

# SUNCOAST OBSERVER

A quarterly newsletter brought to you by the National Weather Service Tampa Bay Area, FL

www.weather.gov/tampa

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## Top stories in this newsletter



NWS Tampa Bay Safety Brochures Now Available in Spanish



NWS Tampa Bay SKYWARN® Program

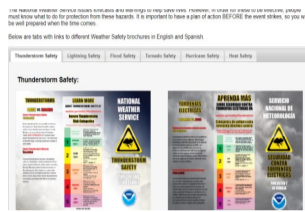


KTBW Radar Dome Replaced



NWS Tampa Bay Participates in Inaugural GCAWS Workshop

## NWS Tampa Bay Safety Brochures Now Available in Spanish



By: Yidiana Zayas and Keily Delerme

The National Weather Service issues forecasts and warnings to help save lives and property. However, in order for these to be effective, people must know what to do to protect themselves from these hazards. It is important to have a plan of action before the event strikes, so they can be well prepared when the time comes.

In addition, it must be taken into account that around 20% of the population in Florida speaks Spanish. It is important to try to reach as many people as possible in order to fulfill the aforementioned mission. To help achieve it, the Spanish Team from the NWS Tampa Bay Area translated some of the weather safety brochures. Here you will find valuable information about the most common weather hazards in our area.

Now is the time to prepare for future possible events and have a plan for before, during, and after any weather event. We encourage you to visit: [weather.gov/tbw/brochures](https://weather.gov/tbw/brochures) to access all the informative brochures in both languages: English and Spanish.

Be #WeatherReady.

## NWS Tampa Bay SKYWARN® Program



By: Dan Noah

The impacts of hazardous weather are experienced by many Americans each year. To obtain critical weather information, NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, established SKYWARN® with partner organizations. SKYWARN® is a volunteer program with nearly 290,000 trained severe weather spotters. These volunteers help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather to the National Weather Service.

NWS encourages anyone with an interest in public service and access to communication, such as HAM radio, to join the SKYWARN® program. Volunteers include police and fire personnel, dispatchers, EMS workers, public utility workers and other concerned private citizens. Individuals affiliated with hospitals, schools, churches, nursing homes or who have a responsibility for protecting others are also encouraged to become a spotter.

Please see <https://weather.gov/tampa/skywarn> for more information on SKYWARN. Please see <http://www.weather.gov/tbw/wx4tor> for information on amateur radio networks and frequencies in our area.

## KTBW Radar Dome Replaced



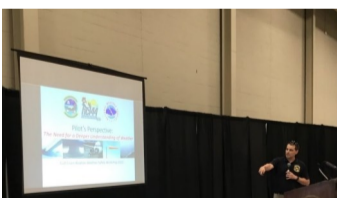
By: Josh Campbell and Tyler Fleming

Between February 28th and March 13th, the KTBW WSR-88D radar in Ruskin, FL was offline while a crew from the Radar Operations Center in Norman, Oklahoma replaced the radar dome (or radome). Individual panels were removed from the inside and replaced one at a time until the entire dome was rebuilt.

The dome of the radar is typically what people think of when they hear radar however inside of the dome is an antenna that looks like a satellite dish and some very sensitive equipment. The dome of a radar serves to protect this equipment from the harsh environment that could damage it. It is also coated with a hydrophobic surface that minimizes interference to the radar beam when the radar itself gets rained on.

The radar dome replacement took the contractors 2 weeks to do because of the massive scale of the project. The panels had to be replaced one at a time from the top down. When they were originally built they did it around a skeleton from the ground up to maintain the structural integrity of the panels while being built. There are 66 panels, and each panel is around 5 feet across. The radome itself is 38 feet in diameter. Periodic replacement of radome panels or the full radome is important to ensure the radar's operational integrity over its full life cycle. This new dome should hopefully last us another 20 years.

## NWS Tampa Bay Participates in Inaugural GCAWS Workshop



By: Austen Flannery

The inaugural Gulf Coast Aviation Weather Safety (GCAWS) Workshop was held in New Orleans on Feb. 24-25. The purpose of the GCAWS Workshop is to promote aviation safety and productivity through improved weather awareness and forecasting services. GCAWS is designed to strengthen communication and best practices between the aviation and weather forecasting communities to support the National Airspace System (NAS). Groups represented included NWS meteorologists (including from the Tampa Bay Office), military personnel, private and general aviation pilots, airlines, airports, and other federal agencies from across the country.

GCAWS was separated into two individual workshops. The first day was focused on aviation weather forecasting. The second day was focused on meeting pilot and air traffic controller needs for weather safety information, including presentations on aviation weather hazard recognition, mitigation, and avoidance. The GCAWS workshop was a resounding success and provided a great opportunity for networking, collaboration, and discussions with partners within the aviation community.

We look forward to the next GCAWS workshop that will be held in either late 2024 or early 2025 at a yet to be determined location. Be on the lookout for announcements concerning the next GCAWS in the near future! More information on the inaugural GCAWS, including saved presentation slides/recordings and workshop photos, can be found at the [GCAWS website](#).