

PRESSER

The Newsletter of the ARRL West Central Florida Section

Section Cabinet

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Darrell Davis, KT4WX

Assistant Section Manager
Section Emergency Coordinator
Section Traffic Manager
Dave Rockwell W4PXE

Technical Coordinator
Darrell Davis, KT4WX

Assistant Section Managers

- Jimmy Russ, AB4KA
- Mike Douglas, W4MDD
- Paul Toth NB9X
- Russ Delaney N4RTD
- Mike Lunsford KB4FHP
- Chuck Johnston W4CWJ
- Dee Turner, N4GD
- Christine Duez K4KJN
- Dan Noah WX4DAN
- Chris Bloxsom, AA4CB



Section Manager Musings

Darrell Davis, KT4WX
Section Manager
West Central Florida Section,
ARRL

This issue of THE WCF PRESSER is running a bit late this time. Life gets in the way. This month at work is the second busiest month at work for me. August is my busiest month at work. Being I do IT in an elementary school, this is the time of the year we check in our student devices (Polk County Public Schools is a 1:1 school district: one device for every student). So thank you for your understanding in advance if I miss responding to your email, text message, or phone call.

At the time, I write this to you, we just concluded our 1st Annual ARESCON, the newly established ARRL West Central Florida Section ARES Conference. Many thanks to Dave Rockwell W4PXE, our Section Emergency Coordinator and Section Traffic Manager for putting it all together. Many thanks to all those who presented at ARESCON and TECHCON

earlier this year. With the addition of ARESCON as an annual conference, we are probably one of the few ARRL Section's in the country that has an annual technical conference (TECHCON) and now an ARES/encomm conference (ARESCON).

We are also one of the few ARRL Sections to have not only one but two linked repeater systems (Analog and NXDN) that cover the entire Section, thanks to the steadfast labor of the West Central Florida Group. As a result, most of our Section nets are on VHF and UHF, where our Technical class licensees can participate.

Most ARRL Sections have their Section nets on HF out of necessity. We have several very large amateur radio clubs (Tampa Amateur Radio Club and St. Petersburg Amateur Radio Club), that do a lot for amateur radio.

The Lake Wales Radio Amateurs (LWRA) does a monthly "QRP and Tailgate Tech" event at a different city/county park.

Tamiami Amateur Radio Club hosted amateur radio contact with the International Space Station recently.

Amateur Radio is a different

phenomena here in West Central Florida. To all our radio clubs, ARES groups, and amateur radio operators, keep up the good work of making amateur radio a phenomena here in the ARRL West Central Florida Section.

Here is my challenge for you as we enter the summer months:

Be a Contributor, not a Consumer. The pastor of my church recently used this phrase in a sermon he preached on a Wednesday Evening. It applies to amateur radio as well. Are you a contributor or consumer? Do you contribute to your local radio club, ARES organization, CERT group, etc. Sadly many in amateur radio enjoy the hobby, but do not think about giving back to amateur radio, or to the community in times of need.

The primary reason we have our amateur radio licenses, is to provide emergency communications and public service communications. Are you active in your local ARES, ACS, or CERT group? Do you just consume all of the good things that amateur radio has to offer, or do you also give back to amateur radio from which you have received so much enjoyment. ? Be a Contributor, not just a Consumer.

Lastly all amateur radio operators should belong to three things: their local radio club, their local ARES, RACES, or ACS group, and the

ARRL, the National Association for Amateur Radio. They provide many good benefits to ARRL members, one's that we often do not think about.

Remember the Atlantic Hurricane Season begins on June 1, 2026 and runs through November 30 2026. Make your preparations now and do not wait until the storm is upon you. Stay cool as our long and hot summer months have just begun.



Three Polk County Amateur Radio Operators Named Recipients of the Outstanding Volunteer Award

On Thursday March 19, 2026 at the 2026 Polk County Volunteer Banquet, the Polk County Board of County Commissioners recognized three amateur radio operators for their contributions as a volunteer with the 2026 Outstanding Volunteer Award:

Jim Carlin N4JPC
Dan Haslam W5DBH
Tom LaFlam N4CHL.

Carlin is an Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) for Polk County ARES and active in Lake Ashton CERT.

Haslam is active in Polk County ARES, and helps to maintain the repeaters for the Lake Wales Radio Amateurs (LWRA) amateur radio club.

