

NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Western Region Notes

February 10, 2005

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Kudos to WFO Pocatello: WFO Pocatello received the following thank you letter from the Pocatello Mayor after the outstanding service they provided on a January winter storm.

"I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to you and your staff for the important services the National Weather Service provides to all of Southeast Idaho. The City of Pocatello has various departments that prepare for their work day based on your daily weather information.

"Recently, your timely information about a significant winter storm helped our crews prepare and coordinate plans for street plowing, emergency services, and other necessary services. Without prior warning, the size of the storm could easily have overwhelmed us, and it would have been difficult to implement such a coordinated effort at short notice.

"Thank you again for the fine job you do! Our unpredictable Idaho weather certainly makes your job a challenge."

Sincerely,
Roger W. Chase
Mayor

In Memory of Kevin Vosburgh: Kevin Vosburgh, Information Technology Officer for Eureka WFO, died on Monday, February 7, from a heart attack while skiing on vacation in Colorado. Kevin transferred from the Navy to the Eureka WFO in May 2003. Even though he was not there long, he became a vital member of the office and staff. He will be greatly missed.

Cards can be sent to:
Donald Vosburgh
22 Meadowview Lane
Richmond, MA 01254

Donations can be made to the American Heart Foundation, Diabetes and Cancer Society.

Funeral services will be held in Richmond, MA on Monday, February 14, at 2:00 PM. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.legacy.com/berkshire/LegacyHome.asp>

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

Statement of the Week: This week's Statement of the Week is a Winter Storm Watch issued by WFO Salt Lake City. The Watch covered the Utah Mountains above 7000 feet with snow beginning on Sunday, February 6. The Watch was upgraded to a Heavy Snow Warning early Sunday morning. The Watch verified with snow measuring between 10 to 24 inches over the Mountains of Utah by Monday night. WFO Salt Lake City provided 36-48 hours lead time for this heavy snow event. Good job SLC!

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SALT LAKE CITY UT
415 AM MST SAT FEB 5 2005

.A COLD MOIST PACIFIC STORM SYSTEM WILL BEGIN TO SPREAD ACROSS THE AREA SUNDAY THEN CONTINUE THROUGH MONDAY.

IDZ025-UTZ007>010-017-018-052300-
CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST MOUNTAINS-HENRY MOUNTAINS-WASATCH
MOUNTAINS I-80 NORTH-WASATCH MOUNTAINS SOUTH OF I-80-
WASATCH MOUNTAINS/IDAHO PORTION-WASATCH PLATEAU/BOOK CLIFFS-
WESTERN UINTA MOUNTAINS-
415 AM MST SAT FEB 5 2005

...WINTER STORM WATCH IN EFFECT FROM LATE SUNDAY MORNING TO MONDAY AFTERNOON...

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN SALT LAKE CITY HAS ISSUED A WINTER STORM WATCH FOR ALL OF THE MOUNTAINS OF UTAH AND EXTREME SOUTHEAST IDAHO. THE WATCH IS FOR THE PERIOD FROM LATE SUNDAY MORNING THROUGH MONDAY AFTERNOON.

A COLD AND MOIST PACIFIC STORM SYSTEM IS EXPECTED TO PUSH INTO THE AREA SUNDAY MORNING THEN CONTINUE AT LEAST THROUGH MONDAY. PERIODS OF SNOW...HEAVY AT TIMES...WILL DEVELOP OVER THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINS BY LATE SUNDAY MORNING AND SPREAD RAPIDLY INTO THE SOUTHERN UTAH MOUNTAINS. ACCUMULATIONS OF 1-2 FEET ARE EXPECTED TO BE COMMON ABOVE ABOUT 7000 FEET BY MONDAY AFTERNOON WITH LOCALLY HIGHER AMOUNTS.

PEOPLE PLANNING TRAVEL OR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN THE MOUNTAINS SUNDAY OR MONDAY SHOULD CONSIDER COMPLETING THESE ACTIVITIES TODAY...BEFORE THIS STORM BEGINS. ANYONE PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN THE MOUNTAINS SUNDAY OR MONDAY SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR WINTER STORM CONDITIONS.

REMEMBER...A WINTER STORM WATCH MEANS CONDITIONS ARE FAVORABLE FOR A HAZARDOUS WINTER STORM EVENT IN AND CLOSE TO THE WATCH AREA.

