

# NFARC / ALACHUA ARES(R) November 2024 Update

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z NCS521

We have been BUSY here in Alachua County!

**Hurricanes** Our team has now deployed for three hurricanes in 2024, the last being Hurricane Milton, Oct 9-10. During Hurricane Milton, we had over 50 different hams check into our volunteer command net, and our 138 hours of volunteer service likely netted another \$22,080 for Alachua County, bringing our 2024 total to over \$60,000. Our After Action Report can be reviewed here:

#	Incident	Deployed Hours	Estimated Reimbursement
1	2022 Hurricane Nicole <sup>8</sup>	72 deployed hours	\$ 8,640
2	2023 Hurricane Idalia	41 deployed hours	\$ 6,500
3	2024 Hurricane Debby	165 deployed hours	\$24,000
4	2024 Hurricane Helene <sup>9</sup>	178 deployed hours	\$28,480
5	2024 Hurricane Milton	138 deployed hours	\$22,080
	TOTAL ESTIMATE	456 deployed hours	\$89,700

<https://www.nf4rc.club/incidents/2024-hurricane-milton/>

**Veterans' Day Ceremonies** This was our first-ever display at the annual Alachua County Veterans' Day celebration, held on the grounds of Veterans' Park, with helicopter and sky-diver arrivals and public speeches and talks in honor of veterans. The Gainesville Amateur Radio Society has been holding successful displays there for years, but we decided we



needed to gain more volunteers and showing up for these kinds of public events would be a "good thing." We did a fine job for our first-ever event, with

- two 10x10 canopies,
- lots of volunteers,
- our 30-foot telescoping mast,
- HF and VHF radios and WINLINK capabilities, and
- Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ even brought his 1946 Jeep and lots of vintage and current ham radios as display items!

*What fun!* But we forgot a FLAG for the top of our mast! We showed adults and kids alike how we can move disaster messaging either to cellular texting or email without needing any Internet or originating cell phone.



At our November meeting, we discussed the successes and "oops" portions of our display and will be doing it all over again (hopefully easier!) at the December 7th Life South Santa Delivery event.

**Field Day Outcomes** The ARRL has released Field Day Scores. This year we entered in the far-more competitive 4A category. It was a lot of work to set up at a totally new location, but volunteer after volunteer made impressive improvements in their skills and scores.

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We placed 12th in the nation out of about 186 entrants in Field Day 4A,  
netting us a top-6.5% standing!

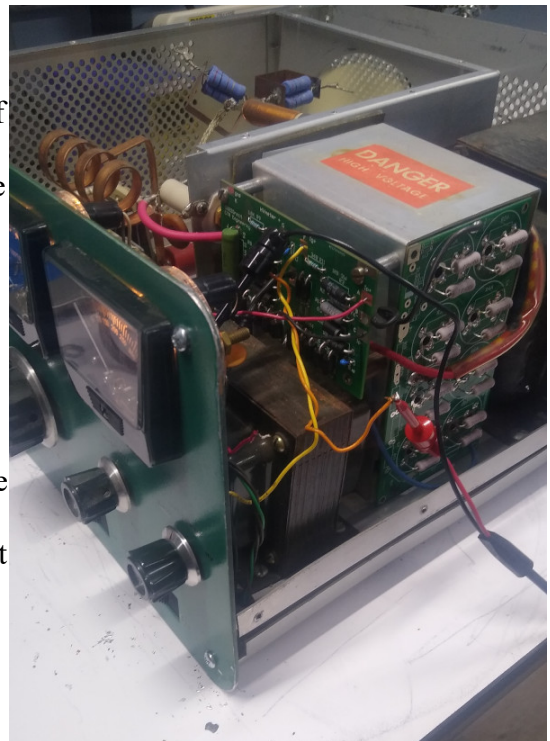
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We were VERY pleased. What was even more interesting was studying the NFL team who squeaked above us -- **Sun County Amateur Radio Society**. Surprisingly, there are a lot of similarities between the two active clubs -- both are raising their skills and scores year after year. The SCARS club has an impressive website at: <http://www.146970.com/> and they operate an impressive 2 meter voice repeater also.

**Lessons From Tennessee** Brett Wallace, NH2KW, volunteered with an organized group in the disaster zone of Hurricane Helene in Tennessee. He is just that kind of a guy! We had him give us a slide show at our November meeting and he described how effectively volunteer groups both from inside and outside the region worked to help those impacted by the floods. He went over communications systems and techniques that moved supplies and kept teams safe. They dealt with great people and not-so-great people in their efforts and he had keen insights to share with us about what works in such disaster service. Way to go, Brett! We will have him back to bring us more information, soon!

**6-meter Amplifier** The heavy-duty SB-220 King Modified 6-meter amplifier has now generated 950 watts of output thanks to **months of work by Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO**. Mike put in a whole new power supply (we're talking 3,000 volts!) and completely replaced a destroyed meter and switch and made many other repairs. Next is working on the T/R relay and tidying things up. We hope to have this on the air soon!

**6-meter Meteor Scatter** Mike is also our mentor for this unusual mode of propagation. We have a POTA/Meteor Scatter event planned for Saturday December 14th- near the peak of the GEMINID meteor shows. Enter at the North entrance to San Felasco State Park, meeting there at 0800 at the Pavilion. We will be bringing our 35 foot alumina tower with a 6 meter beam and 600W Icom amplifier to do Meteor Scatter during the meteor shower that weekend. And we will also support multi-band HF POTA operations using our tower, HF antenna and Sextuple Antenna Multiplexer. Come join us! For further information get on our groups.io site <https://groups.io/g/NF4RC> or email Gordon @ docvacuumtubes at gmail.com



We will have a "dress rehearsal" for the Meteor Scatter event at the Gibby household at 2PM on Sunday December 1.

**New EOC Go Box** -- Dave Huckstep is ALMOST finished with his creation of two County-owned HF-GoBoxes with newly provided (by the county) HF & VHF/UHF gear, including an ICOM 7300 and 600 watt amplifier (in two separate professional go-boxes). This is a labor of love for Dave W4JIR and we'll be using the amplifier for our Meteor Scatter efforts. Go Dave!

**License Classes & HinterLand Emergency Comms Reid Tillery K9RFT** continues to just be a bundle of energy, conducting Thursday evening Technician License classes, and equipping local contract fire stations with new antenna masts (also thanks to GARS crew Terry Gordon and Shannon Boal!) and conducting Wednesday East Alachua County comms tests and bi-weekly NVIS nets. Great going!

### Upcoming Events

- Our team will provide a display at the December 7th LifeSouth Santa Delivery massive children-focused event at Santa Fe College. For more details, see our Incident Action Plan at:



<https://www.nf4rc.club/dec-7-lifesouth-santa-delivery-incident-action-plan/>

**LIFESOUTH**  
Community Blood Centers  
**Operation Santa Delivery**

We are likely to be holding LabNLunches in the coming months to support:

- Finishing up any remaining details on the TEN Arduino-based electronic Winkeyer-type keyers
- Building VHF/UHF portable voice/data go-boxes
- Building simply 6-meter antennas
- Building RFI-filtered portable inverter stations



And we plan to participate as 3I category in the 2025 Winter Field Day. Come join in on the fun and learning!