

What's happening? Santa Rosa County Edition

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As if June wasn't already going to be busy enough with the ARRL Field Day, in comes Tropical Storm Claudette. While we didn't take a direct hit, we were on the eastern side of the storm and it generated several tornadoes, straight line winds, and a significant amount of rain in our area as it moved northeast. We activated our SKYWARN net that covers Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa counties in Florida for 9 hours as the storm moved through our area of responsibility. We are thankful for our relationship with the National Weather Service of Mobile, AL as we have access to their Weather Chat system to provide updates over the air as soon as they are available to us. Our net control stations are all trained as Advanced SKYWARN Spotters and have had additional net control training to ensure the information they provide is accurate and that we don't speculate, only report.

Now enter Field Day, something we've all been looking forward to for months. This year we opted to setup in the parking lot of the Santa Rosa County Emergency Operations Center in Milton. This gave us an opportunity to be centrally located and readily accessible to the public.

Setup began at 0730 L on Saturday. We had approximately 12 hams onsite to assist with setup. One takeaway from this year is that we plan on setting up on Friday next year. Setting up on Saturday really takes a toll on everyone and by the time setup is completed, no one really feels like operating until later in the day. Our operations plan was done in ICS format this year to give us the opportunity to practice for a real event.

We also unveiled our brand-new mobile communications trailer. The cargo trailer was donated to us in part by Ascend Performance Materials in Pensacola as well as contributions by several hams. In next month's issue we will have pictures of the inside. This was really our "shakedown" trip for the trailer, so we have a few more things to button up. We plan to use this trailer for emergency communications deployments as well as to setup at festivals, fairs, and other events to educate the public about amateur radio. You can view the dedication video the trailer on [our website](#).

The Santa Rosa County Emergency Management team also allowed us to utilize their mobile command post to house 4 of our operating stations to help keep our operators out of the sun.



We worked hard to plan an event that would interest the public as well as to help support other organizations in the area. We partnered with a local food bank, [Food Raising Friends](#), that provides meals for children during school breaks in which they normally would not have received a nutritious meal. To encourage people to donate, we offered a raffle ticket for each item donated for prizes including hand crank weather radios and a 43" 4K Smart TV (donated by 2 of our ARES team.) In total we received close to 300 items for the food bank. Some who didn't know about the food drive even left to bring back an item to donate. The winner of the TV ended up being a new ham that was taking his license test to upgrade from technician to general, which he passed. The video of the drawing is available on [our site](#).



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And if all that wasn't enough to draw the public in, what goes better with "ham" radio than barbeque? A local food truck setup in the parking lot offering some amazing barbeque to the public. Since it was there, we gave away close to \$600 worth of free BBQ meals to any dispatchers, firefighters, EMS, or law enforcement members that stopped by to visit.

While visitors were welcome anytime, our main public event was published as 1-6PM local time. During this time our focus was on meeting and greeting the public and introducing them to ham radio. We wanted to make sure that everyone that came onsite got the opportunity to speak with a ham and get on the air if they chose to. *Gary-KF4JK speaking to one of our visitors in front of the local CERT team's booth.* In addition to the food drive, the local

In addition to the food drive, the local Air Force recruiting office contacted us and asked if they could set up a booth.



At the end of it all we had around 40-50 visitors that came throughout the event. We may not have made the most contacts on the air, but we definitely made a significant amount of contact with the visitors that stopped by. We are already beginning to talk about our plans for Winter Field Day as well as the ARRL Field Day again next year. The EOC parking lot turned out to be a great location and we are thankful to the Emergency Management team for allowing us to host it in their parking lot.



July is already looking like a very busy month for our team. Our next training session is on Saturday July 10 at 3:00PM local time focusing on SKYWARN nets and reading weather radar. It will be at the Santa Rosa County EOC (4499 Pine Forest Road in Milton, FL.)



On Saturday July 24 at 4:00PM local time we will also be participating in a Red Cross Shelter Simulation at the Milton Community Center. Pre-registration is required and more details can be found [online](#).

We are currently trying to coordinate with other ham radio clubs, teams, and individuals in Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa counties for ham education, support, and public events. You can read more about our mission on the Rural Radio Preparedness Association [website](#). The goal of this effort is to provide a club agnostic team of people to help new hams as well as educate the public on ham radio via several different methods. For those in the local area interested in participating, we will have a meeting at Florida Town Park in Pace, FL (at the end of Floridatown Road) on Saturday July 24 at 11:00AM local time. Lunch will be provided.

For more information on our Santa Rosa County ARES team or to get involved, please visit us online at srcares.org, check us out on [Facebook](#) or email info@srcares.org.