



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

**March 2006**

# **SOUTHERN TOPICS**

*Working Together To Save Lives*

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[Previous Topics](#)

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## **CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION**

### **METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH**

**Tsunami “Best Practices Sharing” Intranet Webpage.** Do you have tsunami material or operational best practices other RFCs or WFOs could benefit from? If so, send them to Melinda Hinojosa (SR Tsunami Program Leader) ([Melinda.Hinojosa@noaa.gov](mailto:Melinda.Hinojosa@noaa.gov)) so she can add them to the webpage:

<http://lucretia.srh.noaa.gov/srh/marine/tsunamifocalpoints.html>

**San Juan Discusses Tsunami Risk.** WFO San Juan WCM Rafael Mojica recently participated in the first 2006 tsunami briefing for the Mayaguez City tsunami risk zone community leaders at the Engineers and Surveyors local chapter. Ten community leaders attended the briefing where the NWS TsunamiReady program and Mayaguez tsunami vulnerabilities were discussed. Thirty-seven people attended Rafael’s presentation.

**Randy Lascody, Live!** NWSHQ Public Affairs is coordinating a "webchat" with the USA Today newspaper on June 8<sup>th</sup> at 2pm, in conjunction with national Rip Current Awareness Week (week of June 5th). Randy Lascody will serve as the technical representative/expert on behalf of the NWS WFOs.

**Duty Officer Presentations Online.** ROC Duty Officers sometimes give presentations to SRH staff during their month-long stay. You can view the presentations of past Duty Officers on the SR Intranet at this link:

<http://lucretia.srh.noaa.gov/srh/roc/presentations/>

Don’t see yours listed? Please contact Melinda at: [Melinda.Hinojosa@noaa.gov](mailto:Melinda.Hinojosa@noaa.gov) and she’ll add yours to the list.



**San Antonio NWR Station Gets Face Lift.** Residents of Bexar County and surrounding counties in the San Antonio, Texas metro area are reaping benefits of the completely replaced NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards station. Station WXX-67 was recently required to move to a more strategic tower location. With its completely refurbished dual transmitter, antenna, transmission line, and emergency power generator, the SAME capability to this part of the south Texas has been greatly improved. Nationally, approximately 400 NWR stations will eventually receive a similar face lift during the next several years as funding for this purpose is provided by NOAA.

**Austin Amber Alert Meeting.** The first Texas AMBER Alert Advisory Working Group board meeting was held by the Governor's Division of Emergency Management in Austin on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. This working group included members from the Office of the Governor, Department of Homeland Security, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Lottery Commission, Texas Association of Broadcasters, Border Patrol, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. At the meeting, WFO Austin/San Antonio MIC Joe Arellano, WCM Larry Eblen, and SRH NWR Program Manager Mike Mach discussed the NWS's supporting role in disseminating the Child Abduction Emergency (CAE) product. Members of this working group will continue to focus on networking, peer training and troubleshooting the operational aspects of the Texas AMBER Alert Network.

**A "Chamber of Commerce" Weather Report for Key West.** WFO Key West MIC Matt Strahan recently met with two different Key West Chamber of Commerce committees - the Government Affairs, and the Military Affairs Committee. He discussed the city's vulnerability to hurricanes and the NWS's ability to forecast them, and he made suggestions about how to better prepare the island's infrastructure to withstand storms. Given that the island has been evacuated 4 times in the past two hurricane seasons, there was understandably great interest in the topic. The Chamber of Commerce reports that about 25% of their businesses have already folded, and predictions are that another 15% will fold if another evacuation occurs this coming season. The Chamber is trying to better understand the evacuation process, and provide input to it. Great interest also centers on methods for returning evacuated workers to the city as quickly as possible, so that cleanup efforts can begin.

