



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Fort Worth, Texas

February 2004

SOUTHERN TOPICS

Working Together To Save Lives

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR



On January 16 I participated in the dedication at WFO Tampa Bay of a new NWR marine transmitter. Co-sponsored by the NWS and NOAA Fisheries, the directional transmitter further extends service to the marine community off the west central Florida coast. The ceremony was well attended with representatives from NOAA Fisheries and NOAA's Aircraft Operations Center, in addition to our NWS staff. There was extensive media coverage of the event. The program included remarks from NOAA Administrator Lautenbacher, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries Bill Hogarth, and myself. There are five other NWR marine

transmitters, three in California, one in Washington and one in Massachusetts. In my remarks I noted:



Fifty-two percent of the population of the United States, about 150 million people, live in coastal counties and - to a large extent - they are already served by existing weather radios. However, I am particularly interested in how we may further improve marine weather services across our large coastal areas in the Gulf states and the southeastern United States. At WFO Tampa Bay - just as at all NWS forecast Offices in the nation - we are showing that "government closest to the people serves best." Our dedicated staff here at this office will ensure timely forecasts, watches, warnings and special weather statements are on the NWR throughout the Tampa Bay area and the coastal waters of west-central Florida. And working closely with NOAA Fisheries they will ensure other critical information for the marine community is also broadcast.

To give you an idea of the volume of marine-related forecasts and statements we are talking about - the Tampa Bay WFO issues an average of more than 2,000 marine products each year. Our nation has some of the most active and severe weather in the world, and central Florida is known as the thunderstorm and lightning capital of the nation. This area also has one of the highest tropical storm threats in the coastal United States. This new weather radio provides the added advantage of getting vital NOAA Marine Fisheries information out to more of the marine community, where they work day after day - at sea.

NEW MIC. I am pleased to announce a recent Meteorologist-in-Charge appointment. **Justin Weaver** has been appointed Meteorologist-in-Charge of WFO Lubbock. Justin obtained a BS degree in meteorology from Central Michigan and began his NWS career as an intern at WSFO Lubbock in 1990. He earned an MS degree from Texas Tech and served as the service hydrologist and later a senior forecaster at the WSFO before moving to WFO Detroit. He returned to Lubbock in 2001 as the ITO. His duties have given him broad experience with all types of severe weather, and in addition he has the somewhat unique experience of coordinating with our partners in both the Mexican (International Boundary and Water Commission) and Canadian (Lake Huron) meteorological services.

IFPS

TWO NEW GRIDS. Two new grid elements are required by February 24: wind gust, and 20 foot wind speed and direction. There is a resource Web page on the SRH IFPS Web site which was created from recommendations from the Text Formatter Team:
<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/cwwd/msd/gridresources.html>

WFO HUNTSVILLE PRODUCING GFE STYLE GRAPHICAL HWOs. Senior forecaster Chris Darden and forecaster Brian Carcione recently completed the development of a graphical HWO covering all weather threats that is produced and disseminated daily via GFE. Using GFE to produce the HWO has resulted in a more efficient way of providing this valuable weather information to local EMAs, media and users in the Tennessee Valley. The graphical HWOs are available on the WFO Huntsville Web site.

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

MARINE

NEW ORLEANS WORK BOAT SHOW. WFO New Orleans forecaster Tim Erickson attended the New Orleans Work Boat Show on December 5 as a marine worker using his commercial fisherman's license. Tim used the opportunity to get a feel for what was being used and said in the marine environment about NWS services and products.

Tim met several people and companies on a daily basis and heard good things about the forecasts we create. He also asked private weather companies what they thought about NWS products. Only one said they actually use the marine products to amend or modify their own, "...they are used as sort of a guideline for what we issue..." The others were more guarded in their comments, but generally indicated they were aware of NWS products. Tim collected many specific comments that will be especially helpful to local marine operations at the WFO.

6TH ANNUAL CARIBBEAN BOAT SHOW. WFO San Juan participated in the 6th Annual Caribbean Boat Show at Puerto del Rey Marina in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, last month. Forecasters Ernesto Morales, Andy Roche, Walter Snell, Rafael Mojica, and visiting forecaster from TPC/NHC, Jorge Aguirre -Echevarria shared exhibit responsibilities during the three-day event, providing free materials while also answering mariners' and visitors' questions. This is the largest boat show in the Caribbean, attendance was estimated at around 12,000 people, and about 500 visited the WFO booth. Mariners were interested in the upcoming NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts from St. Croix and Culebra.

