
WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA SECTION EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2025

American Radio Relay League ®

Amateur Radio Emergency Services ®

(ARES®)

West Central Florida Section

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Overview

Members of the amateur radio community have a long, rich history of responding to emergencies locally, state- and region-wide, and national emergencies. This tradition continues today. In the 21st century, we have a highly robust communications infrastructure serving our public service agencies and organizations. During most disasters and emergencies, we continue to have cellular phone and internet services. With these technologies, the needs for contingency and emergency communications support have evolved. Our amateur radio community is adapting to meet these challenges. This plan outlines how our radio operators will support our supported agencies and organizations to provide effective communications in all situations.

The Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC), appointed by the Section Manager (SM), oversees the ARES® (Amateur Radio Emergency Services ®) program for the American Radio Relay League ® (ARRL ®) West Central Florida (WCF) Section. The WCF ARES ® is primarily a coordinating agency to support the responding agencies and organization within the ARRL West Central Florida Section. The SEC serves as the point of contact to obtain support resources from other Florida sections and the ARRL headquarters. Each Emergency Coordinator (EC) assigned to a county does the following, recruits, trains, exercises, activates, manages, and directs ARES® members within their county and their assisting and cooperating agencies. Following the emergency management principle that all disasters start and end locally, each EC is empowered to develop a tailored team meeting the needs of their respective counties.

Our goal for the WCF ARES® program is to become a conducive source for the counties, agencies, and organizations to request augmenting resources to establish effective communications for an impacted community. ECs should request additional support through fellow ECs with whom they may have established mutual aid agreements. When the mutual aid resources become exhausted, ECs should request that the SEC or the State ARES® coordinators seek additional resources from other ARRL® Sections, or ARRL® headquarters. While there is no guarantee that resources will be available, every effort will be made to obtain resources to meet the needs.

The PACE Model

Our ARES team follows the PACE model for supporting our sponsors. PACE stands for Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency. Here are the definitions of these categories and how amateur radio fits in.

- **Primary** – These are the day-to-day normal communications methods used by an agency or organization to conduct their mission. Amateur radio operators volunteering with these agencies should be proficient in the use of the standard communications methods. These would normally be internet-based email, cellular and landline telephone, and other forms of media.
- **Alternate** – Alternate methods might be to shift from Wi-Fi internet communications to cellular hot spot. Each agency or organization emergency/contingency communications plan should outline the prescribed alternate communications modes. In most cases, the configuration of these alternate communication channels will be done by site Information

Technology (IT) specialists or communication professionals. In other cases the agency or organization may rely on their ARES members, these radio volunteers should be proficient in setting up, switching, and operating these alternate communications modes.

- **Contingency** – Contingency communications are activated when both primary and alternate methods are disrupted. For example, there is no internet service to communicate between a disaster shelter and the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The shelter might shift to using a radio-based mail service (e.g., Winlink) to maintain direct communication. This would be where amateur radio operators become valuable team members who bring these specialized skills to the agency or organization.
- **Emergency** – Emergency communications modes are those used in the “When All Else Fails[®]” situation. For amateur radio teams, many of the contingency systems using radio-only channels may still be operational or can be used in a peer-to-peer configuration. As a last resort, our amateur radio operators should be proficient in sending and receiving voice messages. Some of our operators may still maintain Morse code proficiency, as well. Once again, the emergency modes should be defined by the agency or organization emergency communications plan.

Concept of Operations for Amateur Radio Emergency Services

We encourage all radio amateurs to join ARES and become proficient in public service communications. We recommend that all ARES members complete the ARRL *Basic* and *Intermediate EmComm* training. Those moving into leadership positions should complete the *Advanced EmComm* training when it becomes available. Additionally, all ARES members should be familiar with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We recommend that all ARES members complete these Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Independent Study Courses:

- IS-100 (latest version) – *Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS 100*
- IS-700 (latest version) – *An Introduction to the National Incident Management System*

Emergency service by amateur radio is defined by Part 97.407 of Title 47, Code of Federal Regulations (FCC Rules and Regulations) under the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES). Under RACES, each jurisdiction was granted a license from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to allow non-licensed operators to operate on amateur frequencies. The jurisdictions were to appoint a Radio Officer who could direct amateur radio support. The FCC has stopped issuing RACES licenses; all operators supporting Part 97.407 communications within the amateur bands must hold appropriate amateur radio licenses.