**WFO Nashville Scores a Hit with TV Seminar.** WFO Nashville enjoyed a great turn-out at their recent coordination meeting with local TV meteorologists (10 of the 12 weather broadcasters from all four Nashville stations attended). WCM Jerry Orchanian, SOO Henry Steigerwaldt, Senior Forecaster Mark Richards, ITO Michael Davis and MIC Larry Vannozzi met with their TV partners to discuss a variety of items. Major topics included Instant Messaging, the debut of WFO Nashville's graphical HWO, web page changes (a step-through of the new standardized climate page was a big hit), a brief overview of gridded forecasts, and the Enhanced Fujita Scale. The meeting was highly interactive with plenty of great dialogue. The WFO received feedback which will help improve services.

**Tenth Annual Bahamas Weather Conference.** Several Southern Region WFOs were represented at the recent 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Bahamas Weather Conference. WFO Mobile and New Orleans MICs Randy McKee and Paul Trotter, and WFO Miami WCM Robert Molleda were in attendance, as were Max Mayfield and Will Shaffer from NHC. A highlight of the meeting was a panel discussion on Hurricane Katrina and its impacts on the Gulf Coast. Randy McKee and Paul Trotter gave excellent presentations on the NWS role before, during and after the event, and their presentations were complemented by others given by local EMs and media attendees. The presentations lasted approximately 2 hours, followed by questions to the panel from the audience. Another panel discussion focused on Hurricane Wilma and its impacts on South Florida. WFO



Miami WCM Robert Molleda gave a presentation on the role that WFO MFL played before, during, and after the storm. Robert stressed the importance of the coordination that took place between WFO MFL, local emergency management officials and the media in the days leading up to the event. Robert used the presentation to educate the media and EM officials on some of the new and experimental products that are being provided by Miami.

**Little Rock WCM Takes to the Airwaves.** WFO Little Rock WCM John Robinson recently appeared on a live, one-hour severe weather special on KARK-TV, the NBC affiliate in Little Rock. John had previously taped a segment dealing with the odd weather events of 2005. During the live broadcast, a camera was set up in the WFO so that he could answer questions from the TV station's meteorologists and their viewers. A highlight of the show was a discussion concerning the NWS warning process. John explained that while tools such as the WSR-88D, AWIPS and WarnGen were very important, it was the skills and experience possessed by the warning forecasters that were most critical to the warning decision process.

**Directors Visit San Juan.** On March 30, NWS Director Gen. D.L. Johnson and Southern Region Director Bill Proenza visited WFO San Juan and participated in an all hands meeting with staff members. The two Directors briefed the staff on budget and VERA, and answered questions. A highlight of the visit was the awarding of the Director's Medal Excellence to Edward Tirado, WFO San Juan ITO, for his performance and dedication. Great Job Ed!

While in Puerto Rico, NWS Director Johnson and Director Bill Proenza, accompanied by WFO MIC Israel Matos and WCM Rafael Mojica, traveled to the city of Mayaguez for a tour of the Seismic Network and a meeting with University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez Campus administrators and professors. A full day of briefings took place involving the Mayaguez City TsunamiReady project, evacuation routes and maps, tsunami vulnerability, watch/warning protocols, the NOAA Sea Grant Program, and the NOAA/NWS 2003 initiative to establish an atmospheric science program at the University. The initiative was very fruitful and the first class will be graduating in 2007.

San Juan was also the site of the recent annual meeting of the Hurricane Committee of the World Meteorological Organization Regional Association IV. Representatives of member states from as far away as Spain, the Canary and Cape Verde Islands, the Caribbean and the northern part of South America met in San Juan to discuss the upcoming season and coordinate forecasting and planning. Gen. Johnson, Bill Proenza, and Max Mayfield, National Hurricane Director, gave the welcome messages.