SNOWFALL CLIMATOLOGY FOR TALLAHASSEE. WFO Tallahassee climate service focal point Tim Barry was interviewed for an article in the Florida State University student newspaper, the *FSView* and *Florida Flambeau*, snowfall climatology for the Tallahassee area. Many facts and figures used for the article were placed on the WFO Web site:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tae/snow.html>

HOW COLD HAS IT BEEN SO FAR IN YOUR STATE? WFO Atlanta established and maintains a minimum temperature map for Georgia for the winter of 2003/2004. On the WFO's climate page a user can easily see what the lowest minimum temperature has been so far this winter for various sites around Georgia. A written narrative details weather events associated with cold outbreaks, and also has links to some wintertime minimum temperatures from previous years. (<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ffc/html/coldest3.shtml>).

MARDI GRAS CLIMATOLOGY. The good times associated with Mardi Gras week will soon be rolling in the New Orleans area, with Fat Tuesday around the corner. WFO New Orleans climate service focal point Robert Ricks has prepared a Mardi Gras climatology for New Orleans for February 13-24. Robert is optimistic this page will help prepare the hundreds of thousands of Mardi Gras visitors for what weather to expect in the Big Easy during all outdoor events. The page is at: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lix/html/MardiGras/mardigras04.htm>

CLIMATE SERVICES PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY UNITS. As part of the Professional Development Series, NWSH Climate Services Division has prepared six different Professional Competency Units (PCUs) to improve the local knowledge of climate at the WFOs. Each of the six PCUs can be viewed at: <http://www.nwstc.noaa.gov/nwstrn/d.ntp/meteor/clipds.html>

LOCAL CLIMATE DATA SITES EXPANDED. Using the AWIPS Climate Program, WFO Fort Worth has available on their Web site the monthly Preliminary Local Climate Data (NWS F-6 form) for all 12 of the ASOS sites within their County Warning Area. In addition to expanding the amount of climate data available to their customers, this also allows the WFO to customize local climate data for locations that are nearby to a particular NOAA Weather Radio transmitter. This can be viewed at: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd/f6.htm>

SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS AND OUTREACH

Career Day a Hit in Deep South Texas. WFO Brownsville DAPM Jim Campbell, ASA Rachel Gutierrez and HMT Sam Martinez participated in the Clearwater, Cromack, Del Castillo, Garden Park, Garza, Longoria, Perez, Putegnat, Sharp and Victoria Heights Elementary Schools Career Day in South Texas. The WFO Brownsville trio provided interactive English and Spanish (Sam and Rachel) briefings on career paths in meteorology which were enthusiastically attended by approximately 1,500 fifth graders.

Severe Weather Safety Plan Reviewed in Alabama. WFO Birmingham MIC Ken Graham reviewed the severe weather safety plan and provided an informative severe weather safety presentation to over 150 employees of the Georgia Pacific plant in Belk, Alabama. Plant employees were required to take the training as part of their safety awareness program. As part of their safety plan review, Ken toured three underground tornado shelters in place around the plant. The shelters have been designed to hold every employee during any given shift. In fact, the GP plant has its own sirens to warn employees of fire, tornado or terrorist attack. Each event (weather or non-weather) has its own unique tone. The plant managers, who employed the principles and criteria of the successful NWS StormReady program, are interested in earning the coveted recognition to reward their staff for the excellent job in preparing for the worst.

WFO Birmingham Partners with Alabama Emergency Management. WFO Birmingham WCM Jason Wright, forecaster Michael Scotten and SCEP Kristin Hurley attended the Letting Emergency Management Meet Others' Needs Emergency Preparedness Fair at Nichols-Lawson Middle School in Sylacauga, Alabama. Visitors of the NWS booth display were treated to a tornado simulation chamber and were also provided a presentation which explained WFO Birmingham's warning and forecast operations. A variety of weather-related outreach and preparedness handouts were also provided to attendees of the WFO Birmingham booth display.

WFO Birmingham Debuts New FloodReady Program. MIC Kenneth Graham, hydrologist Roger McNeil, forecaster Michael Garrison and WCM Jason Wright attended a FloodReady town meeting in Wadely, Alabama. Wadely will become the first city in the U.S. to gain FloodReady recognition. This FloodReady program was developed by Roger McNeil and Michael Garrison. Approximately 30 people attended the event moderated by Donnie Knight, Randolph County EMA coordinator. Presentations were made by APC, Alabama Power, COE, EMA, NWS, and USGS officials.

