



NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

September 8, 2005

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE



Congratulations, Bob Tibi....New Deputy RD for Western

Region: I am pleased to announce the selection of Bob Tibi as the Deputy Regional Director for Western Region. Bob has served as the WR Hydrology and Climate Services Division Chief for the past 15 years.

Prior to joining Western Region Headquarters, Bob served as MIC at WSO Parkersburg, WV; Service Hydrologist at WFO Charleston, WV; and Program Manager in the Office of Hydrology. Bob was the catalyst for the creation of the regional and local climate services program (adopted agency-wide) and co-led the development of

Western Region's Leadership development program, LIFT. Bob's leadership skills, his vision and innovation, will be great assets as he assumes his new position as Deputy RD.



A Fond Farewell to Dan Keeton: On August 6, 2005, Dan Keeton, MIC WFO Oxnard, resigned from federal service to return to the Portland, OR area. For many who came to know Dan over the years, his departure is a loss for us all. Dan enjoyed a long, exciting career that took him many places, including Alaska. Most notable was his tenure in the West where he served as MIC in Pendleton, OR, WCM in WFO Portland, OR, Acting MIC in WFO Reno, MIC in WFO San Diego and lastly, MIC in WFO Oxnard. Dan made many positive contributions to NWS, including his most recent role as a facilitator and mentor in our LIFT program. As Dan moved up in his career, to different offices, I am sure those who worked with him and got to

know him were sad to see him leave. I am happy for Dan as he pursues other interests back home in the Portland area. However I will miss him, as I know many others will.



Welcome Mark Jackson, Western Region's newest MIC: On August 7, Mark Jackson, former SOO at WFO Salt Lake City, assumed the position of MIC at WFO Oxnard. Prior to his job in Salt Lake City, Mark served as the regional scientist in Pacific Region Headquarters. In addition, Mark has served as a team leader/facilitator for the NWS Executive leadership seminar held in NWSTC. Mark has recently agreed to assist us with our Western Region LIFT program. Please join me in welcoming Mark to his new job as MIC. We wish the Jacksons well in their new home.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

Statement of the Week: This week's statement is a Civil Emergency Message issued by WFO Pocatello on Labor Day. Wildfires caused by lightning on Sunday were growing rapidly on Monday, and in some cases, spectators were interfering with firefighting efforts. Local authorities asked for the National Weather Service's dissemination help in asking people to stay away from fire areas and let the firefighters get the job done. The following message was relayed by PIH and was broadcast across local radio stations and printed in local newspapers the next day. Officials stated the message seemed to help decrease the number of spectators at the fires.

BULLETIN - IMMEDIATE BROADCAST REQUESTED
 CIVIL EMERGENCY MESSAGE
 IDAHO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY POCATELLO IDAHO
 RELAYED BY NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE POCATELLO ID
 1142 AM MDT MON SEP 5 2005

...CIVIL EMERGENCY MESSAGE...

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS TRANSMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE BANNOCK COUNTY SHERIFF AND THE FT HALL EMERGENCY MANAGER CONCERNING WILDFIRES IN NORTHEAST BANNOCK COUNTY EAST OF FT HALL...AND IN THE ARBON VALLEY IN POWER COUNTY.

THE FT HALL EMERGENCY MANAGER REPORTS NUMEROUS PROBLEMS WITH SPECTATORS NEAR THESE FIRES. SPECTATORS ARE INTERFERING WITH FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS AND MUST STAY AWAY FROM THESE AREAS. BESIDES BLOCKING ACCESS BY EMERGENCY VEHICLES...SPECTATORS ALSO PUT THEMSELVES AT RISK SHOULD THE FIRE CHANGE BEHAVIOR.

ONCE AGAIN...IF YOU ARE NOT OFFICIALLY INVOLVED WITH THE FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS...STAY AWAY FROM THESE WILDFIRE AREAS.

