



NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

December 15, 2006

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

With winter upon us through most of the region, I want to take this opportunity to emphasize how important it is for us to perform our jobs and conduct our personal lives in a safe manner. Be mindful that slips, trips, and falls are a major problem in all workplaces, but especially in field locations. Here are some tips submitted by Support Operations Division about walking in icy, snowy conditions:

How to Walk



Plan ahead and give yourself sufficient time.

When walking on steps, always use the handrailings and plant your feet firmly on each step.

When walking on an icy or snow-covered walkway, take short steps and walk at a slower pace so you can react quickly to a change in traction.

Bending your knees a little and taking slower and shorter steps increases traction and can greatly reduce your chances of falling. It also helps to stop occasionally to break momentum.

A heavy backpack or other load can challenge your sense of balance. Try not to carry too much--you need to leave your hands and arms free to better balance yourself.

Be prepared to fall and try to avoid using your arms to break your fall. If you fall backward, make a conscious effort to tuck your chin so your head doesn't strike the ground with a full force.

When entering a building, remove as much snow and water from your boots as you can. Take notice that floors and stairs may be wet and slippery--walk carefully.

Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles--use the vehicle for support.



METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

SERVICE OF THE WEEK: This week's service of the week goes to WFO San Diego and forecaster Joe Dandrea. Joe provided excellent customer service to the aviation community and United Airlines in particular during a high impact, low cig/fog event during the time of heavy holiday (Thanksgiving) air travel. MIC Jim Purpura received a call from Al Turner, the General Manager of United Airlines in San Diego who was very complementary of Joe's actions. Specifically Mr. Turner relayed the following information:

"We have had some challenges with fog at the airport for the past (2) nights . On Sunday November 19th, we (United Airlines) diverted several of our airplanes to Los Angeles and Ontario due to fog at the airport. This scenario affected over 1,000 of our customers trying to depart San Diego on Monday morning.

To prevent a repeat, we decided to take a more pro-active approach and make an early determination of what the weather would bring. If fog was again in the forecast, then the plan would be to do planned diversions and bus our customers up to Los Angeles and depart our (2) redeye flights from the Los Angeles station.

We called your office and spoke with Joe Dandrea, who was very professional with his prediction of what time the fog would roll in and how low the ceiling was expected to be at the airport. Based on his information, we were able to put our plan in place and instead of having 300+ customers stuck at the terminal in San Diego on Monday night, they were able to make it to their destination by departing from Los Angeles after a planned bus ride. The reliable and accurate information from Joe saved the day and holiday plans for many of our customers. Thanks, Joe!!!!!!!"



Opheim NOAA Weather Radio Repeater (excitor) Fundraiser: The community of Opheim, Montana recently got together to raise the money to bring a NOAA Weather Radio repeater to their community, and overcome the final hurdle to getting the entire county recognized as StormReady. Valley County Commissioner Dave Pippin already had some local banks and businesses donate a significant amount of the \$4,100 cost, but they were still short of the final goal. Dave decided to have a fund-raising auction and dance at the Mint Bar, in which his band played from 7:30 pm until 1 am. NWS Glasgow WCM Tanja Fransen spoke to the group about what NOAA Weather Radio does for them, and why it is important. With humor, she told the crowd that the NWS is in advertising, not production, and that she heard they could use some better advertising in their community in regards to weather information. This NWR repeater was the best way to get better weather information to the community. Professional auctioneer Rick Stahl donated his services, and auctioned off all the donated items, from baked pies, to books, DVD players, flats of roofing shingles, homemade buns, a storm door, exercise equipment and services for seed cleaning and trenching. In just over 30 minutes, \$1,416 was raised, and one

strawberry rhubarb pie went for \$100! Although the temperature was 20 below zero, over 60 people gathered for the event and contributed to the fundraiser in one way or another.



Mike Seaman. Claudia Cox (Western Region HQ) assisted Bob Hansen in planning NOAA support for this conference.