WFO Huntsville partners with Randy Owen with country group Alabama. WFO Huntsville WCM Tim Troutman recently completed a Public Service Announcement (PSA) project with Randy Owen from the country music group Alabama. Randy Owen completed PSAs for the National Weather Service involving flooding, severe weather and tornadoes, NOAA Weather Radio and hurricane safety. Copies of the completed PSAs will be mailed to all radio stations in Alabama for air play in support of 2004 severe weather awareness week.

Winter Weather Highlighted in WFO Lubbock School Outreach. WCM Ed Calianese was the featured speaker at the monthly meeting of the South Plains Association of Pupil Transportation. This association is made up of representatives from many of the Independent School Districts who determine the direction of the Texas Panhandle student transportation program. The presentation focused on the winter weather climatology of the region, NWS operations and products, winter weather forecasting challenges in the Texas Panhandle, winter weather preparedness, and the long-term outlook for the winter and spring. Ed's presentation will likely result in a number of severe weather safety and basic spotter presentations for school bus drivers this spring.

WFO Amarillo Launches Interactive NWR Program for Kids. The program, called “Kids Weather Hour,” allows students to submit weather-related questions to be answered by Amarillo NWS meteorologists. The questions are answered live on NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) every Friday, between 9 and 10 a.m. To participate, area school teachers register their class or school for an available date. Once registered, kids go on-line to submit their questions and the local NWS team prepares answers, while another team is responsible for the live on-air delivery. The student, teacher and school are recognized as each question is read and answered. Local WCM Steve Drillette anticipates the pilot program will be a great way to promote NWR and become educated to the value of NWR.

Birmingham Forecaster Goes Back to School! WFO Birmingham lead forecaster John De Block traveled to Montgomery to provide educational outreach to his daughter's fifth grade class. On his way from the office to the classroom, he ran in to his son, who realized that his eighth grade science class had also just begun their weather segment. Before he was finished talking to the fifth graders, he was on the schedule to talk to the eighth graders. John gladly accepted the opportunity, huddled with the teacher, and modified his presentation to meet her needs. Thanks to his flexibility, the number of students reached doubled and two children were proud to say their dad works for the NWS!

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATION

WFO Huntsville 2003 Partners Report Completed. Forecaster Priscilla Bridenstine recently completed an extensive outreach project involving the completion of the first WFO Huntsville Partners report. This report detailed all of WFO Huntsville’s 2003 accomplishments and activities since completing the spin-up as a WFO on January 14, 2003. The report was disseminated to all county EMA directors, media and other related partners across north Alabama and southern middle Tennessee.

MEDIA/PUBLIC EXTERNAL SUPPORT

WFO Tampa Bay Strengthens Partnership with Area TV Meteorologists. A special three-hour workshop was held at the WFO Tampa Bay last month to discuss the Graphical Forecast Editor (GFE), verification statistics, changes to products and services, instant messaging during tropical events, and radar interpretation of severe weather for pulse storms. In addition, the eight TV meteorologists in attendance provided feedback that will allow WFO Tampa Bay to serve them better. Presenters included lead forecasters Barry Goldsmith and Frank Alshemier, SOO Charlie Paxton and WCM Dan Noah.

WFO Tampa Bay Receives the Gold Award for this Year’s Combined Federal Campaign. With the help of ET Dave Chaffin, the Tampa office recently received the Gold Workplace Excellence Campaign Award for their outstanding contributions of \$9,418.50 to the Sun Coast Combined Federal Campaign. Thirteen individual awards were distributed to the staff, including two Gold Eagles, six Silver Eagles, and five Bronze Eagles. Thanks to everyone at WFO Tampa, many needy people and organizations will be getting a helping hand in 2004.

SCEP Earns Master Degree Defending “Dixie Alley.” WFO Birmingham MIC Kenneth Graham and WCM Jason Wright accompanied SCEP Kristin Hurley on a trip to Mississippi State University in which Kristin defended her thesis “Dixie Alley: Fact or Fallacy, An in Depth Analysis of Tornado Distribution in Alabama.” Kristin defended her presentation in front of more than 30 people. Faculty in attendance stated that they were not only pleased, but impressed with her research and results. By accomplishing this defense successfully, she completed all the requirements for her MS Degree. Congratulations, Kristin.

NOAA WEATHER RADIO

WFOs Lubbock and Amarillo Announce New Weather Radio Service. WFO Lubbock MIC Larry Vannozzi, WCM Ed Calianese and WFO Amarillo WCM Steve Drillette conducted a news conference to announce the new NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) transmitter located in Summerfield, Texas. WFO Amarillo forecaster Al Pietrycha and WFO Lubbock ITO Justin Weaver also assisted with the event. The Summerfield NWR serves seven counties in the Lubbock and Amarillo County Warning Areas as well as one county in Albuquerque. Several city officials and newspaper reporters within the broadcast area attended the news conference, which was broadcast live on a local FM radio station. Several newspaper articles and a live radio call-in show were initiated by the news conference and the news release. A weather radio receiver, donated by Radio Shack, was raffled at the news conference. The event was a success in advertising the latest resource available to residents of the southwest Texas Panhandle from their local Weather Forecast Office.

