

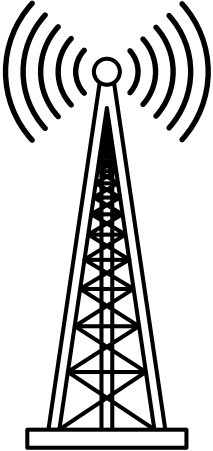
Emergency Management

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

EOC News

DECEMBER 12TH, 2024

Ham Radio and Hurricane Helene



This past September, Franklin County had a close encounter with Hurricane Helene, while our neighbors in Taylor County took the full brunt of the storm. However, in the supposedly safe mountains of western North Carolina, yet more effects were felt as Helene rained and blew itself out. Into the communications gap caused by downed phone, internet, and power lines, the next morning amateur radio operator Dan Mark got on the Mount Mitchell repeater and simply asked if anyone needed help. From there, communications over the entire area were reestablished, bringing needed aid, passing news to and from anxious families, and coordinating with emergency management organizations.

At a neighborhood scale, another amateur radio operator in Swannanoa, NC had, in addition to ham radio gear, a Starlink connection, Wi-Fi, and perhaps most importantly, a household solar power system to keep everything running. He quickly turned his home into a neighborhood “internet cafe,” inviting neighbors to bring their laptop computers over for a recharge and a connection to the outside world. With messages being passed both over amateur radio frequencies and via the internet, families could stay in touch outside the affected area. Equally importantly, local communications were maintained using ham radios. All of these stories can be found at that radio operator’s blog,

<https://swling.com/blog/tag/hurricane-helene/>

Here on the Forgotten Coast, volunteer radio operators, with the help of the Franklin County Emergency Management and the City of Carrabelle, have built a similar amateur radio repeater capability. As Hurricane Debby passed us by in late August, volunteers across the county from Alligator Point to Apalachicola funneled condition reports to the County EOC through this repeater. Less than a month later, the morning after our near-miss with Hurricane Helene, FCEM CERT volunteers relayed information to the EOC on road conditions and the availability of food and fuel.

Fortunately, we were only minimally affected by these two storms. However, FCEM is looking for more amateur radio operators, and we will begin licensing classes and further training in early 2025. Please contact us at w4zng.radio@gmail.com for more details if you are interested.



Emergency Management Staff, Volunteers, & Stakeholders

Shining a spotlight on the people who make this agency function.

Rob Zingarelli



Rob Zingarelli volunteers his time for auxiliary communications and related support at FCEM. His contributions encompass amateur and other radio operations, teaching radio licensing courses, and engaging in the design, construction, and maintenance of two-way radio stations. As a fourth-generation resident of Apalachicola, he is also a research physicist who recently retired after a 30-year tenure in underwater acoustics at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory. He holds a PhD in experimental nuclear physics from Florida State University, a BS in computational physics from Carnegie Mellon University, and graduated from Apalachicola High School in 1980. In his free time, he enjoys hiking, hunting, fishing, cycling, exploring obscure areas of physics and math, and, of course, communicating across the country via amateur radio.

Ham Radio Winter Field Day(WFD) - January 2025

Winter Field Day is a weekend-long event in which amateur radio (ham) operators camp out, set up portable radio stations, and get on the air during the last weekend in January. The overall goal is to practice operating in remote locations on auxiliary power in a simulation of some non-specific emergency. As a nationwide event, WFD was started about ten years ago as a cold weather counterpart to the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Field Day, which is held the last weekend in June. Fortunately for us here in North Florida, late January is usually prime camping weather.

While several hams associated with FCEM and the Tate's Hell Amateur Radio Club (THARC) have participated in WFD in past years, for 2024 we're going bigger. The overall plan is to meet at the Wright Lake campground off Hwy 65 mid-day on Friday, Jan. 24th to set up camp and test equipment. Food and refreshments will be on an individual and pot-luck basis, so bring plenty to share! The event officially begins at 11:00 a.m. EST on Saturday and runs for 30 hours to 4:59 p.m. EST on Sunday, though many, many breaks for conversations and naps are sure to happen. Some of us may even camp over to Monday if the weather is particularly nice. Drop-by visitors, new radio operators, and anyone interested in radio are especially invited. You do not even need to be a licensed radio operator to participate! FCC rules allow for anyone to talk on the air, so long as a licensed operator is present.