Most of our West Central Florida sponsoring agencies and organizations have adopted Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) concept embracing amateur, public service, and national contingency communications. Some of our counties still designate a Radio Officer (often the EC) who directs

communications support to agencies. ACS teams normally integrate into the Incident Command System (ICS) for their sponsoring county or municipality. Most of our counties have adopted the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), **Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)** program as the training standard for radio operators (RADO) serving during emergencies and incidents.

For organizations and agencies that have not adopted AUXCOMM, our ARES team can evaluate members using the **ARES® Standardized Training Plan, ARES® Emergency Communicator Individual Task Book**. Your county's EC, or the SEC can assist members who would like to complete this task book. Sponsoring agencies and organizations may develop their own or supplemental training plans and task books designed to address their unique requirements.

All ARES members participate in local and regional communications events. Operators need frequent recurring practice to hone their radio skills. Events and exercises offer structured opportunities to keep up proficiency. Additionally, the relationships established among operators during these events will be invaluable during actual emergencies and disasters.

ARES members who directly support municipal or county programs may be asked to undergo background checks and other administrative procedures to become trusted members of the emergency response team. ARES members should consider this a privilege and always remember we are guests of sponsoring agencies or organizations. Radio operators should be prepared to accept the instructions of the agency or organization leaders. All should remember that we operate with "professional humility". Members serve at the pleasure of the agency or organization. During an activation, ARES members who are deployed with an agency or organization fall under the direction of that agency or organization. The WCF ARES organization is not part of the chain of command during activation. ARES members should take pride in operating effectively, following directions, and continuously enhancing their knowledge and skills through practice with their sponsoring agency or organization.

Emergency Activation

ARES members should never deploy to an emergency or disaster location until they are activated by an EC or radio lead for their sponsoring organization. All ARES members should keep the EC, radio lead, or other designated individual advised of their availability to deploy. We recommend that each ARES member should have a go-kit that will sustain them for 7 to 10 days. They should include appropriate clothing, bedding, food, toiletries, and off-duty personal items (e.g., books, games, etc.). Members should bring only the radio equipment that will be needed for the incident. The watch word is self-sufficiency during deployment. All members should remember that their first priority is to ensure that they and their families are safe before considering deploying.

In most counties within the West Central Florida Section, our ARES operators have become fully integrated into the disaster/emergency plans of the county. The county Emergency Coordinator (EC) has a direct inline relationship with the Emergency Management organization within the county. Many of our operators are

fully vetted volunteers with the county. Those operators will be activated through their respective EC. The EC should notify the SEC upon activation as soon as possible.

Emergency nets will be activated according to the emergency communications plan for the county, agency, or organization. Each ARES member is encouraged to be skilled in net control and traffic handling. ARES members become familiar with and follow the net procedures established by their sponsoring organization. Additionally, ARES members should be proficient in keeping the logs required by the organization (e.g. ICS-309, ICS-214, unit radio log, etc.). ARES members are encouraged to participate in the regularly scheduled training nets conducted by the sponsoring organizations.

ECs should notify the SEC if they will be out of the area for an extended period. We recommend that the EC designate an acting EC in those situations. The SEC will notify the SM, the Assistant Section Emergency Coordinators (ASECs), and the ECs when the SEC will be out of the area or unavailable. Normally, the SM or a designated ASEC will assume the duties of the SEC during the absence.

WCF Section Alert Levels

Safety comes first in all ARES activations. ARES members should undertake deployments only after their family and properties are rendered safe to the maximum extent possible. Members should not accept undue risk in deploying. Each member must weigh the benefit versus the risk of deploying in support of an emergency, incident, or event. The Section Manager and the Section Emergency Coordinator set the Activation Level. The Section Social Media Coordinator will post the activation level as soon as possible. The Section Public Information Coordinator or designee will prepare and release a Press Release regarding the change in activation level within 8 hours.