Muenster Unleashed along the Red River Valley. WFO Fort Worth MIC Bill Bunting and WCM Gary Woodall and the Cooke County Electric Cooperative combined forces to dedicate the recently deployed NWR station in Muenster, Texas. This site is strategically located between the two Texas cities of Wichita Falls and Sherman. Station KHA-99 will provide broadcast audio to both sites of the Red River including Love County in Oklahoma. The ceremony was attended by 24 members of the local media, government and emergency management community. Gary gave an overview of the NWR program, while Bill urged the attendees to assist in promoting NWR to the public at large. The ceremony was punctuated by a special test of the NWR alarm tone, demonstrating its value as a warning tool.

Florida Association of Broadcasters Host Communications Workshop. The Florida Association of Broadcasters and the state of Florida Division of Emergency Management hosted a Media Security and Reliability Council conference in Tampa. The platform of the working group meeting was to formulate and approve Best Practices Recommendations for media and government to deliver emergency messages via digital networks. Southern Region representatives included NWR program manager Mike Mach and WCMs Dan Noah (Tampa Bay), Dennis Decker (Melbourne) and Al Sandrik (Jacksonville).

What's on the Air. Southern Region was at various stages of NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) installations through the month of January. The aging NWR station located on the top floor of the Marriott Hotel at New Orleans was revitalized with a new 1000 watt dual transmitter. Just in time for Mardi Gras, this location supports the shipping and tourism industry over the Lower Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico. The NWR station at Beaumont, Texas was relocated to a more strategic address. The antenna and heliax cabling was refurbished to allow this 1000 watt transmitter to better serve the shipping industry around Port Arthur.

Several additional NWR stations were deployed to a number of Texas locations. A new 300 watt dual transmitter was brought on-air at Milano and will serve south central Texas. Broadcast audio for station WNG-649 will originate from WFO Fort Worth. A 1000 watt dual transmitter was brought on-air at Plainview and will serve that part of west Texas between Lubbock and Midland. A 300 watt dual transmitter was brought on-line at Mineral Wells with broadcast audio originating from the Fort Worth/Dallas Forecast Office. The Kingsville and Baffin Bay area of south Texas will now be better served with the new Riviera NWR station. USDA-Rural Utilities Service funds granted to the Kleburg County Office of Emergency Management and tower space provided by the Riviera Telephone Company have made station WNG-609 a strategic center for weather information along South Padre Island.

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

SURVEYING HYDROLOGIC SITE. WFOs Jacksonville, Atlanta and Tallahassee met at the Charlotte forecast point on the Altamaha River in the Jacksonville HSA. The meeting facilitated the transfer of the forecast point and co-op responsibilities to WFO Jacksonville from WFO Atlanta for the second time in six years. While at the site, the staff gauge was inspected, the inaccessibility of the wire-weight gauge was verified, and the possibility of installing an acoustic gauge was examined. WFO Atlanta HMT Nate Mayes introduced the observer, Walter Bailey, to WFO Jacksonville DAPM Mike McAllister and meteorologist/hydro focal point Parks Camp. WFO Tallahassee hydrologist Joel Lanier arranged the forum and facilitated a meeting with the acoustic gauge representatives.

GENEVA, ALABAMA LEVEE RESTORATION PROJECT. WFO Tallahassee senior service hydrologist Joel Lanier attended groundbreaking luncheon ceremonies dedicating the beginning of construction of the Geneva Levee restoration project for the city of Geneva by the Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District. The project will take two years at a cost of around \$12 million dollars. People attending included the governor of Alabama Bob Riley, Congressman Terry Everett, mayor of Geneva Karon Simmons, Barbara Gibson (director of the Choctawhatchee Pea Yellow River Water Management Authority), Charles Owens, (project manager of the Civil Works Project Management Team - USACE Mobile, Alabama), and Don Hyde who recently assumed the Flood Warning System specialist position.