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Seattle forecaster Carl Cerniglia (right) and boat show participant

Seattle Boat Show: WFO Seattle had a booth at the 2005 Seattle Boat Show, held at the Qwest Event Center in Seattle. Nearly 71,000 people attended this year's show, which took place January 14-23. Several staff members from WFO Seattle dedicated time at the booth. Lee Chesneau, a forecaster from the NWS Ocean Prediction Center (OPC) in Camp Springs, Maryland, also came out for the event. As part of the Boat Show's activities, he taught two marine weather safety classes for nearly 100 people. The booth displayed NWS products and services (especially marine-related material), NOAA

Weather Radio, and National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD) products, and the staff answered hundreds of inquiries from boat show attendees.



Dan Keeton explains the finer points of the tsunami warning system at the Los Angeles Tsunami Task Force Meeting

Tsunami Task Force Briefing: On his first day on the job as the new Oxnard WCM, Eric Boldt joined MIC Dan Keeton in a Tsunami Task Force Meeting for greater Los Angeles. The task force was assembled to address tsunami preparedness issues. The recent tragedy spurred interest in more robust tsunami hazard planning. Approximately 90 people participated in the meeting. The disciplines represented included public works, emergency planning, law enforcement, firefighters, USCG, media, and elected officials from the city of Los Angeles and Long Beach.



(L to R) Engine Capt Dave Collins, Aviation Officer Kenny Duvall, ECC Manager Mark Glos, and Lead Forecaster Dave Gomberg

Forecasters Visit Angeles National Forest

Dispatch: Los Angeles/Oxnard Fire Weather Focal Point and Lead Forecaster Dave Gomberg, along with MIC Dan Keeton, recently visited the Angeles National Forest (NF) Emergency Communications Center and dispatch/aerial tanker base in Lancaster, California. The Angeles NF has responsibility for the San Gabriel Mountains in Southern California. Their wide-ranging responsibilities include fighting wildfires, responding

to automobile accidents, providing general law enforcement, and conducting search and rescue.



Robyn Heffernan, WFO Boise, explains the difference between tornadoes and hurricanes.

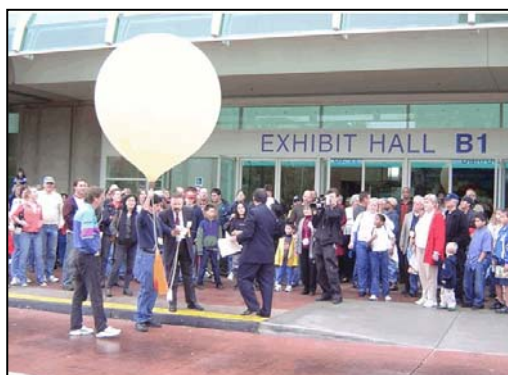
WFO Boise Makes a Storm at “JASON 2005 Science Extravaganza”

Robyn Heffernan and Jay Breidenbach represented NOAA’s National Weather Service at the “JASON 2005 Science Extravaganza,” held at Northwestern Nazarene University, in Nampa, Idaho, January 31 – Feb 2. JASON is a National project, organized by world famous oceanographer Bob Ballard, as a way to interest middle school and high school students in earth science. NOAA scientists have participated in the project each year.

The theme of this year’s JASON project focused on “disappearing wet lands in the Mississippi Delta region.” Students from Idaho joined teams in Southern Louisiana via a live web cast, and were able to visit in person with many different Idaho scientists, including some from NOAA’s National Weather Service. Jay and Robyn discussed hurricanes and their effect on coastal wetlands, and National Weather Service’s mission to protect the public by issuing warnings for floods and tornadoes, which can also occur with Hurricanes.

While Idaho doesn’t experience hurricanes, tornadoes and flash floods are much more likely. The students were fascinated by a working tornado machine, built by Jay, which produces an intense tornado-like vortex in a box, using water and a hot plate.

San Diego Participates in Annual AMS Meeting and WeatherFest: Thanks to WFO San Diego for helping out with this year’s American Meteorological Society’s (AMS) Weatherfest. Weatherfest was held January 9 at the San Diego Convention Center in conjunction with the annual AMS Convention. Over 1500 people attended this 4-hour event.



Phil Gonsalves (Met Intern, holding balloon) launched an upper air balloon to open this year’s AMS WeatherFest. To Phil’s left is ET Scott Brookshaw. To his right is MIC Jim Purpura.