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HEDGES

Boise Assists in Issuing Amber Alert: On August 15, WFO Boise was asked by Idaho State Comms to issue an Amber Alert (Child Abduction Emergency (CAE)) on the Boise and Twin Falls NOAA Weather Radios. After issuing the alert, Idaho State Comms noticed no local radio stations in the Boise area were re-broadcasting the alert. After some trouble shooting, they realized their transmitter in the Boise area was not operating. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) message went throughout the rest of the state with no problem, but no broadcasters in the Boise area were able to pick it up. Idaho State Comms quickly instituted their backup plan, which is to have the NWS issue the CAE message using NOAA Weather Radio. This backup plan involving WFO Boise has been in the works for several years, but had never been tested or utilized:

- 1) Notify the NWS by phone of the need to issue an EAS alert.

- 2) Idaho State Comms confirms the NWS fax number and provides the CAE script for NOAA Weather Radio.
- 3) NWS calls back Idaho State Comms to confirm the authenticity of the request.
- 4) Upon receipt of the fax, NWS issues the EAS alert via NOAA Weather Radio.

This back up arrangement works both ways: should NOAA Weather Radio fail at any Idaho location, WFO Boise can contact Idaho State Comms (in the same manner) and request they issue an appropriate alert using EAS.

At an after action meeting concerning this event, Idaho State Comms and area broadcasters had high praise for the quick response and professional manner of the NWS, as well as the clarity of the EAS message broadcast over NOAA Weather Radio. By the way, this situation did have a good ending -- the vehicle with the abducted child was located by an alert highway patrolman who heard the Amber Alert on the radio, and the child was subsequently safely returned to her mother.

2005 Pacific NW Weather Scramble: The annual Pacific NW Weather Scramble golf tournament was held on August 13 at the Ft. Lewis Golf Course, south of Tacoma, WA. The tournament had a full house of 44 players from around the Pacific Northwest, including NWS retirees Bob (and Doris) Richey from Salt Lake City and Jerry McDuffie from Tennessee. Even Woody Dickey, who retired from the NWS in 1976, joined in to enjoy the fun under the sun and the drawing for prizes.

The winning team shot a nine-under par 63. The team included Mike Roll (Portland Corps of Engineers) with guests Sylvia Roll and Hugh & Patty Brumley. One shot back in second place (8-under 64) was Ted Buehner (WFO Seattle) with guests Brandon & Mike Wholey and Mike Maiori. In third place (with a tiebreaker at 6-under par 66) was Mark Wolf (WFO Seattle weather spotter) with guests Dale Eihart, Steve Gohde, and Mark O'Malley of NWS Portland.

Long drives were won by Mark Wolf, Nathan Ford (Ft. Lewis), Sylvia Roll, and Patty Brumley. Ted Buehner was the closest to the pin ("KP") on the 8th hole with a shot only 22 inches away from the cup. The other "KP"s, at the 2nd and 12th holes, were Mike Wholey and guest Bill Lihudis. The longest putt made on the par-3 15th hole was drained by Bob Richey – the second year in a row.

Next year's tournament is slated to return to Ft. Lewis. Hope to see there!



(L to R): Betty Aye (County Commissioner), Keith Meier (MIC), Nancy Espy (County Commissioner), Jim Scarlett (WCM), Ray Traub (County Commissioner)

Powder River County, Montana Designated StormReady:

Powder River County, in southeastern Montana, was named as Montana's (and Western Region's) newest StormReady County in a ceremony on August 29.

Comments by local officials during the ceremony highlighted the NWS' role in the community. In particular, NOAA Weather Radio, public weather awareness campaigns, and SKYWARN spotter training were especially noted. Officials are very happy with the 25 community rating points toward flood insurance (a benefit of the StormReady program), as Broadus, MT is situated in a flood plain. Thanks to Jim Scarlett (WCM) and Keith Meier (MIC), and congratulations to all!

WR Convenes Service Backup Team: A sub group of the Digital Services Management Team composed of MICs, ITOs, WCMs, regional staff, and a union representative recently met at Western Region Headquarters to review policies pertaining to WFO service backup. The work accomplished during the meeting will result in an updated WFO Service Backup regional supplement. The group also addressed several ongoing GFE technical issues related to activating IFPS service backup. As these issues get resolved, they will be forwarded to the offices to incorporate into local guidance to forecasters.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

Bi-annual SOO/DOH PD&T and Intern Progress Reports: The bi-annual Western Region PD&T and Intern Progress Reports are due from each WFO and RFC by September 30, 2005.