WEATHER CHANNEL SPECIAL - RIVER FORECASTING. The Weather Channel (TWC) production crew visited the Lower Mississippi RFC in mid-January to interview HIC Dave Reed, and to film the LMRFC staff at work for the TWC special on river forecasting. The interview and filming took about three hours. Following the filming at LMRFC, LMRFC development and operations hydrologist Bob Stucky took the crew to interview Paul Wagner, owner and operator of Dr. Wagner's Swamp Tours in Slidell, Louisiana, about how he uses NWS river forecasts in his operations. While there, the group enjoyed a tour of the lower Pearl River and portions of the Honey Island Swamp. The TWC crew also took a barge ride on the Mississippi River.

TWC crew also conducted a short interview with a representative from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) office in Baton Rouge about USGS Web pages and the stream gauging program. The production crew also took a short trip to film an automated river gauging location. The special will be about 30 minutes long and should air in April. We will keep you posted.

SERFC/UCF COLLABORATIVE PROJECT. Last month Southeast RFC SCEP student Jamie Dyer and senior hydrologic forecaster Wylie Quillian visited the Compaq Water Resources Simulation Laboratory of the University of Central Florida (UCF). Jamie and Wylie visited with Dr. Scott Hagen and several of his graduate students. The purpose of the meeting was to further the SERFC/UCF collaboration to forecast tide-affected river stages in the vicinity of Conway, South Carolina. Jamie is setting up the FLDWAV hydraulic model for the Waccamaw River system. Dr. Hagen's graduate students are simulating astronomical and storm surge tide boundaries for input into FLDWAV. Each party communicated data needs that will be met in the near future to improve river/flood forecasts at Conway.

PRODUCT CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH NWS DIRECTIVE 10-922. A new version of NWS Instruction 10-922 titled "WFO Hydrology Products Specifications" became effective on February 9, 2004. This new directive is at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/pd01009022b.pdf>

Here is a summary of the product changes associated with this implementation.

1. Flood watch products (FFA) will be issued to provide all follow up information on previously issued flood watches, including cancellations. Previously, flood statements (FLS) were issued to provide all follow up information on current Flood Watches.

Examples displaying the flood watch product changes can be found at the following Web page: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/flashflood/ffproducts.shtml>

2. Latitude/longitude polygon coordinates defining a warning area will be included at the end of flash flood warning (FFW) products.
3. Double dollar signs /\$\$/ will be included at the end the following products:

<u>Product Title</u>	<u>nnn of awips id</u>
Hydrologic outlook	ESF
Flood watch	FFA
Flash flood warning	FFW
Flash flood statement	FFS
Flood warning	FLW
Flood statement	FLS
Hydrologic statement	RVS
Hydrologic summary	RVA
River and lake forecast product	RVD
Hydrometeorological data report #1	RR1
Hydrometeorological data report #2	RR2
Hydrometeorological data report #3	RR3
Hydrometeorological data report #4	RR4
Hydrometeorological data report #5	RR5
Hydrometeorological data report #6	RR6
Hydrometeorological data report #7	RR7
Hydrometeorological data report #8	RR8
Miscellaneous hydrologic data report	RRM
Automated data report	RRA
Daily hydrometeorological data summary	HYD
Weekly hydrometeorological data summary	HYW
Monthly hydrometeorological data summary	HYM

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

3-HOURLY PRECIPITATION FREQUENCIES. Matthew Sitkowski, a senior student working with Prof. Henry Fuelberg at Florida State University, has derived updated precipitation frequencies for observation sites across the Southern Region. The original impetus for this COMET-sponsored research project was to develop frequencies for 3-hourly intervals, to help support PoP forecasts for such high time resolution, but Matt has extended his work by updating climatological frequencies for 6-, 12-, and 24-hour periods as well, all stratified by month. Results are posted at <http://bertha.met.fsu.edu/~sitkow/> (Use the Internet Explorer browser to access the graphics.) These climatologies will provide the basis for additional work to enhance precipitation forecasts in many forms as part of the new IFPS digital services and operations. Good work, Matt.

TRAINING FOR RPG BUILD 5. The WSR-88D RPG Build 5, which will be fielded shortly, is the most ambitious RPG software release yet. The WDTB is preparing teletraining sessions and hard copy material to facilitate forecaster training. Regional focal points and SSD will be provided with information on how to access the material, and we will forward that to all offices as soon as it's received.

AMS ONLINE WEATHER STUDIES PROGRAM. We encourage all offices to become familiar with the Online Weather Studies program developed by the American Meteorological Society. This is an innovative, 12 to 15 week course prepared in conjunction with meteorologists who are nationally recognized in atmospheric science education. The program, an outgrowth from the AMS DataStreme Project, is designed to provide any college with resources to offer an introductory meteorology course, complete with real-time weather data. Details are at <http://64.55.87.13/amstedu/online/info/>. Our offices are frequently contacted by individuals or educators who are interested in meteorology courses. Referring them to this site may help address their questions.

