support of all past and present Members to fulfill our Mission of supporting every Shelter when opened. Only two Shelters out of six were staffed during the Hurricane Idalia Activation. Please renew your support and participation.



**MERT NEEDS YOU!**

Please renew your participation in MERT activities.

### HURRICANE IDALIA VOLUNTEERS



**Pat Davis – KQ4BRW**  
Westport HS



**Gray Moffett – KC3DWY**  
Forest HS



**Bill Sobel – K1WLS**  
EOC Radio Room



**Bill Gillespie – KW5BG**  
MCC Test & Prep



**Leon Juncyszyn – K8ZAG**  
MCC Test & Prep



**Hayden Kaufman – N2HAY**  
Marion Co. ARES

Our project list continues to shrink with everyone's help. Thank you!

- ✓ Start building an MCC Operations Manual to guide all Members in setting up, operating and supporting MERT activities while operating the MCC during deployments.
- ✓ Complete the school Shelter Audits.
- ✓ See the antenna repairs at Belleview Middle School are completed ASAP.
- ✓ Organize a joint Marion County Exercise for EMCOMM teams (MERT, ARES and HEC).
- ✓ Replacing and moving the OCF HF Antenna tower (telescoping type) to the outer corner of the generator fence to place the antenna long wire element further from the large tree.

### **MERT Activation mentioned in "The ARRL Letter" and ARRL Podcast**

The August 31, 2023 edition of "The ARRL Letter" included MERT's Activation for Hurricane Idalia. The original report by Marion County ARES Coordinator Hayden Kaufman was edited for the national article and audio report.

Visit: <http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter?issue=2023-08-31>

ARRL also distributed an audio report of MERT's Activation on Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> at:

<https://blubrry.com/arrlaudio/news/117460864/arrl-audio-news-september-1-2023/>



In Ocala, the Marion County Emergency Radio Team (MERT) was activated to support shelter operations on Tuesday, August 29. Marion County ARES was placed on standby to support the MERT team and other served agencies. The county was spared the brunt of the impact. Marion County ARES Emergency Coordinator Hayden Kaufman, N2HAY, said the activation identified some opportunities for improvement in the area's disaster response. "We were very fortunate to have had little to do. However, the activation provided us some insight on factors that would impede communications in an emergency," he said.

Ham volunteers worked with the County Sheriff's office to ensure the amateur radio equipment onboard the Marion County Mobile Command Center was fully operational before it was deployed to Madison County, the area most heavily impacted by the storm.

Kaufman thanked the many local volunteers for their service during the hurricane. "I am personally proud to be a member of our increasingly tight-knit EmComm community," he said.

"Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it!"

Mahatma Gandhi

## MERT Completes Updated ICS-205A and Radio Reprogram

During August, MERT personnel completed a project recommended by Shelter Operators to simplify the SHREK Kit radio channels list to only those primarily used during an Activation.

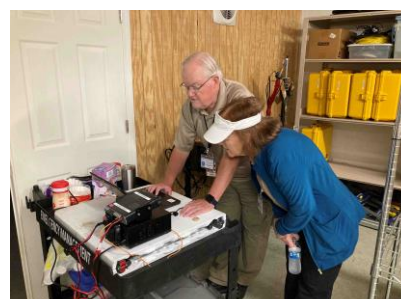
MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, EOC, MERT (ICS 205A) SHREK KIT						
INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN						
Basic Local Communications Information:						
CHANNEL NUMBER	AGENCY	REPEATER CALL SIGN	ID-480 DISPLAY	FREQUENCY	PL TONE	MODE
0	MERT	KQ4GFC-V	KQ4GFC 00	146.700		DV
1	MERT	KQ4GFC-V	KQ4GFC 01	146.170		DV
2	MERT	KQ4GFC-U	KQ4GFC 02	443.075		DV
3	MERT/CERT	KJ4CLL	KJ4CLL 03	146.330	123.0	FM
4	ARES	K4GSO	K4GSO 04	146.810	123.0	FM
5						
6	ARES	K4HJJA	ANTHONY 06	146.870		FM
7	MERT WINLINK	GATEWAY OR PSP	WINL 030	146.030		FM
8	MERT WINLINK	GATEWAY OR PSP	WINL 030	146.030		FM
9	MERT WINLINK	GATEWAY OR PSP	WINL 070	146.070		FM
10	MERT WINLINK	GATEWAY OR PSP	WINL 070	146.070		FM
11	MERT SIMPLEX	KQ4GFC-X	KQ4GFC 11	146.700		DV
12	MERT SIMPLEX	KQ4GFC-X	KQ4GFC 12	146.170		DV
13	MERT SIMPLEX	KQ4GFC-X	KQ4GFC 13	443.075		DV
14	MERT / CERT SIMPLEX	KJ4CLL-X	KJ4CLL 14	146.330		FM
15	ARES	K4GSO-X	K4GSO 15	146.810		FM
16	MERT	DVOICE	DVOICE 16	146.430		DV
17	MERT	DVOICE	DVOICE 17	146.460		DV
18	MERT	AVOICE	AVOICE 18	146.460		FM
19	MERT	AVOICE	AVOICE 19	146.380		FM

Step One was the review and determination of what specific radio channels would be used on primary, secondary and tertiary repeaters in an emergency.

Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG) MERT Technical Advisor, led the effort and did an excellent job presenting ideas and encouraging feedback by Members.

When finished, the ICS-205A was reduced to 19 channels from the prior 40! All Members agreed the refocus was appropriate and needed.