LaFlam is a volunteer firefighter, who volunteers for the EAA Sun-N-Fun Fly Inn each year.

The ARRL West Central Florida Section congratulates these three amateur radio operators on receiving the Polk County Outstanding Volunteer Award for 2026 for their service to the amateur radio community, and to the residents of Polk County.

Eric Owen KD4MZM & Tom Bentley W1HFR are Silent Keys

Eric T Owen KD4MZM, became a Silent Key on March 8, 2026. Owen was 62 years old at the time of his passing. Owen, a resident of the Sarasota area, had served as an ARRL Technical Specialist for a number of years, and was active on HF and HF digital modes. For the full obituary please go to <https://www.ehovita.com/us/obituaries/fl/>

[sarasota/eric-owen-21218928](https://www.wcfpresser.com/sarasota/eric-owen-21218928).

Thomas Bentley W1HFR became a Silent Key on March 15, 2026. Bentley was 64 years old at the time of his passing. Bentley is survived by his wife, Catherine Bentley WA1HFR, and other family members.

Bentley had a long and dedicated career of 24 years working in Fire Departments in Bristol, CT and Hebron, NH., finally retiring in 2019. Bentley achieved the rank of Lieutenant, and served as an EMT, Firefighter II, and was an instructor at the New Hampshire Fire Academy.

Bentley, a resident of Ridge Manor, enjoyed creating items for amateur radio with his 3D printer, producing custom t-shirts, cups, and hats. Bentley was active on several HF nets including the Florida Phone Traffic Net and the South Florida ARES Net.

Bentley was a member of the Spring Hill Amateur Radio Club, the Hernando County Amateur Radio Association, and was active in the East Pasco Amateur Radio Society.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date, with details to be announced. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made to the Hernando Firefighters Benevolent Relief Fund at <https://hffbrf.firstresponderprocessing.com>



Duwain Hunt W8JJV Recipient of the 2025 Florida CERT Distinguished Service Award

In August 2025, Duwain Hunt W8JJV, was named the recipient of the 2025 Florida Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Distinguished Service Award. This honor recognizes individuals for their exceptional contributions to the growth and development of CERT and Emergency Management communities in Florida.

Hunt first became an amateur radio operator in 1964. He was introduced to amateur radio by Francis Burton K8JRC. Burton was the teacher of his Math Class at Huff Jr. High School in Lincoln Park, MI, who had an amateur radio station set up in his classroom. Hunt was very thankful to Burton and Bill Pearson for inspiring a life long interest in communications and Amateur Radio.

Hunt is very heavily involved in encomm, and hopes to finish his state certification for deployment with ARES in the State of Florida.

Hunt has been an active contributor to the CERT program for almost a decade, not only in Charlotte County, where he is a regular instructor in both CERT basic and in advanced training, but throughout Southwest Florida.

Hunt is also AUXCOM trained, an ARRL Official Emergency Station, an ARRL Technical Specialist and an ARRL Assistant Emergency Coordinator for Charlotte County ARES.

Hunt also enjoys building battery packs for use in the field, and serves as net control for numerous nets in his area on 2 Meters and 70 CM on a regular basis. Hunt even now has a Zenith Trans-Oceanic SW Radio (1955) just like the one he had when he was a kid and loves it!

The ARRL West Central Florida Section congratulates Duwain Hunt W8JJV on earning the 2025 Florida Community Emergency Response Team Distinguished Service Award.



First Annual ARESCON

a Success

The ARRL West Central Florida Section hosted the First Annual ARES conference, which is called ARESCON, on Saturday May 16, 2026 at the Hillsborough Public Service

Operations Complex (PSOC), located at 9450 E Columbus Dr., Tampa, FL 33619, between 1300 EDT and 1600 EDT. A pizza luncheon was enjoyed by all who attended before ARESCON got underway.

An ARESCON webpage has been added to the Section website which contains information about ARESCON, which included a conference schedule, list of presentations, and any slide presentations or handouts used by the presenters. The ARESCON webpage can be found at <https://arrlwcf.org/wcfarescon>.

Also the ARESCON presentations have been recorded and will be available for viewing on the Section YouTube channel located at <https://www.youtube.com/@arrlwcf>, after post-production editing has been completed by Russ Delaney N4RTD, one of our Assistant Section Managers.