CHANGES TO ETA-BASED MODEL OUTPUT STATISTICS. The Meteorological Development Laboratory (MDL) is preparing to make a series of changes to the Eta Model Output Statistics (MOS). These changes will be made in two stages; both occurring in February. The first will occur on February 17; the second, on February 24. All of the details are outlined at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/synop/changes/eta32notif.htm>. The following has been extracted from that site:

Stage 1 (February 17). The current Eta MOS guidance uses model output to 48 hours to produce MOS guidance out to 60 hours in advance. The current Eta MOS forecasts are produced as soon as the 48-h model forecast files are available (roughly 0245/1445 UTC). The redeveloped Eta MOS will use model output to 84 hours to produce guidance out to 84 hours in advance. The MOS guidance products will therefore be disseminated approximately 30 minutes later because they must wait until additional model files are available. Because of timing considerations, guidance will be available only out to 60 hours in this first implementation.

New Eta MOS forecast equations for max/min temperature, spot temperatures and dewpoints, POP/QPF, wind speed and direction, and total sky cover will be implemented. Testing of these equations show that this guidance exhibits improved skill compared to the current Eta MOS. Verification scores can be viewed at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/synop/tin/eta32verif.htm>

The MDL will make changes to the stations that are available in the Eta MOS MET text bulletins. Due to station closures, text products for four sites will be removed from the Eta MOS system:

EL TORO... CALIFORNIA (KNZJ)
SANDERSON... TEXAS (KP07)
PORT RICHEY... FLORIDA (KRRF)
LEMMON... SOUTH DAKOTA (KY22)

The call letters for the following three sites will be updated in the Eta MOS text products:

SITE	FROM	TO
CECIL FIELD... FLORIDA	KNZC	KVQQ
CUSTER...SOUTH DAKOTA	K0V1	KCUT
DENNISON...TEXAS	KF39	KGYI

Stage 2 (February 24). Guidance for sites in Alaska and Hawaii will now be available, and 142 new sites in the CONUS will be added to the MET text messages. The format of the Eta MOS MET text messages will be modified to allow for guidance out to 72 hours. The format of the text products will change to allow for guidance at 66 and 72 hours, although guidance for those hours will not be generated until early April when the NCEP will be making changes to the Eta model run times. At that time the guidance for 66 and 72 hours will be included in the text messages. Sample 0000 and 1200 UTC MET messages with new elements out to 72 hours are available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/synop/tin/eta32.htm>

The definition of categories of total sky cover will be modified to distinguish between FEW and SCATTERED clouds. Categorical forecasts of ceiling height will be available in the Eta MOS text products. Also, categorical forecasts of snowfall amount will be available in the Eta MOS text products for 24-h periods ending at approximately 36 and 60 hours after 0000 UTC (60-h forecast not available until April); and 24, 48, and 72 hours after 1200 UTC (72-h forecast not available until April). Snowfall amount forecasts will be available from September 1 through May 31 for most sites in the MOS system.

A Technical Procedures Bulletin for the Eta MOS text products is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/synop/tpb/etamsg2004.htm>

TOPICAL SOO MEETING. A number of Southern Region Science and Operations Officers (SOOs) will meet in San Antonio in early March. The primary topics of discussion will be local numerical weather prediction and interoffice collaboration in the forecast process. This will be the second in a series of such topical meetings which are conducted in alternate years from a region-wide SOO meeting. The first was held in Huntsville last fall.

NEW AND RECENT SOO ORIENTATION. New, or at least relatively new, SOOs Jeffrey Cupo (WFO Midland/Odessa), Gregory Patrick (WFO Fort Worth/Dallas) and Kurt Vanspeybroeck (WFO Brownsville) spent three days in January at SRH participating in an operational orientation workshop. They had the opportunity to interact with each other, meet the staff of each of the SRH divisions, spend a lot of time with the folks from SSD, and also present their plans and goals for the next few years. In preparation for that meeting we updated the on-line SOO Reference Notebook <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ssd/soonotebook/>.

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION BRANCH

AWIPS OB2/OB3 STATUS. All Southern Region sites have successfully installed OB2 and related Maintenance Releases. OB3 was successfully installed at WFOs Mobile and Shreveport. A few bugs have been identified with several already having been addressed and fixed in preparation for national deployment.

WSR-88D ORPG BUILD 5 STATUS. WFOs Fort Worth, Albuquerque and Norman will be participating in the beta test for ORPG Build 5. The test will begin in February and early March with national deployment scheduled to begin March 29.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS. We have a number of new NWR site orders in the queue and have been monitoring and coordinating with the telcos to get them installed. SRH has been keeping a close watch on the effort to install the WFO San Juan St. Croix, Virgin Islands circuit. It has been challenging, but progress has been made.