Our West Central Florida Activations levels are:

- **Level 4: Routine Operations** – No standby for activation or current activations. ARES members go about their normal daily routines. This is a good time to check go-kits, emergency supplies, and family evacuation and communications plans. Members participate in regular ARES training nets to receive updates on section status and maintain proficiency in radio operations.
- **Level 3: Alert Status** – One or more ARES groups on Standby for possible activation in one or more WCF Counties. ARES members should follow the instructions of their sponsoring organization. For regional events such as hurricanes, members should monitor news media, their county ACS/ARES net, and/or the NI4CE repeater system for situation awareness.
- **Level 2: Partial Activation** – One or more WCF Section ARES Groups are activated. Members of the activated groups follow the directions of their sponsoring organization. Members who are not activated should continue to monitor news media, their local ARES net, and/or the NI4CE repeater system for potential callouts for additional operators in the activated groups. Requests for additional operators should be handled through mutual aid agreements or requested through the Section Emergency Coordinator or Section Manager. Activated groups will normally suspend their regularly scheduled training nets. During scheduled events (e.g., marathon, 10K run, walk-a-thon, etc.), the sponsoring organization may ask the ARES support team to assume Level 2.

- **Level 1: Full Section Activation** – All WCF Section ARES Groups are activated. All WCF nets are cancelled until further notice. Activated ARES members will perform under the direction of their sponsoring organizations. ARES members, who are not activated, carry out their primary responsibilities in support of their family. All members should be aware of situations for assistance when needed.

We must stress that ARES members should never deploy without specific activation instructions from their sponsoring organization.

WCF Field Organization

The following organization information is provided for reference. Members should check the Section website (<https://arrlwcf.org>) for the latest information.

Table 1 WCF Field Organization

Position	Name and Contact Information
Section Manager	Michael Douglas W4MDD Wauchula, FL 33873 Cell: 863-585-1648 FirstNet: 863-832-1885, w4mdd@arrl.org
Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC)	Dave Rockwell, W4PXE St Petersburg FL 33705 FirstNet: 727-804-5821, w4pxe@arrl.net
Section Traffic Manager (STM)	Dave Rockwell, W4PXE St Petersburg FL 33705 FirstNet: 727-804-5821, w4pxe@arrl.net
ASM Rural Communities & ASEC for Exercises	Charles Johnson W4CWJ Sarasota, FL 34240 941-813-5726, twojfarms@yahoo.com
ASM SKYWARN®	Open
WCF ARES® Net Manager, VHF/UHF	Sanford Wyatt, KM4WXX Sarasota FL 34240 Km4wxx@arrl.net
WCF ARES® Net Manager, HF	William Johnson, N4NOA Brandon FL 33511 moo.bill@verizon.net
ASEC (Emeritus)	Randy Payne K4EZM Sebring, FL 33875 863-446-0913, k4ezm1@gmail.com

Emergency Coordinators by County

The following are the Emergency Coordinators as of the date of this plan. Please check the county’s website for the latest information and a list of Assistant ECs (AEC). ECs should be appointed by the Emergency Management Director of their respective counties.

Table 2 Emergency Coordinators by County

County	Emergency Coordinator Name & Contact Information
Charlotte	Tom Chance K9XV Punta Gorda, FL 33950 317-213-9240, k9xv0829@comcast.net
DeSoto	Doug Christ KN4YT Arcadia, FL 34266 863-990-2507, kn4yt@yahoo.com
Hardee	Darrell Davis KT4WX Ft. Meade, FL 33841 863-245-9923, kt4wx@arrl.net
Highlands	Jeffrey A. Bronsing, KJ4NEO Lake Placid FL 33852 Kj4neo@gmail.com
Hillsborough	Bill Miller N1CD0 Ruskin, FL 33570 757-635-2195, bmiller@hcaresraces.net
Manatee	Steve Park W4OEP Parrish, FL 34219 727-542-4729, spark003@live.com
Pasco	Tim Cunningham KM4YGV (Radio Officer) Zephyrhills, FL 33541 813-842-1852, tdc@earthling.net
Pinellas	Clayton Parrott KJ4RUS (Radio Officer) Largo, FL 33770 727-215-8140, clayton_parrott@yahoo.com
Polk	Christine Duez K1KJN Dundee, FL 33838 863-241-1288, cduetz10@yahoo.com
Sarasota	Mike Kearney- KG7KIQ (Acting) Sarasota, FL 34233 mbk7@comcast.net

Emergency Operations Centers and Radio Officers

The following table lists the contact information for the Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) within the West Central Florida Section.