National Science Teachers Association Conference:

Approximately 2,000 people, many of them school science teachers, attended the National Science Teachers Association Conference in Salt Lake City, December 7-9. NOAA staffed an information booth and distributed a wide variety of brochures, CDs, posters, booklets, and more. Pictured in the photo (L to R): Bob Hansen, Annie Reiser, Jeannine Montgomery, Dennis Cain, Bruce Moravchik, and Jeff Lorens. Also helping to staff the booth (not pictured): Carl Gorski (WRH), and from WFO Salt Lake City: Kevin Barjenbruch, Mike Conger, Dave Hogan, and

Career Day in Billings: On November 29, 2006 Billings, MT WFO Lead Forecaster Julie Arthur and Met Intern Liz Stoppkotte staffed a booth at the "Bridger's Jobs for Montana's Graduates Career Fair" in Billings. Several high schools from all across Southeast and South Central Montana participated in the fair. Other organizations in the fair included several local businesses, law enforcement, the military, healthcare and medical professionals, and other government agencies. Many students and teachers visited the booth to inquire about the National Weather Service and to obtain information concerning the education required for a degree in meteorology.



Media Fair at Hanford: WFO San Joaquin Valley recently held its 12th Annual Media Workshop. There was good representation of weather broadcasters from both the Fresno and Bakersfield markets. Topics covered included changes in climatology products, an overview of local hydrologic services, upcoming air-quality products, the Area Forecast Discussion (AFD), Spanish web page updates, NOAA Weather Radio for schools, and an ENSO update. Steve Mendenhall (second from left) and Dan Gudgel (right) planned and hosted the event.

SKYWARN Recognition Day Activities: The 2006 SKYWARN Recognition Day was a big success across Western Region. Thirteen WFOs in WR participated. Following are some of the highlights:



Glasgow: The Valley County Amateur Radio Club braved another year of harsh wind chill temperatures to set up for the Skywarn Recognition Day event. This was their sixth year participating in the event. With wind chills to 20 below, they got their antenna set up in the daylight, and were ready to go by 5 pm. This year's contacts were down from previous years, and it was heard commented several times, "We can't wait to get out of the bottom of this sunspot cycle!" With 171 contacts, it was a little less than in previous years. But it doesn't have any of the club

members disappointed. They know that conditions will only improve over the next 5 years as we get into a more active solar cycle.



Billings: Ten volunteer Amateur Radio operators from the Yellowstone Radio Club and Yellowstone Amateur Radio Emergency Services participated in the 2006 SKYWARN Recognition Day special event at WFO Billings, including one retired NWS employee, Chuck Bikle. In addition, four current staff members (Dan Borsum, Scott Carpenter, Tom Frieders and Bill Rasch) from WFO Billings volunteered time to participate in the event. Preliminary analysis of the log file indicates the volunteers and WFO Billings staff members were able to make contact with 30 other NWS offices across the country, along with several other amateur radio operators using several different bands and modes. These volunteers put in a total of 35 hours between them, beginning Friday evening and ending late Saturday afternoon. HAM Radio focal point Scott Carpenter prepared his signature chili for the event again this year, which was enjoyed by all who dared. Shown are Dave Beadle (AD7GA), YRC/YARES Volunteer and Scott Carpenter (KE7BKU), WFO Billings HAM Radio focal point.

Salt Lake City: Several volunteers from local ARES groups participated in 2006 SKYWARN Recognition Day at WFO Salt Lake City. The volunteers were able to make contact with 41 other NWS offices across the country, along with several other amateur radio operators, using several different bands and modes. The volunteers used 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meter bands, as well as 440 MHz. Among the modes used were SSB, CW, RTTY, RF, Echolink, and IRLP. These volunteers put in over 90 total hours between them, beginning Friday evening and ending late Saturday afternoon. Photos from the events at Salt Lake City can be viewed at:

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/slc/spotter/Skywarn2006.php>



Missoula: WFO Missoula had several volunteers from the local ARES (Hellgate Amature Radio Club) from Missoula come and participated in the 2006 SKYWARN Recognition Day at WFO Missoula MT. The volunteers made 288 contacts that day, 30 of them to other NWS offices around the country. The volunteers used 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meter bands, as well as 440 MHz. Among the modes used were SSB, CW, RTTY and RF. The volunteers worked both Friday evening and all day

Saturday and put in over 80 hours between them.