**WFO Huntsville Teams Up with the Army.** The Soldier-Scale Atmospheric Test Bed Workshop, a joint venture of the Army, University of Alabama in Huntsville, and NASA, was held in Huntsville in late March. The purpose of the workshop was to define the needs within the Army operations and training communities for improved weather information. WFO HUN participated in the workshop by hosting a tour of the WFO, and providing an informal overview of the collaborative activities already ongoing at WFO HUN. In a follow up e-mail to the group, UAH Research Director Mike Newchurch expressed his special appreciation to HUN SOO Chris Darden for accommodating the needs of the group.

**New Orleans Media Workshop.** WFO New Orleans/Baton Rouge recently hosted 11 TV broadcasters from the New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Biloxi markets for a 3 hour workshop. This was the first meeting with area broadcasters since Hurricane Katrina, and that epic event dominated



the presentations and discussions throughout the workshop. MIC Paul Trotter, WCM Frank Revitte and SOO Mike Koziara discussed various facets of Katrina, including impacts, current services, and new WFO and NHC products in the pipeline for this coming season. The workshop wrapped up with a general discussion on the impacts Katrina placed on the television stations. One of the stations in New Orleans suffered a near complete loss of equipment during the storm surge, while another station serving the Mississippi Coast suffered wind damage yet managed to continue broadcasting throughout the event. Overall, the workshop was well-received with positive remarks concerning the WFOs performance during last year's historic impacts.

### **HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH**

**New Mexico Drought Meeting.** With storage at Elephant Butte Reservoir expected to reach a 35-year "low" by late September, the Rio Grande Basin Initiative (RGBI) met for their annual meeting March 27-30 in Ruidoso, New Mexico. WFO ABQ MIC Charlie Liles made a presentation on the future of water sustainability in the Rio Grande Basin. The RGBI consists of stakeholders concerned with water issues on the Rio Grande. The conference was co-hosted by New Mexico State, Texas A&M, the Texas State University System, and Texas State Water Commission. Although the vast majority of attendees were from Texas, the main focus this year (it alternates) was on New Mexico water issues.

**Low Flow Information Project.** With funding support from the AHPS program and the Office of the Hydrology, SR HSB is working with the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) to collect low flow impact information for river forecast points/data point locations in the upper Trinity River Basin. The NDMC will be working closely with WFO Fort Worth, the West Gulf RFC, and various local and state agencies in Texas to collect this information and provide it to WFO FWD. The goal of this demonstration project is to provide our customers with easy and user friendly access to this low flow information via the AHPS web page.

Changes are required to the AWIPS hydrologic database and HYDROGEN (the hydrograph generation software baselined in AWIPS OB6) before this information can be displayed on the AHPS web page. A new table for low flow/low water level impacts will be included with AWIPS OB 7.1. This will allow the WFOs to include such information in the hydrologic database. The table contents will evolve with time based on new requirements. In addition, HYDROGEN will be modified to collect the low flow impact information from the hydrologic database and make it available for display on the AHPS web page. We will keep you posted on this project.

**Interagency Meeting in Oklahoma.** An NWS/COE meeting was recently held to discuss the reimbursable COOP flood control (FC) networks that are primarily in the state of Oklahoma. The operations and maintenance of these COOP networks are performed by NWS personnel on behalf of the COE. The COE provides us with funds to perform these functions annually. NWS folks in attendance included Mike Asmus, regional COOP program manager, Ben Weiger, Chief of the Hydrologic Services Branch, Al Hong, Service Hydrologist from WFO Tulsa, David Andra, SOO from WFO Norman, Larry Lowe, HAS forecaster from the Arkansas Red Basin RFC, and Mike Teague, the Data Acquisition Program Manager from WFO Tulsa. The meeting was held to begin the process of conducting a network analysis to determine if changes were required to this network. It also gave both agencies an opportunity to re-acquaint themselves with personnel involved with the reimbursable COOP FC network program. Both agencies agreed to meet again this fiscal year after



conducting a more detailed network analysis. Several other general actions were identified as part of the meeting. These included providing the COE Tulsa District with B-44 information for the reimbursable COOP

FC-7/9 sites and providing the COE with a data report showing the reimbursable COOP station reports received in the NWS for a particular period of time. The COE would also provide us with a similar report with the data received on their end for the same time period.