Finally – and we have to say it – if the weather looks nasty for the weekend, we will reschedule to sometime in February. The national event won't be going on then, but we can still have plenty of fun camping and getting on the air.

More details about WFD can be found at <https://winterfieldday.org> or by contacting Rob Zingarelli at w4zng.radio@gmail.com

See What We Are Up To





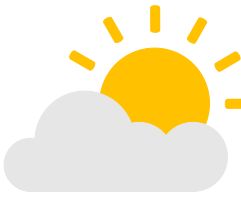
A glance at the projects that each staff member and prominent volunteer is undertaking.

- Jennifer Daniels, the Director, has been working on reimbursement for Hurricane Debby, Hurricane Helene, and also updating our directories; also, she will be attending a Directors and FEPA meeting next week.
- Amanda Anthony, the Coordinator, is working on updating our finance books and our Survival Guide.
- Jessica Lockhart, the SPN Coordinator, is trying to coordinate a Contractors meeting for 2025, and taking training to further her knowledge about the field of Emergency Management.
- Tim Keith-Lucas, the Operations Chief, is refining our checklists to ensure comprehensive hurricane preparedness, equipping our Mobile Command Trailer, and also setting up for Holiday on the Harbor.
- Scott Bush, the Quartermaster, is currently reorganizing the EOC trailers to accommodate a wider array of events, coordinating the organization of the Hangar, and also assisting with equipping our Mobile Command Trailer.
- Judi Ring, the CERT President, is developing educational materials to raise awareness about the CERT program among the public, updating our event schedule, and prepping our oncoming class of Certers.
- Rob Zingarelli, the Lead Radio Operator, is concentrating on the radio wiring setup within the command trailer and is doing weekly check-ins with SARNET.
- Robin Daniels, the Inventory Manager, is in the process of consolidating equipment from various areas within the EOC to both the command trailer and its supporting trailer.
- Robin Gibson, our Vehicle Inspector, has been diligently checking and ensuring that our county vehicles are maintained and ready at a moment's notice.
- Allen Sanders, the Groundskeeper, has resumed grounds maintenance activities in preparation for the forthcoming summer season and is currently maintaining chainsaws.
- The team eagerly awaits the review and approval of the new building plans by the state Office of Environmental and Historic Preservation.

Upcoming Events

Event	Description	Date	Time	Location
Holiday on the Harbor	Festival and Boat Parade of Lights	Saturday Dec 14	12 PM - 7 PM	Carrabelle, FL
Christmas	Christmas Eve and Christmas Day	Tues - Wed Dec 24 & 25	All Day	-
Winter Field Day	Ham Radio on Air Event	January 25 - 26	All Day	-

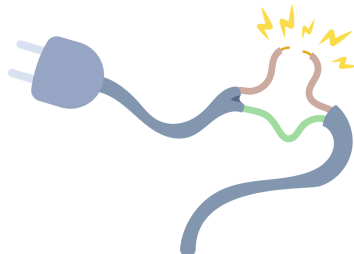
Weather Outlook

	<u>Fri, Dec 13</u>	<u>Sat, Dec 14</u>	<u>Sun, Dec 15</u>	<u>Mon, Dec 16</u>	<u>Tues, Dec 17</u>
Weather					
	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
Temp. (F)	50 / 66	56 / 70	55 / 72	58 / 72	56 / 74

EOC Tip of the Week

Electrical Safety Tips

- Avoid overloading outlets to prevent electrical issues and fires.
- Unplug unused appliances to minimize overheating risks.
- Use extension cords sparingly and avoid placing them under carpets or across doorways.
- Keep electrical devices away from water and avoid using them with wet hands.
- Inspect cords for damage before use.
- Install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) near water sources for shock protection.
- Prevent damage to electrical cables by avoiding excessive pressure and improper storage.
- Do not use damaged cords, as they can cause electrical fires.



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