A 2nd Annual ARESCON is tentatively being planned for the Spring of 2027, exact date and venue to be determined. A WCF SECTION PRESS RELEASE will announce the exact date and venue once they are established.



Two ARRL West Central Florida Section HAMS Recipients of the ARRL Certificate of Merit. First Annual ARESCON Videos Are Now Published

On Saturday May 16, 2026, at the opening of the First Annual ARESCON, the ARES Conference for the ARRL West Central Florida Section, the Section presented the ARRL Certificate of Merit to Sanford Wyatt KM4WXX and Duwain Hunt W8JJV, for their contributions to the 2026 ARRL West Central Florida Section Simulated Emergency Test, called Operation Dark Start, which simulated a major power failure throughout much of the State of Florida.

For the video of the presentation of ARRL Certificate of Merit at the opening of the First Annual ARESCON, you may go to the Section YouTube channel at

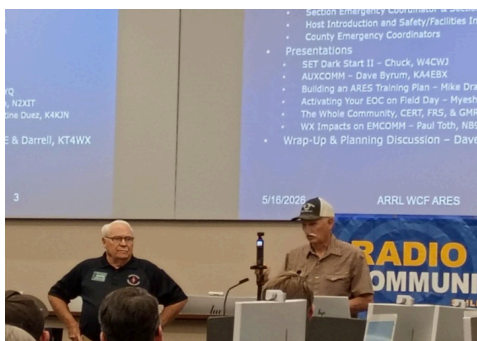
<https://www.youtube.com/arrlwcf>.

Twenty Sixth Annual WCF Section Field Day Caravan Coming this ARRL Field Day

As is traditional here in the ARRL West Central Florida Section, the ARRL West Central Florida Section will facilitate 26th Annual ARRL West Central Florida Section Field Day Caravan on Saturday June 27, 2026. The ARRL West Central Florida Section has facilitated the Field Day Caravan since the inception of the Section in 2000.

There will be two teams once again this year. Team One will be composed of Darrell Davis KT4WX, Section Manager, and Russ Delaney N4RTD, Assistant Section Manager, and will cover the southern part of the Section. Team Two will be composed of Dave Rockwell W4PXE, Section Emergency Coordinator/Section Traffic Manager, and will cover the northern part of the Section.

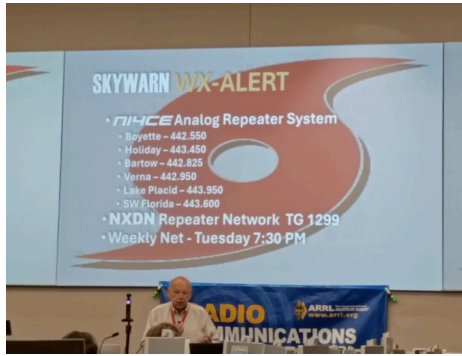
If you wish to have a visit from the ARRL WCF Section Field Day Caravan, please register your Field Day site at the ARRL Field Day Locator at <https://www.arrl.org/field-day-locator>. You will need to be logged into the ARRL website



before you can register your Field Day site. Please register your Field Day site as soon as possible and no later than Saturday June 20, 2026. This will give us time to complete the travel itinerary for both teams and publish them on the Field Day Caravan webpage which is located at <https://arrlwf.org/wcf-special-events/west-central-florida-section-field-day-caravan/>.

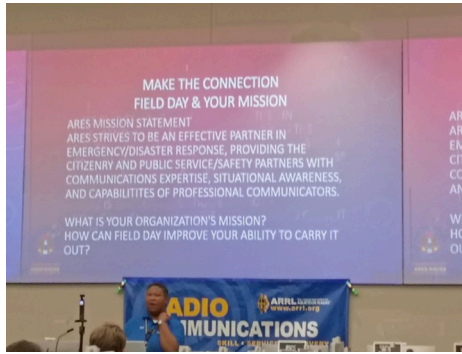
A WCF SECTION PRESS RELEASE will be disseminated once the travel itinerary is published on the WCF Section Field Day Caravan webpage.

Photos from the First Annual ARESCON:



Remembering Memorial Day

Memorial Day is Monday May 25, 2026. The ARRL West Central Florida Section is commemorating Memorial Day, and asks everyone to take time to remember, and reflect on the ultimate sacrifice of life given by the men and women in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. We should never forget their sacrifice for the freedom we enjoy in this great country.