**Florida Flood Plain Managers Meeting.** Joel Lanier, Senior Service Hydrologist at WFO Tallahassee, attended the 2006 Annual Florida Flood Plain Managers Association (FFMA) meeting in Gainesville, Florida in early March. Meeting representatives included FEMA Region IV, Flood Plain Managers and Water Management Districts from around the state of Florida, and various vendors. FEMA gave an excellent presentation on the catastrophic flooding in New Orleans and the Mississippi Coast. Many of the attendees are members of the FFMA. The meeting was setup in two tracks. One track was devoted to technical issues regarding flood plain mapping and the other track towards administration of Flood Plain Management and the National Flood Insurance Program.

Two major highlights of the meeting were the coverage of the FEMA Flood Plain Map Modernization Program, and the use of ArcHydro and GIS based hydrologic/hydraulic modeling tools for assessing flood plains. In Florida, FEMA is coordinating Flood Map Modernization funding through the Water Management Districts (WMDs). Each WMD is allocated resources which are used to complete the Flood Plain analysis in-house or contract out in some combination to various engineering companies. Each WMD is given special access to FEMA Flood Plain Management tools to track community meetings and projects status. The studies include hydraulic analysis on a local scale for affected communities where the size and economic impact justify the cost of doing the analysis. However the majority of rural areas will not be redone due to associated costs. Instead the existing Flood Plain categories will simply be digitized as is. There were also presentations and discussions regarding setting or reassigning flood plain categories and the role that insurance costs and local community desires play. One theme that seemed to recur in personal conversations was the Flood Plain Managers' desire to develop collaboration with the emergency management community and the National Weather Service. Additional information and resources regarding this meeting and the Florida Flood Plain Managers Association in general can be viewed at: <http://www.ffma.net>

## **SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION**

**Fire Weather Workshop Held At WFO Midland.** In a continued science and methodology-sharing effort WFO Midland hosted a fire weather workshop on March 21, 2006. Guest presenters included Tom Byrd (WFO El Paso), Steve Cobb, Mark Conder and Todd Lindley (all from WFO Lubbock), Seth Nagle (WFO San Angelo) and Jack Settelmaier (SSD). Local presenters included Greg Murdoch, Cody Lindsey, Alec Lyster and Jeffrey Cupo. Due to the unprecedented ongoing 2006 fire weather season Greg Murdoch (WFO Midland Fire Weather Focal Point) organized the workshop in order to identify best practices and discuss how they might be implemented. The workshop included 10 presentations, each followed by a time for discussion. "Fire weather is simply another form of severe weather, without the rotating cumulonimbus clouds," Jeffrey Cupo (SOO,



WFO Midland). A Southern Region Intranet page has been created with links to the agenda and presentations: <http://intranet.srh.noaa.gov/maf/soo/Seminars/Fire/>

**May Visit Teletraining Calendar.** The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) calendar for May is now available. A one-page printable planning version of the calendar is available at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/planning.html>  
The teletraining calendar is available at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ecal.asp>  
Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: [visit@comet.ucar.edu](mailto:visit@comet.ucar.edu)

The sessions planned for May are:

- \* Monitoring Gulf Moisture Return with GOES Imagery (Basic, May 2, 9)
- \* Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential Using GOES Sounder Derived Products (Basic, May 10, 31)
- \* Use of GOES/RSO imagery with other Remote Sensor Data for Diagnosing Severe Weather across CONUS (Intermediate, May 11, 12)
- \* The Enhanced-V: A Satellite Severe Storm Signature (Basic, May 1, 19)

Recorded VISIT sessions are available through the NWS Learning Management System catalog at: <http://e-learning.doc.gov/coursecatalog/index.cfm> (Select National Weather Service Courses, then search for the term VISIT.)