The Sneads, Florida NWR telco concerns are being addressed through close coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation, who owns the facility where the transmitter will be housed. The anticipated Beaumont, Texas move, the new Carrizo Springs, Texas start-up, and the Plainview, Texas circuit, in addition to many others are moving along with no anticipated problems. The circuit for the El Paso Spanish language transmitter has also been successfully installed and tested.

SRH continues to do modifications and updates to the Frequency Database to ensure all our transmitters are in compliance with regulations. We have also been working with CWWD's Hydrology Branch concerning the narrowbanding effort for hydro transmitters and alert systems and gauges. As updates are approved and confirmed, the frequency database continues to get better and easier to manage.

We have sent a survey to each office asking about their current telephone system. We are looking to upgrade/replace these systems in FY05 as funding allows. Most of these telephone systems are reaching the end of their life expectancy or are becoming more expensive to maintain at optimum levels. As the information from the field is gathered, we will determine the best course of action for the region.

OBSERVATIONS AND FACILITIES BRANCH

SURFACE OBSERVATION PROGRAM. Southern Region received 35 requests from the aviation community for new certificates, cancellations and changes in type of surface certificates last month.

NWS INSTRUCTION 10-1031. SR performed an emergency review of NWS Instruction 10-1301, Surface Observing Program (Land) in January. The changes focused on the new “Snow-Paid Observing Program.” Recommendations with minor changes were noted and submitted to Steven Pritchett at NWSH.

SNOW-PAID OBSERVERS. Southern Region surface program manager received the first snow-paid contracts for the new snow-network observers across portions of SR. Once the contracts are received at SR, each contract is reviewed by the program manager for completeness, signed by the SOD chief, and sent to MASC for payment.

UPPER-AIR OBSERVATION PROGRAM. In December, Southern Region's upper-air rankings were outstanding with 19 out of 23 sites earning scores above the national average of 286.09 out of a possible 300. Fifteen of these offices received excellent scores above 290.00 for the month. WFO New Orleans, earned the region's top spot in December with a score of 297.34. The staff had shown a steady improvement over the past three months leading to the top spot in December. Other offices showing or maintaining excellent scores over the past three months were Jackson, Mississippi; Del Rio, El Paso and Corpus Christi, Texas; Little Rock and Nashville.

In addition to the excellent December monthly scores, nine Southern Region offices had 12 month averages above 290.00. WFO Little Rock continues to lead the 12 month average with a score of 294.91. Just a few points behind Little Rock was Del Rio (294.64), Corpus Christi (294.55), Nashville (293.04), New Orleans (292.38), El Paso (291.97), Jackson (291.45) and Lake Charles with an average of 291.08.

MAF REVERSE OSMOSIS /HUMIDIFIER OPERATIONS. After several weeks of manual adjustments, the humidifiers at Midland-Odessa appear to be functioning normally with a mixture of purified RO water combined with normal tap water for the correct amount of ions to produce steam. Humidification is important for reducing static electricity that could damage electronic circuit card components, and is particularly low in the winter in the desert southwest. This and other methods of restoring inoperative humidifiers to service is being investigated by FET Steve Davis to raise the indoor humidity levels at other sites in the SR.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Disposal of Radiosonde Battery Activation Water. Recent instructions to ECS focal points posted on the NWS Environmental and Safety Web page for notifying local sewage treatment plants regarding the chemical constituents of radiosonde battery activation water has been removed pending refinement of the method to communicate this message. At issue is presenting the information to the operators of the wastewater treatment plants in a way that tells the true story of the volume of copper residue that will be produced on a daily basis. The first treatment plant approached in SR stated that the concentration in mg/l of copper in the battery activation water was too high, while the actual volume of copper in mg produced on a daily basis is actually very small. Until this is resolved, the sites on public sewage systems will collect the battery water, as do all sites that have septic systems instead of sewer hookups.

SAFETY

OSHA Visit to WFO/RFC New Orleans. OSHA inspectors visited WFO New Orleans to inspect the HVAC air handlers mounted on the roof to determine if the configuration of these units required a formal Confined Space Permit Entry system as specified by the NOAA Tier I contract auditors. The OSHA inspectors agreed in principle with the NOAA auditors, except that by applying Lock Out/Tag Out procedures to de-energize the system during equipment maintenance would eliminate the requirement for the permit system. This condition will apply at other NWS-owned WFO/RFCs such as Atlanta, and also at the National Hurricane Center/WFO Miami.