WR Web Policy Reminder: Offices are reminded to consult this guidance before adding or modifying a web page

Content Guidelines for Office Web Sites: This guideline provides a bullet summary of key aspects of DOC, NOAA and NWS web policy. If the office follows these guidelines (checklist), their web page will conform with polices as they are now written. This guideline updates the previous version modified May 12, 2002.

Introduction to WR Standard Web Page and Server Access: This is a short primer for **new** webmasters accessing the web farm.

Bi-weekly WR SOO/DOH Operational Calls have resumed: The Bi-weekly SOO/DOH operational calls have resumed. Gene Petrescu (Missoula) and Eric Pytlak (Tucson) led the first two conference calls. The calls are held every 2 weeks with the option to hold the second call during periods of active weather. The goal of the conference calls is to promote better situational awareness of upcoming weather changes and promote scientific sharing among the offices. These calls are not intended to replace daily forecaster collaborations or small group blast-up calls. Any questions should be directed to Andy Edman (SSD).

AWOC Update: According to Ed Mahoney (WDTB), the upcoming AWOC winter weather training modules will be ready by the April/May 2006 time period. The current plan will be to require AWOC winter training next summer/fall in preparation for the following winter. More information will be coming as we receive updates.

GOES-N Launch Delayed: The NASA/NESDIS Management Team has made a decision to delay the launch of GOES-N. This delay is due to problems with the satellite's batteries. A new launch date has not been released.

RIDGE Radar: Due to Hurricane Katrina support, the operational implementation of the new RIDGE radar web pages has been delayed. The prototype system performed well during Hurricane Katrina and the implementation delay is not expected to last long.

Upcoming Science Workshops:

Hydrologic Research to Operations Meeting: WR is organizing a hydrology research to operations meeting October 4-6. The purpose of the meeting is to build relationships between the research and NWS operations communities to apply current and future research to solve problems in hydrology operations at the RFCs and WFOs. The website for the meeting is: www.wr.noaa.gov/hydroscience. Please contact Kevin Werner (WR/SSD) with any questions.

Ninth Annual Great Divide Weather Workshop: The Great Divide Workshop will be held at the Hampton Inn in Great Falls on October 25-27, 2005. The focus of the workshop will be on the forecast challenges faced in the Intermountain West and the Western High Plains. The scheduled key note speaker for the banquet will be David C. Whiteman from the University of Utah. Dave will present a pictorial look at unique weather phenomena.

Please register for the workshop by accessing the local news section at either the Missoula or Great Falls home pages (weather.gov/missoula or weather.gov/greatfalls). Abstracts should be sent to the workshop email address by September 15, 2005 to ensure inclusion in the workshop preprint. Hotel reservations must be made by September 20.

Workshop contacts are Gene Petrescu, Michelle Mead, and Mike W. Johnson
voice: 406-329-4715 fax: 406-329-4842
e-mail: wr.great.divide.workshop@noaa.gov

Twelfth Annual Workshop on Weather Prediction in the Intermountain West: The Twelfth Annual Workshop on Weather Prediction in the Intermountain West will be held on November 3, 2005 at the Desert Research Institute (DRI) in Reno, Nevada. The objectives of these annual workshops are to discuss major issues related to operational meteorology over the western United States and to foster interaction between applied meteorologists, research scientists, and others who rely on operational weather forecasts or data. The workshop is held in alternate years at DRI and the University of Utah, and this year is being hosted by the DRI / NOAA Cooperative Institute for Atmospheric Sciences and Terrestrial Applications (CIASTA).

This year's workshop agenda has two primary focus areas: Transportation Weather and Air Quality Forecasting and Impacts, with emphasis on the operational prediction methods, monitoring networks and management challenges specific to the Intermountain West. Abstracts can be submitted for either poster or oral presentations.