All previous teletraining sessions, including those with recorded instructor audio and annotations, are available at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ts.html>

**Preparing For The NAM Model Upgrade.** From now until June 13th NWS forecasters have the opportunity to compare the output from the current and new North American mesoscale (NAM) models on AWIPS, because the new version is running in parallel on the NCEP computer system. We are distributing (via LDM-LDADS-AWIPS) a number of parameters from the new NAM model for evaluation and comparison with the existing NAM model guidance. This will continue through June 13th when the new version is scheduled for implementation. Instructions for obtaining and viewing the output from the parallel NAM are available on Eric Howieson's Intranet page: <http://intranet.srh.noaa.gov/srh/awips/index.html>

A new discussion group has been formed to allow field forecasters to relay their comments and observations to the NCEP model developers. The URL is: <http://www.meted.ucar.edu:8080/metedbb/user/login.page>

The COMET folks have developed a 90 minute Webcast on the NAM-NMM. That Webcast is available at: <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/nwp/NAMWRF/splash.htm>

The Webcast contains background information about the WRF modeling system in general and the new NAM-NMM in particular. The presentation runs just under 80 minutes, plus there are two activities that pop up, so users should expect to spend about 90 minutes. Note you may break it into sections at any point desired, either by pausing while keeping the presentation window open or completely exiting and returning to the site at another convenient time. If you exit and later return to the site, it will automatically begin again on the first slide, but you can select any slide from the slide index in the left panel, allowing you to resume autoplay at the desired point.



NWS folks wanting credit on the Learning Management System (LMS) will be able to get it by successfully completing the quiz on the LMS site. Note the Webcast will only be available through the MetEd site, but the quiz will be on the LMS site.

After the evaluation period, when final details are known and forecast lessons from the evaluation period have been learned, a revised Webcast will be released as a source of background information on the model. The Webcast linked above is intended only for evaluators or anyone else needing this training before the public version is released.

Additionally, after the evaluation period, teletraining will be developed focusing on forecast performance, with lots of case examples.

## ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

<b>SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS</b>			
<b><u>MARCH 1 – 31, 2006</u></b>			
<b><u>Southern Region Losses</u></b>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>From (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>From Title</u>
Pearline McCauley	WFO HUN	Transfer outside NWS	ASA, GS-7
Virginia Johnson	WFO MEG	Retirement	ASA, GS-7
Charles A. Dotson	WFO TSA	Transfer to ER	Elec Tech, GS-11
<b><u>Southern Region Gains</u></b>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Aaron A. Gilstad	WFO EYW	New hire from outside	Intern, GS-11
Kelly A. Meeks	WFO LZK	New hire from outside	ASA, GS-7
<b><u>Within Region Transfers/Actions</u></b>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Douglas A. Butts	WFO SHV	Promotion	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Marianne Sutton	WFO EWX	Promotion	Forecaster, GS-9

## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

**CWSU Memphis Participated in ATOMS.** The Memphis ATOMS team participated in two EEO outreach events in March. The first event was held on March 11th at the Tennessee Technology Center in Memphis. MIC Doug Boyette and Meteorologist Vilma Castillo-Harmon staffed a NWS booth at the 2nd annual Aviation In Schools Career Day sponsored by the Memphis Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen. Interested students from almost every Memphis high school were pre-selected



to attend the Saturday event, which drew sponsors such as Fed Ex, Airbus, Embry-Riddle, Air Force, Army, Tennessee Air National Guard and several local flight schools. There were approximately 300 children who attended the event.

The other event was held on March 21st, also at the Tennessee Technology Center in Memphis. ATOMS team members MIC Doug Boyette and Meteorologist Robert Slattery staffed a booth at the annual Aviation Career Day sponsored by the Mid South EEO Committee (MSEEOC) based the ARTCC Memphis Center. The team spoke to an estimated 85 high school juniors and seniors about careers in the field of meteorology as well as careers in electronics (plugging the ET side of the NWS). This event mainly drew representatives from FAA, NWS and Mid South National Guard outlets.