Step Two was updating the RT Systems computer program with the new channel lists. Bill Gillespie (KW5BG) completed this task.



Bill Gillespie (KW5BG) shows Pat Davis (KQ4BRW) the RT Systems features when the SHREK Kit radios were reprogrammed.

Step Three was re-programming all the SHREK Kit radios. Bill led the team in completing this task on Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. The team helping included Pat Davis, Bill Davis, Gray Moffett and Hayden Kaufman. Many thanks to All!



(L-R) Hayden Kaufman (N2HAY), Bill Davis (KQ4ILZ) and Gray Moffett (KC3DWY) moved and provided the radios for reprogramming.

“The greatest waste in the world is the difference between what we are... and what we could become!”

Ben Herbster (American Clergyman)



## MERT/CERT/ARES Monthly Meeting

The August Monthly Meeting was very interesting with these presentations.

MERT Coordinator Harlan Cook shared:

- A) Updated Marion County Weekly Net Reference was distributed
- B) Updated ICS-205A for SHREK Kit radios shared
- C) How Ferrite Beads reduce RFI and Common Mode Interference

His presentation included videos and web resources sharing what these are and how they work along with how to select the right one for your

ARES Coordinator Hayden Kaufman shared:

- A) ARES news and activities
- B) Introduction to AUXCOMM class update schedule for Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Sign up at:

Visit: <https://aresmcfl.org/signup-for-the-intro-to-auxcomm-class-10-21-23/>

HEC Coordinator Dave Welker shared:

- A) HEC After Action Report on Exercise conducted 08-11-2023
- B) HEC Plan to shift focus to Voice (Radio Telephony) skills
- C) Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) Radio Equipment Protection Container


Radio Go Kit Show and Tell by Randy Williams (WD8MGZ)

- A) Randy shared his unique Radio Go Kit he designed and built. Awesome!

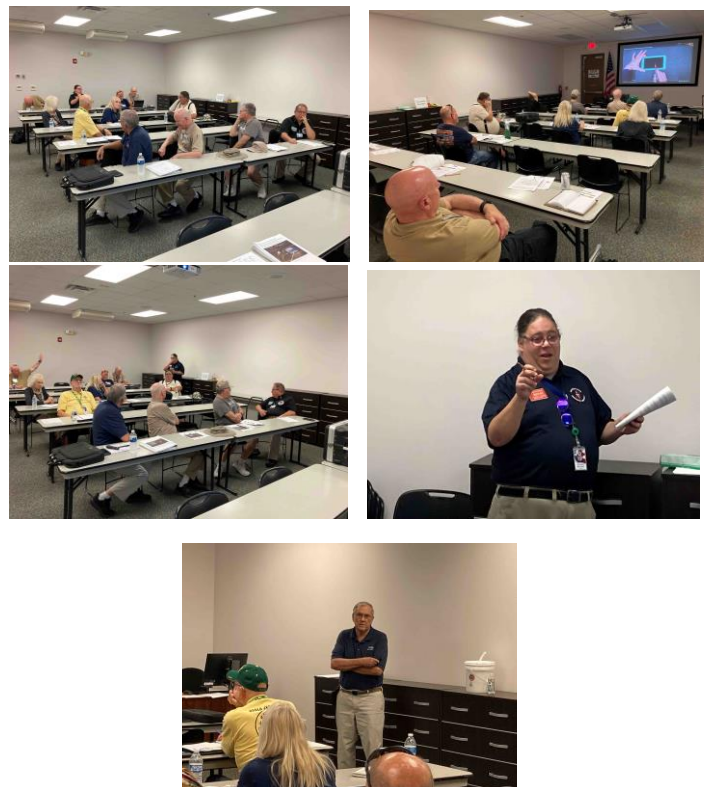
# MERT

**MERT ARES HEC CERT MONTHLY MEETING**  
**AGENDA**  
**August 19, 2023**  
10:00 am

- **Welcome!** Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) MERT Coordinator
- **Pledge of Allegiance**
- **Attendee Introductions** (Name, Call Sign and Organization)
- **Silent Key Acknowledgements**
  - A moment of silence for all our friends who are informed or passed.
- **MERT Coordinator Update** Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) MERT Coordinator



  - Updated Marion County Net Reference
    - Handout available.
    - All Ham's are encouraged to participate in all Marion County Net's
  - Updated ICS-205A
    - Following through on recommendations from Members supporting the Shelters that the Radio Plan needed to be simplified... is nearly done!
    - The new document only has primary and backup Repeaters listed along with simplex and Winlink gateways detailed. Our next step is to reprogram all the SHREK Kit radios along with the appropriate radios in the radio room at the EOC.
  - MCC Update
    - Mfg. confirmed Tarheel II Antenna requires repair or replacement. MERT is awaiting the unit from Tarheel to continue our tests.
  - How Ferrite Beads reduce RFI and Common Mode Interference
    - My continuing challenge on improving radio reception on KJ4CLL (145.330 MHz) has helped me learn more about Ferrite Beads. I will share some interesting things I've discovered in my update.



Life is 10% what happens to me... and 90% of how I react to it!

Charles Swindoll



Randy, Thank You for sharing your wonderful Radio Kit with us all! What a very impressive design!! He will be using his Kit on a two-week fishing trip to West Virginia and then on his way back to Ocala.

***Interested in learning more about MERT? Visit <https://KG4NXO.com>***

MERT Members....if you are also a CERT Member, your reports on helping your local community group are invited!