Michael Khuat, WFO San Diego's ITO (left), and WCM Ed Clark (right) help staff the NWS booth at the AMS WeatherFest event.



Service Hydrologist Sherrie Hebert provides Hydrologic insight into the severe drought conditions to local emergency management staff and local media.

WFO Pocatello Celebrates Second Ground Hog Day Chili Cook-Off:

WFO Pocatello hosted their second annual Ground Hog Day Chili cook-off on February 2. The morning began with several emergency coordinators, NRCS representatives, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, and media personnel attending the Spring Hydrologic Briefing, presented by Service Hydrologist Sherrie Hebert.

Following the Hydrology briefing, WCM Vern Preston summarized “Punxsutawney Phil’s forecast.” Then, Vern provided a summary of the Ground Hog day festivities, including a weather briefing by Forecasters Dawn Harmon, Greg Kaiser, and Rick Winther, and a review of NWS

forecast procedures using AWIPS digital forecast products. The event was covered by local TV stations.



Local Emergency Coordinators sample the chili at WFO Pocatello.

After the official activities, the Chili contest got underway. The Pocatello staff and guests were encouraged to bring their special chili and to sample others. Judging consisted of the following categories: color, taste, texture, aroma, and spiciness. Eight concoctions were entered – four from NWS staff and four from the emergency coordinators. This year’s entrants included the following: Western Storm-Front Chili, Blizzard Express, Chili, Tsunami Surprise Chili, I Can’t Believe It’s Not Chili – Chili, Tantalizing Tuber Tornado Chili, Chile con las Frijol Negras, Wickedly Windy Chili, and WMD Chili.

Category awards:

Most Hot & Spicy: Vernon Preston (Tornado Chili)

Best Texture: Brent Rigby (Blizzard Express)

Most Colorful, Taste/Flavor, & Aroma/Smell: Sherrie Hebert

Overall winners:

2nd runner up – Vern Preston (Tornado Chili)

1st runner up – Vern Preston (Wickedly Windy)

Chili Master Grand winner – Sherrie Hebert (Chile con las Frijol Negras)

The event was so well received that next year’s plans are already in the making. By the way, Phil *did* see his shadow, so eastern Idaho is planning for additional winter episodes, which many farmers are very happy for – as eastern Idaho is now in its sixth year of severe drought.



Rich Denning (ET) and Bryan Tilly (ET) participate in a cribbing exercise. Cribbing is used to remove debris to free a victim.

Pocatello Staff Complete CERT Training: Eight employees from WFO Pocatello successfully completed Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training. The training promotes a partnering effort between emergency services and the people that they serve. If a disastrous event overwhelms or delays the community's professional response, CERT members can assist by applying basic response skills. These skills can help save and sustain lives following a disaster until help arrives. Rich Denning (ET), Dean Hazen (SOO), Mike Huston (MET), Donna Mills (AA), Vern Preston (WCM), Bill Snyder (ITO), Rick Stork (ESA), and Bryan Tilly (ET) are the members of this CERT team. In recent weeks, WFO Pocatello

staff has provided weather safety training at eastern Idaho county CERT courses and has also been invited back to introduce the teams to the SKYWARN program.



WFO San Joaquin Valley Celebrates a Decade of Service: On January 27, the staff at WFO San Joaquin Valley (in Hanford, CA) marked their 10th year since forecast operations began at the present facility. A special anniversary lunch commemorated the event.

HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

Western Region Upper Air Performance: For the second month in a row, Western Region's upper air scores were top in the nation. The last time this was accomplished was in Dec 2001 - Jan 2002. Keep up the great work!

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

Advanced Warning Operations Course (AWOC): *AWOC Training Deadlines:* It is important that offices keep up with the training schedule. In WR, we have broken the two track deadlines up into first and second half of FY05.

March 31, 2005 – Complete Core Track (WFO and CWSUs)

August 31, 2005 – Complete Severe Weather Track (WFO and CWSUs)

August 31, 2005 – Complete Hydrology Core Track (RFC's only)

TBD (probably March, 2006) – Winter Weather Track (WFO and CWSUs)

For more info on AWOC and LMS go to: <http://wdtb.noaa.gov/courses/awoc/index.html>.