**How Much Water is in That Cloud.** SMG Meteorologist Doris Hood with the assistance of Administrative Assistance Tammi Barreras, lead nine first grade science labs over two days at Cline Elementary School in Friendswood, TX in February 2006. Each lab consisted of five experiments that students participated and included tornado tubes and 'How much water is in that cloud' from the Southern Region Jetstream website. Two other experiments were demonstrated for the classes such as the can crusher, which was a favorite and met with requests of "Do that again!" The energy and enthusiasm to participate that kids this age have is infectious. Doris and Tammi got some great comments such as "This is fun!"

**Forecast Product Outreach at Slidell.** WFO New Orleans SOO Mike Koziara presented "Experimental Enhanced Wording Within the ZFP Product as Generated by the GFE Text Formatter" to several southeast Louisiana and coastal Mississippi television meteorologists at that office's April Media Workshop. Mike described the efforts WFOs Miami and Melbourne have made to produce enhanced ZFP text wording by incorporating tropical cyclone wind probabilities and wind and hazard gridded data.

**SMG Hosts Texas A&M Meteorology Students.** On Saturday April 1, nineteen Texas A&M meteorology students made the two hour drive to Houston to tour the Spaceflight Meteorology Group office and Johnson Space Center facilities. Meteorologist Doris Hood arranged the tour with help from fellow tour guides Brian Hoeth and MIC Frank Brody. The students received briefings on SMG's Space Shuttle and Soyuz landing forecasting, as well as, daily and special operations support. Students also saw demonstrations of the variety of display tools SMG has in addition to our customized AWIPS. The students toured the Space Shuttle Mission Control and Space Station Mission Control centers, learning about SMG's interactions with the flight control teams. To top it off, the group visited the historic Apollo Mission Control, the Space Vehicle Mockup Facility (with full scale mockups of the Space Shuttle and Space Station modules) and finally the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory which is the 6.2 million gallon pool in which the astronauts train.

**Interdisciplinary Dust Issues.** WFO El Paso Forecaster Dr. Dave Novlan was invited to teach a lecture for Dr. Thomas Gill's Graduate seminar on Interdisciplinary Dust Issues at the University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP). The 2 1/2 hour seminar had 10 graduate students in attendance. Dave lectured on "A Synoptic Climatology of Blowing Dust in the El Paso Area." Dave and Dr. Gill are planning a joint paper along with Texas Tech to characterize the overall dust problem in west and far west Texas and eastern New Mexico. This paper may be presented at the AMS Applied Climatology Conference next January in San Antonio. Dr. Gill believes, as do many in the NWS, that Climate Services is probably the most import driver and function of our agency, next to the provision of forecasts and warnings.





With the support and input from the WFO, the curricula at UTEP is moving toward a climatological emphasis as they direct studies toward an Air and Water Environment program. As such, the NWS-UTEP partnership is synergistic, with their research in local wind modeling and identification of dust sources yielding operational benefits to forecasters as much as to their research and curriculum development. With support from Dr. Novlan, Dr. Gill is working to develop instructional components from a modular synoptic climatology point of view, which Dr. Novlan demonstrated with his dust lecture. He was able to integrate mathematics and statistics into synoptic meteorology and to bridge climate and meteorology with geophysics and geology. This technique will serve as a stand-alone teaching seminar with potential application to a larger media for course and applied laboratory work in the future. Dr. Novlan will help UTEP develop this climatology curriculum, and also work with him on climate and dust related items.

Dr. Gill deeply appreciates our help and will work with us in the future to formalize more of this partnership. Dr. Gill donated a new introductory atmospheric sciences textbook (Hobbs 2nd Edition, out this spring) to our Library.