Table 3 Emergency Operations Centers

County	Location and Point of Contact for EOC
Charlotte	26571 Airport Rd Punta Gorda, FL 33982 941-833-4000, No Radio Officer. Contact EC.
Desoto	2200 N. Roan St. Arcadia, FL 34266 (863) 991-4831, No Radio Officer. Contact EC.
Hardee	404 W. Orange St Wauchula, FL33873 863-245-9923, No Radio Officer. Contact EC.
Highlands	6850 West George Blvd Sebring, FL 33875 893-385-1112, No Radio Officer. Contact EC
Hillsborough	9450 E. Columbus Dr Tampa, FL 33619 813-301-7474, POC: Bill Miller N1CDO RACES Officer (EC)
Manatee	2101 47 th Terrace E Bradenton, FL 34203 941- 749-3500, POC: Steve Park W4OEP
Pasco	8744 Government Dr New Port Richey, FL 34654 Phone- 727-847-8137, POC: Tim Cunningham (EC)
Pinellas	10750 Ulmerton Rd Largo, Fl 33778 727-464-5403 (Radio Room), POC: Clayton Parrott, EM Radio Officer & EC
Polk	1890 Jim Keene Blvd Winter Haven, FL 33880 Phone, No Radio Officer. Contact EC.
Sarasota	6050 Porter Way

County	Location and Point of Contact for EOC
	Sarasota, FL 34232 941-861-5000, No Radio Officer

Weekly Nets by County

Table 4 Section ARES Nets by County

County	Frequency or Repeater	Day and Time
Charlotte	444.975 MHz	Wednesdays at 1930
DeSoto	147.075 MHz, (PL-100), Simplex if the repeater is down,	No scheduled nets
Hardee	146.625 MHz, (PL127.3)	Monday at 1900
Highlands	147.27 MHz, (PL100)	Wednesday 2000 (see alt list)
Hillsborough	440.1 MHz (PL162.2))	Thursdays at 1930
Manatee	147.195 MHz (PL 103.5), KM4EC/R	Mondays at 1900
Pasco	146.67 MHz, (PL146.2)	Wednesdays at 1930 (See alt list)
Pinellas	145.17 MHz, 443.4 MHz (PL156.7), W4ACS	Tuesday at 1930 (See alt list)
Polk	146.985,	Wednesday at 1900 (See alt list)
Sarasota	146.73 MHz, (PL100)	Thursday at 1900
West Central Florida	NI4CE, (PL100) See coverage map	Monday at 1930
	NI4CE NXDN 1200 See coverage map	Wednesday at 1930
	3940 KHz	Saturday at 0730 or after FPTN

Alternate Net List

Wide AREA Nets

- SARNET UHF- Statewide (See map for repeaters in your area)
- WCF Group NI4CE VHF/UHF- WCF (See Map for repeater in your area)
- WCF Group NI4CE NXDN- WCF Digital (See map for repeater in your area)

HF Frequencies

- 7.242 MHz Statewide (Day), Lower sideband (LSB)
- 3.940 MHz Statewide (Night), LSB
- 3.950 MHz Statewide (Night), LSB

VHF/UHF Alternate Local Nets

- 147.555 DeSoto County Primary Simplex
- 147.180 MHz (PL-100) DeSoto Secondary Repeater
- 147.180 MHz Desoto Alt. Simplex if repeater down
- 444.425 MHz FM & NXDN Hillsborough
- 145.21 MHz (PL100) Highlands
- 145.33 MHz (PL100) Highlands
- 442.825 MHz (PL100) Highlands
- 147.135 MHz (PL146.2) Pasco East
- 444.95 MHz (PL127.3) Polk South
- 444.625 MHz (PL127.3) Polk Northeast
- 443.9 MHz (PL127.3) Polk Lakeland

