

**HENDRY COUNTY ARES SEVERE WEATHER EXERCISE REPORT**  
**National Weather Service #tornadodrill**  
**January 25, 2017**

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*After NWS Radio made #tornadodrill announcement:*

Opened Hendry County ARES Severe Weather exercise net at 10:12AM. WD4RCC net control. WT4FEC Clewiston net control & relay.

After many attempts by WT4FEC to open a net with Clewiston repeater, communications were not successful. Traffic from Clewiston was relayed by SMS.

*Following stations reported:*

KM4WJV	Lehigh Acres
K9GZT	Labelle
KN4AFW	Labelle
KI4QIQ	Labelle
WT4FEC	Pioneer
KM4EWE	Clewiston
KJ4WIC	Clewiston

*Weather reports filed as follows:*

KM4EWE Clewiston, approx. one mile north of SR80 at city center at foot of dike.

Windy conditions, and loose debris like cabbage palm branches and empty plastic trash cans being blown around residential yards.

KJ4WIC Clewiston at John Boy Auditorium

Staff and guest in facility had moved to a safe area inside the structure. No injuries.

KM4WJV Lehigh Acres, approx 1 mile south of SR 80 off Joel Blvd.

Funnel cloud approx. two miles east of his location moving east towards Hendry County at 10:24AM

K9GZT Labelle, approx 1 mi., NE courthouse on Riverbend Blvd.

Tornado passed from SE-NW approx 3 mi. west of Labelle at 8:00AM for 15 minutes. Crossed river, damaging and “dropping parts of boats and docks” as progressed. Estimated 100 yards wide

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KN4AFW Labelle, at Florida South Western College on Cowboy Way between SR80 and SR29.

High winds at approx 8:00AM for about 15 minutes with resulting damage of two oak trees blown over in parking area, south-facing front glass doors and front glass windows blown in. Power out. Power lines down, with no arcing. Students and faculty sheltered in place during event, and have been since sent home. No injuries known.

KI4QIQ Labelle, at Labelle Library, South foot of Bridge on Bridge Street.

Light winds, no damage seen.

WT4FEC Pioneer, approx 10 mi east of Labelle and 20 mi west of Clewiston, south of SR80.

Severe thunderstorm in vicinity of Hendry Isles Blvd., and SR 80 at 10:30AM Power out, scattered rain, scattered pea-sized hail. Winds gusting 60-70 MPH coming from the NW.

No further check in's. No followup reports.

Net secured at 10:40AM

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Evaluation: Overall, the net went well, and participation was positive. Participants were patient with the delays while controllers attempted to establish contact from Labelle to Clewiston. Everyone stayed through the entire net. Use of GPS coordinates as reporting positions is discouraged as it requires someone to look up the coordinates on a map and determine the physical location. Using local reference points (like driving directions) is preferable.

Interference from a significant VHF skip, and repeaters in adjacent counties on the same outputs as both Labelle and Clewiston created significant issues. WT4FEC was unable to bring up the Clewiston repeater, nor was KM4EWE able to hear him. The inability to have reliable communications across the 50+ mile separation between the repeaters is an issue being addressed by Big Lake ARC and Hendry County EM. **This is the major issue that must be resolved in some way prior to the next storm season.**

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Submitted January 29, 2017

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