#### **WFO El Paso Contributes to Pathways High School Program.**

Lead Forecaster Joe Rogash is working with Tina Carrick, Graduate Student Coordinator and Pathways Coordinator at the University of Texas- El Paso, to provide a unique weather oriented opportunity for a group of gifted high school science students associated with the Pathways High School summer camp program. During the summer, these students are involved with a variety of field trips that focus on geosciences they don't get exposed to in school. In the past, these efforts have included trips to the mines at Orogrande, NM, hiking in the Franklin mountains, a trip to the Rio Bosque, and a variety of seismic experimental activities.

During the entire month of June, these students will be involved in a variety of such activities. Mr. Rogash proposed a weather experiment involving observation of dust devils. Conditions permitting, the students will travel to an area prone to frequent dust devils, record the number of dust devils and how long each one lasts. On another day with different weather conditions, they will go to the same location and repeat their observations. Their observations also will include video taping, photography, and even onsite observations of wind, temperature and humidity. After the fact, the students will work with NWS staff to review their findings, comparing lapse rates, stability, temperatures, dew point and wind shear to arrive at theories about conditions associated with the formation, intensity and longevity of dust devils.

**Doctoral Students Tour WFO El Paso Area.** Saturday morning, University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) professor Dr. Thomas Gill and 12 of doctoral students from his Environmental Geoscience class visited the El Paso Area National Weather Service Forecast Office at Santa Teresa NM. The purpose of their visit was to gain an overview of NWS operations. WCM John Fausett, Lead Forecaster Joe Rogash, and Journey Forecasters Dave Novlan and Corey Peiper teamed to discuss procedures for producing weather forecasts and warnings, the type of equipment used, the climatology of the county warning area, and why there was a high probability of severe thunderstorms over the southern plains for the weekend. The visit lasted about an hour. Tuesday April 18, Joe Rogash will give an Advanced Spotter session to this same group of doctoral students.

**School to Work Career Fair.** CWSU Albuquerque Meteorologist Alberta Vieira represented the NWS in the "School to World" career fair for junior high and high school students at the



Albuquerque Convention Center on March 4. Students from 66 New Mexico public schools and 18 private/home schools attended the Fair, including 1832 students with 634 accompanying adults. Alberta presented information about careers in meteorology and the government.

**Native American Science and Engineering Fair.** CWSU Albuquerque Meteorologist Alberta Vieira served as a judge for the National Native American Science and Engineering Fair at the Albuquerque Convention Center on March 24, 2006. Students, grades 5-12, from all across the conterminous U.S. and Alaska, submitted approximately 350 projects for evaluation. Alberta was one of 130 judges from across the nation to take part in this Fair.

**Weather Woodles.** CWSU Albuquerque Meteorologist Neil Haley visited Mrs. Clark's Kindergarten Class at Stapleton Elementary in Rio Rancho, NM. Neil presented a slide show featuring the "Weather Woodles," and talked with the children for about an hour.

**Visitors Tour CWSU Albuquerque.** Several visitors toured through our CWSU weather area during the month and were briefed on Center operations. These groups included:

- Mesa Air Shuttle pilots (12 visitors)
- A group including Southwest airlines employees (7)
- Angel Flight Pilots (~8)
- Boy Scout troop (12)
- Civil Air Patrol members (20)

**WFO Shreveport Celebrates Women's History Month.** On Wednesday, March 29th, the Shreveport Forecast Office celebrated Women's History Month with lunch and a guest speaker. Lisa Frantz, ASA, began by summarizing how women in NOAA, and in particular those who have worked for the NWS, have forged ahead to be an integral part of this year's theme: Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams. Ms. Frantz added local flavor by briefly talking about a local woman, Winifred Brasher, who worked for the Weather Bureau and was featured in an article of the Shreveport Times dated January 10, 1943. Mrs. Winifred Brasher brought the copy of the newspaper article to the office Open House in 1995, which pictures her in her job as one of the junior weather observers. The article also mentions two other local women who worked for the Weather Bureau in Shreveport during World War II.