Pacific Northwest Weather Workshop – 2005: The Pacific Northwest Weather Workshop will be held March 4-5, 2005, at the NOAA Western Regional Center campus at Sand Point in Seattle. This annual conference, sponsored by the National Weather Service, University of Washington, and Puget Sound Chapter of the American Meteorological Society, covers recent developments in weather forecasting and observational technologies, major weather events of the past year, and topics dealing with Western U.S. meteorology.

This year we are encouraging abstracts dealing with determining and communicating uncertainty in weather forecasting. Pre-registration is required for all attendees. We encourage you to visit the web site at: www.atmos.washington.edu/~cliff/PNW2005.html for latest information and on-line registration. Please submit abstracts for oral presentations and posters in text, Word or WordPerfect format - no PDF please. **ABSTRACTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 18, 2005.**

For more information contact: Brad Colman/Chris Hill, NWS Forecast Office (206.526.6095 x 224/222, brad.colman@noaa.gov or chris.hill@noaa.gov), or Clifford Mass, Dept of Atmospheric Sciences, Box 351640, University of Washington, Seattle WA 98195 (206.685.0190, cliff@atmos.washington.edu).

Suspension of COMET Outreach 2005 RFP: Due to budget cuts, the COMET Outreach Program's FY2005 Cooperative Project Request for Proposals (RFP) is being suspended. Funding for Outreach Partners Proposals has also been suspended. For more information, visit the COMET web site at <http://www.comet.ucar.edu/>.

Teletraining Session for February: The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) and the Integrated Sensor Training Professional Development Series (ISTPDS) sessions are listed below. Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: visit@comet.ucar.edu.

The teletraining calendar is at: <http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/visit/ecal.asp>.

The sessions for February are:

- NEW - Predicting Supercell Motion in Operations (Intermediate, Feb 15, 22)
- Using GOES to Forecast Winter Storms Part 1 and 2 (Intermediate, Feb 2, 3, 16, 17)
- Lightning Meteorology I/II (Feb 23,24)
- Mesoscale Analysis of Convective Weather Using GOES RSO Imagery (Basic, Feb 28)

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

Kudos: SOD would like to thank the following offices for their hard work performing AWIPS alpha and beta testing during the last year: Boise WFO, Salt Lake City WFO, Glasgow WFO, Billings WFO, Los Angeles WFO, Reno WFO, and the Portland RFC. These tests require an enormous amount of effort by the entire office. Thanks for a job well done!

Office Program Reviews: SOD completed two program reviews over the past two weeks. The WFO Seattle program review was completed during the last week of January and the WFO Flagstaff program review was completed during the first week of February. Bob Diaz, Joe Lachacz, and Dwight Williams conducted the SOD review in Seattle and Andy Edman, and Kirby Cook completed the SSD/IFPS review. Vickie Nadolski, Bob Diaz, Sean Wink and Joe Lachacz conducted the Flagstaff review.

Sean Wink, Electronics & Facilities Branch Chief, attended the SOD/SIB/EPM meeting held in Silver Spring January 25-27. Numerous Regional issues were discussed as well as Program updates on AWIPS/ASOS/RRS/NEXRAD, EMRS and Training.



Oxnard MIC Shadows ET Tech: WFO Oxnard Electronics Tech Steve Kusjy invited MIC Dan Keeton along for an ASOS PM visit to the Camarillo ASOS. Camarillo is an easy ride - just a few miles from the WFO. It was a good opportunity for Dan to see some of the day to day work of the EI Tech staff.

Web Services: Graham Stork, WR/SOD, attended a web services meeting held at SRHQ in Fort Worth, TX. The focus of the meeting was globally load balancing the NWS web services radar pages. The group discussed a wide range of technical issues relating to globally load balancing web services radar pages, and received hands on training on the Foundry Networks devices that will be used to implement the load balancing scheme. Globally load balancing the radar services will improve service reliability and service response time, especially in times of high use. The meeting was attended by representatives of the four CONUS regions, NWSHQ, NOAA Computer Incident Response Team, NOAA Network Operations Center, NOAA Web Operations Center, NOAA network engineers from Boulder, CO, and Norman, OK, and a network engineer from Foundry Networks. An aggressive implementation target date of March 31 has been set.

Eureka Support: George Montenegro traveled to WFO Eureka to give a helping hand in ASOS, and provided support for any after-hour failures and troubleshooting.