NOAA STAR Training Completed. The last two safety focal points scheduled for NOAA STAR Training in December were presented the STAR course in Houston. Unresolved is how to present this training to the new safety focal points resulting from the typical 30% turnover rate, and also a method to provide this information to employees other than supervisors and focal points. A separate training issue being reviewed is how to continue providing expensive biannual recurring training to over 100 SR employees whose fall protection certificates require a review of emergency rescue procedures every two years.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

DIVERSITY/EEO AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

WFO Brownsville DAPM Jim Campbell, HMT Sam Martinez and ASA Rachel Gutierrez participated in a multi-elementary school career day. There were approximately 1500 fifth grade students in attendance. Careers in meteorology were presented by the trio. Additionally Sam and Rachel completed several presentations in Spanish. The children responded very enthusiastically to their interactive presentation.

WFO Little Rock senior forecaster Newton Skiles participated in the 5th Annual Math and Science-In-Industry Day at the Arkansas School for Mathematics and Science. Newton made presentations to two classes and discussed how math and science play an integral part in careers in meteorology, especially with the National Weather Service. The classes contained a total of 42 junior and senior students. The students were enthusiastic and provided many interesting questions which helped provide a very positive experience. The students at the school come from all parts of Arkansas and have excelled in math and science in their local communities.

WFO Tallahassee senior forecaster and EEO focal point Ron Block discussed opportunities in meteorology/hydrology at a career forum at Florida A&M. Ron also had interactions with students and faculty at Albany State University and Darton College in Albany, Georgia. All three schools are predominately African-American institutions. Ron distributed literature at a week-long festival celebrating Kwanza, at the annual Quincy Martin Luther King Commemorative Breakfast and at the MLK Youth Leadership Banquet. He lectured on careers in hydrometeorology at the ML King day lecture series at Godby High School. At the Leon Country Day of Dialogue focusing on race relations, Ron discussed the advantages of diversity in the NWS workplace.

WFO Tallahassee commenced their annual spring semester course at the co-located Florida State University Meteorology Department. The course is entitled “Introduction to the National Weather Service.” This bi-weekly course taught by office staff and invited NWS/NOAA experts has nineteen students and provides a unique overview of NWS career opportunities and operations.

WFO Shreveport forecaster Mary Keiser gave a short presentation to 26 first graders of Cathedral School in Shreveport. Mary talked about NWS operations, what meteorologist jobs consist of, explanation and demonstration of the upper air program, how clouds form, and pictures inside the radar.

RFC Fort Worth is observing Black History Month by calling attention to significant achievements by individuals who are included on a list they've prepared. After each morning's weather briefing, one of the staff reads the name and the significant event for that day which pertains to black history.

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS			
<u>JANUARY 1 - 31, 2004</u>			
<u>Southern Region Losses</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>From (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>From Title/Grade</u>
Bruce Burkeman	WFO SHV	Retirement	WCM, GS-14
Wayne Colin	WFO MFL	Retirement	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Harold Davenport	WFO CRP	Retirement	DAPM, GS-12
Robert Kilduff	WFO BMX	Retirement	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Derrel Martin	WFO OHX	Retirement	MIC, GS-15
Edward Pasierb	WFO LZK	Retirement	HMT, GS-11
Gary Grice	SRH	Retirement	DRD, GS-15
Antonio Castillo	WFO SJU	Retirement	HMT, GS-11

<u>Southern Region Gains</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Brian Burleson	WFO LZK	Transfer from WR	HMT, GS-11
Jason Beamon	WFO MEG	New Hire	Forecaster, GS-7
Gladys Rubio	WFO SJU	New Hire	Forecaster, GS-11
Lora Wilson	WFO JAN	New Hire	Student Trainee, GS-5
Daniel Porter	WFO ABQ	Transfer from CR	Forecaster, GS-7

<u>Within Region Transfers/Actions</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Keith Stellman	RFC FWR	Transfer from RFC ORN	SR HAS Forecaster, GS-13
Thomas Warner	WFO MFL	Promotion	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Mark Frazier	WFO SHV	Transfer from MEG	WCM, GS-13
Larry Vannozzi	WFO OHX	Transfer from LUB	MIC, GS-15
Mark Linhares	WFO BMX	Promotion from BMX	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Faith Borden	WFO BMX	Promotion from BMX	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Steven Smart	WFO OUN	Transfer from OUN	HMT, GS-11
Amanda Roberts	RFC ORN	Promotion from RFC ORN	SR. Hydrologist, GS-13