Abstract submittal is not required for participation. The deadline for registration is 1 October. For a more complete workshop description and registration instructions, please visit the workshop web page at:
<http://conferences.dri.edu/WxPrediction/>

NWSTC AWIPS Postgres Training Materials: Postgres will replace Informix in AWIPS OB6 this autumn. In preparation for this change, the National Weather Service Training Center has been developing Postgres database training materials over the past several months. These materials are;

1. Postgres Documentation/Reference Manuals. If not already received, all WFOs and RFCs should receive these by the middle of August 2005.
2. A Postgres training CD that acts as a Postgres emulator. This will allow local offices to work with Postgres commands. Available by the end of August 2005.

3. An Introduction to Postgres on-line course. This will be available from the NWSTC in September 2005.
4. An Integrating Postgres into AWIPS on-line course is expected in October 2005.
5. A Postgres server with an AWIPS database at the NWSTC. Accessing this server will allow offices to run and test their Postgres scripts with AWIPS data. This server has been purchased by the NWSTC and is being ramped up. No date for field access is available at this time, but the goal is for sometime in late September or early October 2005.

National deployment of AWIPS OB6 is currently scheduled to begin on October 17, 2005. Hence, all WR offices should factor in Postgres training and changeover time for their appropriate AWIPS managers over the next few months.

Teletraining Sessions for September: The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) calendar for September is now available. Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: visit@comet.ucar.edu. The teletraining calendar is now at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ecal.asp>. The teletraining planning calendar with other sessions is at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/planning.html>

The current sessions planned for September are:

- Downscaling Technique by Climate Team
(Basic, Sep 16,21)
- CPC Long Range Forecasting by Climate Team
(Basic, Sep 7, 28)
- CPC Monitoring Products by Climate Team
(Basic, Sep 8,20)
- Use of GOES/RSO imagery with other Remote Sensor Data for Diagnosing Severe Weather across CONUS (RSO 3)
(Intermediate, Sep 13, 14)

Climate team sessions are intended for climate focal points and are a prerequisite for additional classroom training.

Several recorded VISIT session are available via LMS: <http://e-learning.doc.gov/coursecatalog/index.cfm>. Then, go to NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE COURSES and search on VISIT.

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

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

FTS2001 Network Services Conference: Steve Keene, Western Region Telecommunications Manager, attended an FTS2001 Network Services Conference in Chicago on August 15-18. The GSA-sponsored conference allows telecom managers to keep abreast of current offerings and contract changes on the FTS2001 contract, due to expire in January 2008. The agenda for this year's conference was the transition to the new Networkx contract due to be delivered in Oct 2006. The Networkx

contract (which replaces the FTS2001 contract) is a four-year base contract with three two-year option periods. As soon as the new Networx contract has been delivered, DOC and NOAA will begin evaluating the vendors' offers.

Phone System Support: Steve Keene responded to the Sacramento WFO/RFC phone system and voice mail problem. Steve spent four days (including a weekend) upgrading the phone system to a current software version 6.1, he also removed the old Norstar Voice Mail and installed a new Call Pilot Voice Mail system that all offices in Western Region will be upgraded to beginning in FY06. On August 29, Steve worked with Sacramento ET, Mike Bequette, to recreate the Automated Attendant and the CCR trees for the office.

Phone System Problems: WFO Elko also experienced phone system problems, and Steve Keene went to Elko to address the problem. He left for Elko on Friday, September 2 and had the problem resolved by mid-afternoon on Saturday.

New SOD Employee: On September 6, Ms. Florence Evans reported for her first day at WRH. Florence is the newest hire to WRH and is the Program Support Assistant in the Systems Operations Division. She was an officer in the Army and spent time in Brussels Belgium at NATO Headquarters as the Executive Staff Officer. She and her husband recently left the DC area, where Florence worked for the USDA as a Program Assistant, to move back to Salt Lake City. We are glad to have Florence as the newest member of the National Weather Service Western Region.

Upper Air Inspection: Joe Lachacz and Harold Knocke completed an Upper Air inspection at the San Diego contract site on September 1. These inspections are required to be completed every 18-24 months. The operational performance and maintenance support for the site were exceptional. The inspections focus on safety, operations, and maintenance.