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## The Case of the Missing Repeater



*from September 2009*

On an otherwise uneventful morning in early May, the Grounds and Landscaping Department at Florida State University discovered their radios no longer worked.

Clues were scant. Desperate, the department placed a call to Mike O'Brien, owner of Tallahassee 2 Way Radio Systems, who provided radios to the university's different departments for the past 15 years.

"We responded to their call within one hour and we found that their repeater was no longer on campus," recalls O'Brien. "The locked room housed five repeaters. Someone had come in and stripped the department's repeater out of the room. The other four were undisturbed. The only things left [from the missing repeater] were two concrete blocks and the LMR 400 cable hanging from the wall."

"I had never seen anything like that before," O'Brien says.

With a little detective work the rest of the story quickly unfolded: The missing repeater had been donated to FSU by an employee several years ago. He had recently passed away, and his widow had requested that the repeater be removed and donated to the local ham radio club. Unfortunately, the FSU Grounds and Landscaping Department was not informed prior to the repeater's removal.

It was now a race against time to get a new repeater purchased and installed.

"I made a quick call to Icom Systems explaining the situation. They went to work, and I was able to provide FSU purchasing with a quote for an Icom



FR6000 repeater package the very same day," O'Brien says. "Icom's technicians expedited the order and we received and installed the repeater within four days."

While waiting for the repeater to arrive, the department utilized their talk-around channel.

The new IDAS FR6000 repeater was installed May 7, 2009. Not only did it meet the department's need for a quick fix to its communications problems, the repeater offers advanced digital/analog mixed-mode operation.

Part of Icom's family of IDAS products, the FR6000 allows users to gradually introduce digital technology while still using existing analog radios in a system.

"The department currently does not use the digital capabilities of the unit but they understood that they needed a unit that was future proof," O'Brien

explains. "The purchasing department liked the idea that I could provide this unit for just a few dollars more than an analog unit."

In addition to the new FR6000 repeater, the Grounds and Landscaping Department has 37 Icom F21 portables for general use and another six waterproof Icom F60V portables reserved for irrigation employees.

O'Brien has supplied hundreds of Icom radios over the years to various FSU departments, from athletics to maintenance. Currently there are five Icom repeaters on campus.

He expects the university to continue to purchase IDAS products in the future. "They like the idea that the unit is future-proof," O'Brien says. "It's a smart investment."