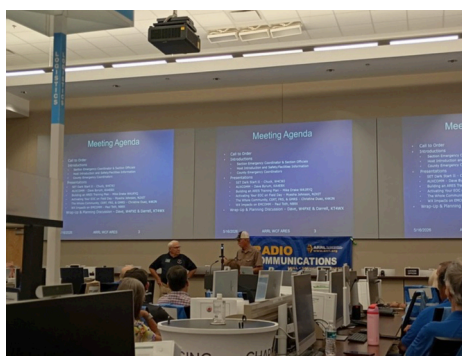
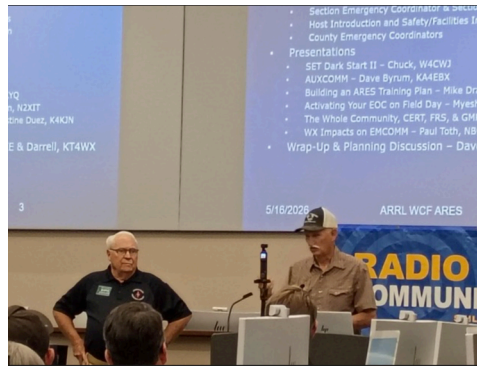


Now is the Time to Prepare for Hurricane Season

Story by Russ Delaney, N4RTD, Assistant Section Mgr

National Hurricane Preparedness Week was May 3rd thru 9th, 2026. Even if you missed it, you still have time to get prepared.

Being prepared isn't just about your radio gear and backup power for them. Your main focus needs to be an overall



plan that includes your entire household.

If you have lived in Florida for some time, you may know the drill, but does anything in your plan need to change?

Create a checklist and follow that list to be sure you and your family will be prepared. That list is handy not just for storms, but as we learned in our recent Simulated Emergency Test (SET) titled “Dark Start,” other non-storm related disasters can wreak havoc as well.

For more information on how you can be prepared, visit the NOAA “Prepare Before Hurricane Season” Web site at <https://www.noaa.gov/prepare-before-hurricane-season>

Another Successful Dayton Hamvention

By Russ Delaney, N4RTD, ARRL WCF Assistant Section Manager

Hamvention 2026 General Chairman Brian Markland, on or around Friday, May 22nd, 2026, stated that “Hamvention Concludes with Record-Breaking Spirit.”

There were a remarkable 37,924 attendees gathered at the Greene County Fairgrounds & Expo Center, reaffirming Hamvention’s standing as the world’s largest and most celebrated amateur radio

gathering.

“On behalf of the entire Hamvention team, I am thrilled to share that Hamvention 2026 was an outstanding success. Seeing nearly 38,000 fellow amateur radio enthusiasts come together in Xenia is something that never gets old. This event belongs to every volunteer, every exhibitor, and every guest who made the journey — and I could not be more proud of what we accomplished together.” - Brian Markland, General Chairman, Hamvention 2026.

Having attended Hamvention numerous times since the early days at Hara Arena in 1990 and on when I lived in the Detroit area, to making my return numerous times since being in Florida for over 20 years, it never gets old.

Hamvention doesn’t get old for me as each year is a new experience. I go back and stay in the same hotel with folks I’ve known since starting out as a Ham over 36 years ago, to seeing the new technologies being displayed.

This event for me is not about whether or not I pick up any amateur related gear (some years I didn’t purchase anything). For me, it’s about the camaraderie with my old friends, getting a first glimpse of hams I had recently met on the air, or seeing interesting call signs and stopping and chatting to get to know new ones.

When I lived in the Detroit area, going to Dayton was easy for all of us. We generally went down in a caravan, stayed at the same hotel, and drove back when it was all over with.

These days, living in Florida, I can make the drive up, but being an airline retiree, it’s an easy choice for me to fly up to Hamvention. However, this does put some limitations on what you could, if you were going to, buy at the show. And, if you have to make connections in another city, like I did, as well as experience weather along the way, the journey can still take a good part of the day and evening.

Regardless of how you choose to get there, a trip to Dayton should be on your bucket list. Although there are those who miss the old “Hara” days, I will say, I feel that Xenia is a much better place for the event, and definitely more room to spread out and in the aisles. In an old video I made in 1993, it was apparent how packed in folks were at Hara. Xenia has much more space to move around the indoor and outdoor vendors.

Whether you fly or drive, one day, try and make it up to Hamvention.