Regional Repeater Networks – Coverage Maps

Figure 1 NI4CE Analog FM Repeater System

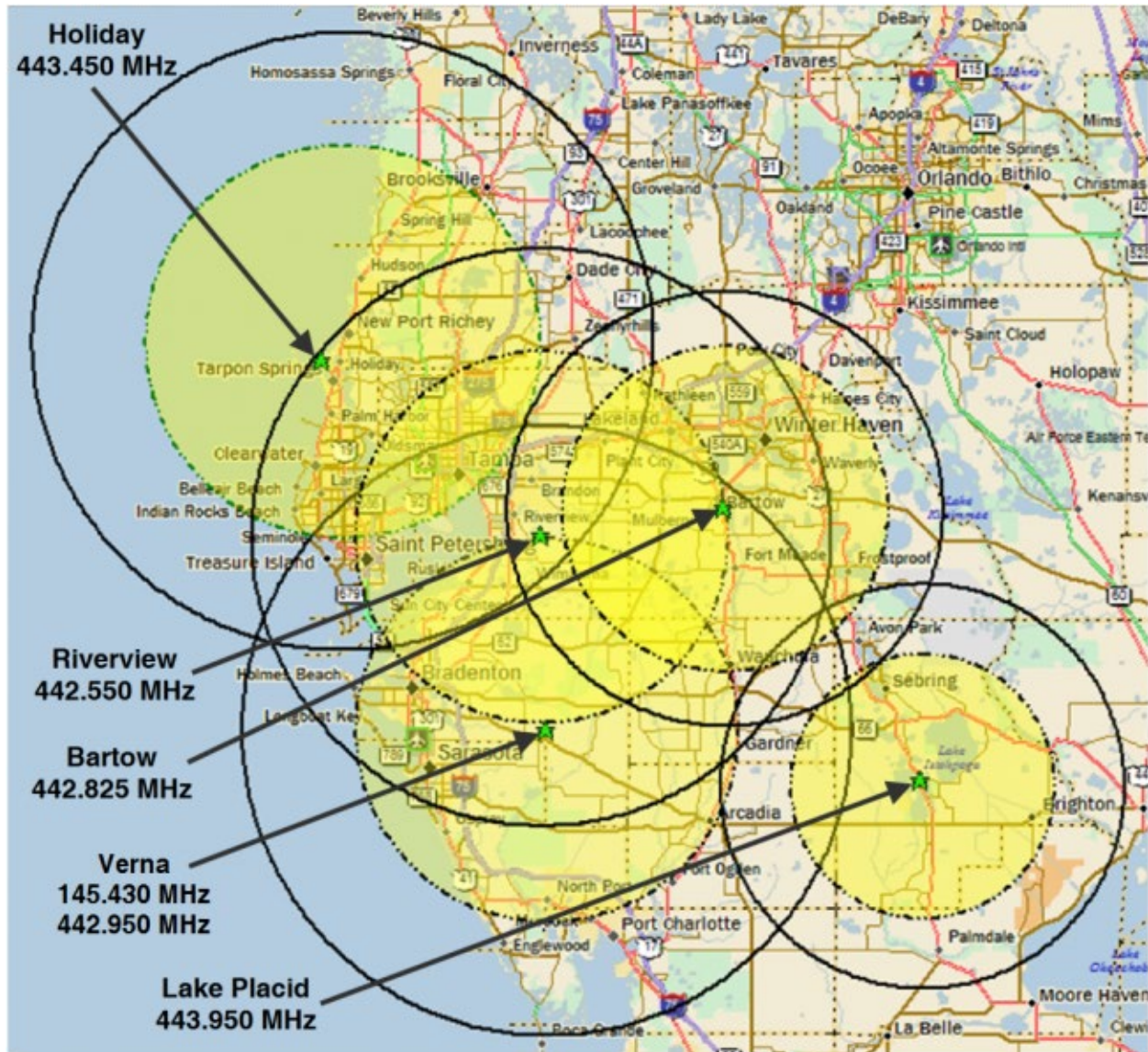


Figure 2 NI4CE NXDN Network Coverage Map

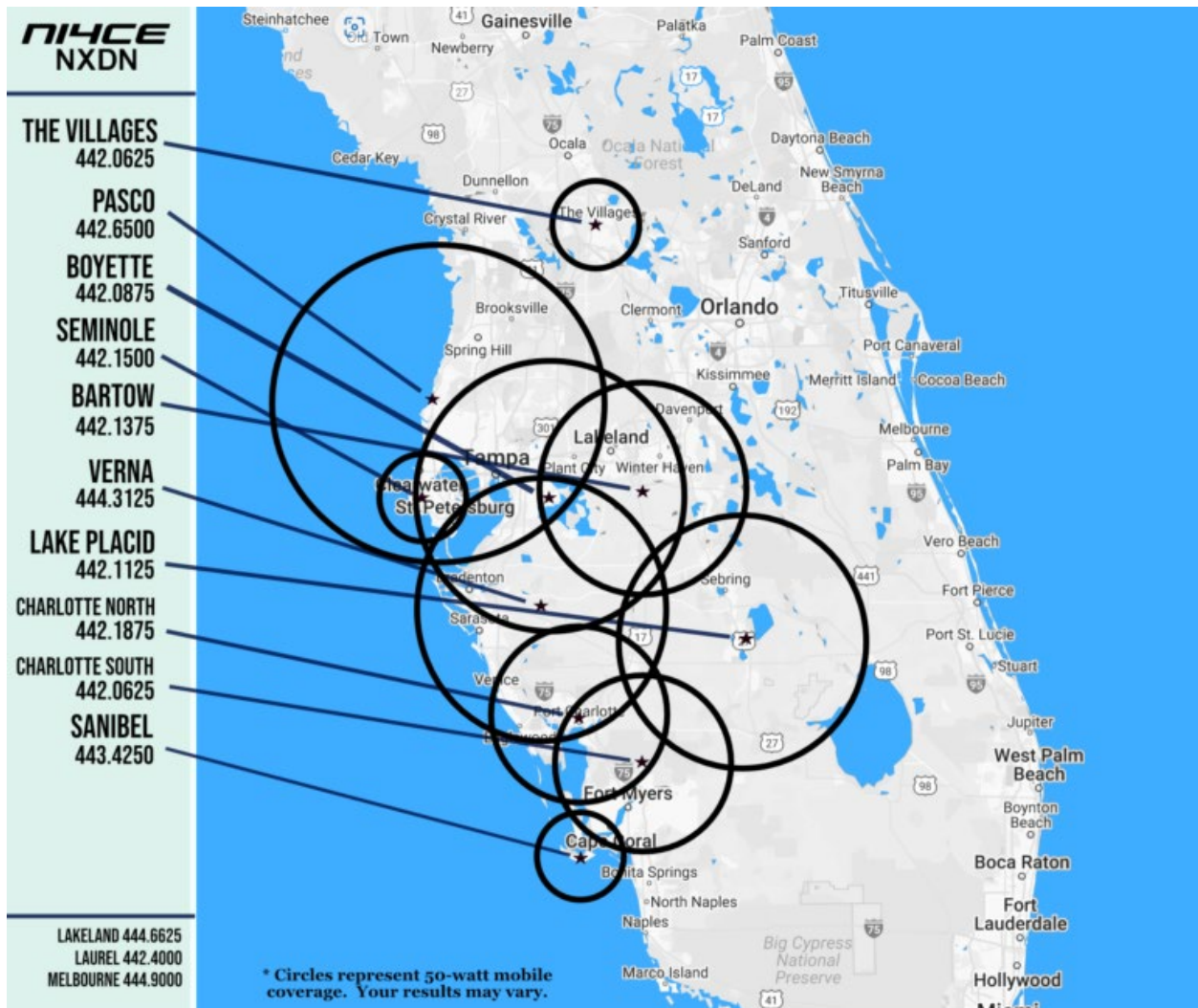
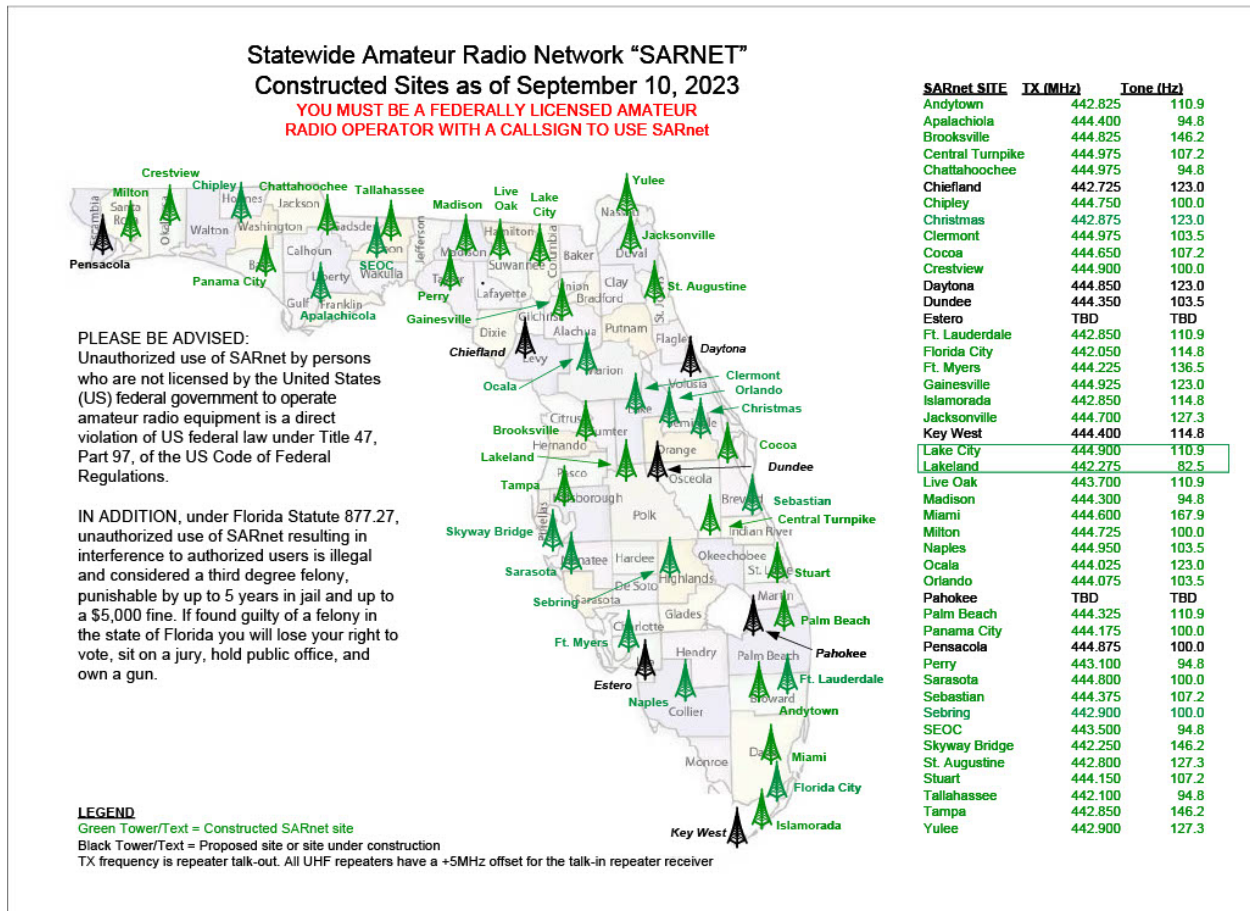


Figure 3 Statewide Amateur Radio Network



West Central Florida ARES & Affiliate Websites

County	Uniform Resource Locator (URL)
Charlotte-	https://ccflares.org
DeSoto-	https://desotoarc.org
Hardee-	
Highlands-	https://www.highlandsamateurradio.com
Hillsborough-	https://hillsboroughares.org
Manatee	https://www.mcesg.org
Pasco-	https://pascoares.org
Pinellas-	https://www.pcacs.org
Polk-	https://polkares.org
Sarasota-	https://srqares.org
West Central Florida Section ARES-	https://arrlwcf.org/wcf-section-programs/ares