



RECREATIONAL
AVIATION FOUNDATION

Brief



Lakeland, Fla. — A tornado struck the Lakeland Airport during the Sun 'n Fun Fly-in on Thursday afternoon, Mar. 31, 2011, causing extensive damage to numerous aircraft in vendor displays and on the flight line. In the aftermath of the storm, twisted and flipped aircraft littered the display area.

The RAF had a full complement of folks in Lakeland with 14 on hand, and the entire team was at ground zero during this most unfortunate event. The onset was sudden, and the RAF tent became a shelter for passers-by who were seeking refuge from the storm. Our tent held tight, unlike those of many vendors around us. There are some early reports of injuries, but no fatalities. Fortunately, our only casualties were a damaged display aircraft, broken TVs, and some wet shoes and shirts. We all made it out of the Sun 'n Fun area safely, and will have to wait until we can return tomorrow before we can fully assess the damage.

The Aviat Husky in front of our tent stayed in place until the winds—which were reported to exceed 100 mph—peaked, tearing the aircraft from its tiedowns and blowing it across the street ([click here to see video](#)).

Once we return to the booth on Friday morning, we will be able to assess the damage and determine how to conduct the remainder of the show. On the bright side, the forecast for the weekend is calling for spectacular weather.

Please check our website, <http://theraf.org>, for videos and photographs of the damage, as well as updates on our current status.