The guest speaker, Ms. Lisa Johnson, Executive Vice President of the Bossier Chamber of Commerce, then spoke to the staff on the local and national scope of women owned businesses as well as how diversity impacts businesses and the economy. She indicated that women are very good at mathematics and science when they are young girls, but somewhere along the way in middle school and early high school, the challenge to keep up with mathematics is lost and their focus in the sciences suffers. The key is to keep girls challenged by showing them a vision of what their studies in mathematics and science can lead to. A discussion followed on what the NWS is doing to reach the young girls in order to increase the number of women in science related fields.

Staff members were also reminded by the office's Diversity focal point, Mr. Bill Parker, that an excellent article was available for reading which could be found on the web by going to:

<http://www.lib.noaa.gov/edocs/women.html>

Thanks to Mr. Parker for arranging for the 2006 Women's History Month celebration.





Pictured are:

Lisa Frantz ASA, Armando Garza MIC, guest Lisa Johnson and Bill Parker, Meteorologist.

**WFO Amarillo Assists in Programming NWRs.** HMT Stephen Bilodeau joined with Market Street United in Amarillo on March 22. United sold 500 radios and Stephen programmed about half of those during the evening news.

**WFO Amarillo Hosts “Non-Weather Emergency message (NWEM)” Seminar.** On February 27<sup>th</sup>, WFO Amarillo hosted a NWEM seminar for area Emergency Managers, County Judges, and local media in the Texas Panhandle. WCM Steve Drillette presented information on how the EAS system works, the new NWEM codes, and the process on how county officials would submit a request for the NWEM. Information regarding Hazcollect was also presented. Seventeen local officials attended the seminar representing 13 of the 20 counties in the Texas Panhandle served by WFO Amarillo. The seminar was timely as Fire Warnings were requested by several of those attending, just two weeks later as several devastating wildfires resulted in numerous communities being evacuated on March 12<sup>th</sup>. After the fires were contained, several of the Emergency Managers were grateful for the training, efficiency and the benefits of using the Fire Warnings via the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

**Corpus Christ Helps Students “Dare to Dream”.** WFO Corpus Christi MIC Scott Cordero, WCM John Metz, and Forecasters Tim Tinsley and Tawnya Evans recently participated in the Dare to Dream Career Fair at Naval Air Station Kingsville. Over 7,000 students attended this event, which also featured the “Blue Angels” airshow. The NWS staff talked to the students about the technology in use by the NWS, and provided hands on displays of a weather balloon, barometer, anemometer, temperature sensor and rain gauge. NWS brochures and Frisbees were also distributed to the participants.

**Birmingham Career Fair.** “Want to Be a Meteorologist?” Journeyman Forecasters John Sirmon and Krissy Scotten of WFO Birmingham recently participated in the annual Fifth Grade Career Fair at Riverchase Elementary School in Hoover, Alabama. Over 50 students listened to John and Krissy speak about topics such as “how to become a meteorologist”, “what it’s like to be a meteorologist”, and “what is the National Weather Service?” In addition to career topics, John and Krissy emphasized the importance of severe weather safety, a timely topic given the active spring severe weather season now in place across central Alabama.

**Working Together to Save Lives.** WFO Corpus Christi Forecaster Mike Gittinger recently conducted a severe weather safety presentation at Magee Intermediate School in Calallen, TX. The presentation, entitled “Working Together to Save Lives”, outlined the different hazards associated with thunderstorms, and provided basic thunderstorm and flood safety rules to the students. The



presentation concluded with a basic explanation of National Weather Service operations and demonstrated the NWS role in promoting public safety. A total of eleven fourth grade classes totaling near 220 students attended the two sessions held in the school auditorium.

**North Alabama Science Fair.** Huntsville MIC Mike Coyne and SOO Chris Darden helped judge the annual North Alabama Regional Science and Engineering Fair on March 14, 2006. Mike and Chris judged various categories in the middle and junior divisions with the winners going on to compete in the state science fair.