Pocatello: On December 1st and 2nd, WFO Pocatello, along with 100 other NWS offices around the country, helped celebrate SKYWARN Appreciation Day 2006. Twelve members of the southeast Idaho HAM group participated in the event held between 5pm December 1st and 5pm December 2nd. The group used ingenuity to get their signal to the skies, by setting up a free standing dipole antenna, and by configuring the flagpole outside the office as a second one. Using these two antennas, and their skills with the HAM radio, the group contacted 21 folks around the nation

despite interference from sunspots and a persistent surface based temperature inversion. Contacts were made from Spokane to North Carolina and from California to Pennsylvania. The 24 hours was definitely a success, and the office and HAM radio group are already making plans for next year's event.



Oxnard: Three gentlemen arrived at noon on Friday December 1st with two RVs and, using an area on the side of the NWS building, set up shop. Eric Boldt (WCM) helped them get set up. The three operators were from Los Angeles County. They are part of the Los Angeles Disaster Operations Center. The office used a Vanity call sign (W60). The HAMS set up 2 meter, 6 meter and 20 meter radios. A total of 24 contacts were made. Curt Kaplan gave these three gentlemen a tour of the facility Friday evening before

his mid-shift, including briefing them on how Spotters are used, a map discussion, and the tools used to make forecasts. Unfortunately, wind was part of the forecast on Saturday. So the only casualty was that a blue tarp overhead had to come down during Saturday due to these winds. Two other new HAMS also came by on Saturday as well to see what was going on. The Hams will be back again next year, and should bring a few more people as well.

Eureka: Skywarn 2006 was a great success again this year! Our first contact was with (JJ1BKB) Shima, Japan, which is just outside of Tokyo. We reached as far east as (KCONWS) Kansas City, MO and (KODMX) Des Moines, IA. This year we installed a shiny new Butternut HF6V antenna (which replaced our old Butternut). It proved very versatile and was tuned to the 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, and 75/80 meter bands. Lots of contacts were made and the ham crowd was pretty large at times. Thanks to the Operations staff for putting up with the occasional crowds this weekend and thanks to our ET Dave Wooley for helping to install the new Butternut and for testing and tuning the antenna systems.

Monterey: Through out the 24 hour special event, amateur radio operators operating under the call sign WX6MTR at the Monterey Office made over 100 QSO's (contacts). The National Weather Service in Monterey participated with a newly improved "ham shack." Photos of the event at Monterey are at: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/skywarn06.php>.

Spokane: There was a good turn out for SRD2006 at Spokane, as well. There were at least 12 HAM volunteers participating, and the office staffed the event for the entire 24 hours. There were 28 SKWARN volunteers, and approximately 125 contacts were made, including 15 NWS contacts. Band conditions were less than favorable. Most of the contacts Friday night were made on 40m/80m, and then 20m during the day Saturday.



Additional participating offices included Elko, Medford, Las Vegas, San Diego, and Sacramento, Reno, Seattle, and Boise: Seattle had a record number of contacts (107). At Reno, the "hamsters" worked the radios throughout the event and contacted around 30 other NWS offices, as well as other countries and states. At Boise, about 15 people participated, mostly hams, and a few regular spotters, contacting several SKYWARN stations across the country. Great Falls had several operators participate, with equipment set up in the conference room. Propagation was relatively poor; with 87

contacts made 33 of those with NWS offices.



L to R: Rich Courtney-WFO Kodiak, Carl Cerniglia and Jim Prange-WFO Seattle assisting customers in the NWS booth

Pacific Marine Expo: The Pacific Marine Expo was held at Seattle's Qwest Field Event Center on Nov 16-18. NOAA had a joint booth group including NWS, Fisheries, NOS and Fisheries Enforcement. The NWS booth was again a joint booth with Alaska Region and WFO Seattle. The booth included a laptop with live Internet use of NWS web pages, a DVD player and large flat screen with marine DVD action (to attract attention to the booth) and plenty of marine handouts. Approximately 9,000 people attended!

Outreach to Spanish Language Station: Mark Moede and Miguel Miller, forecasters at the San Diego National Weather Service, embarked on an outreach event at "Univision" a Spanish broadcast station in San Diego County. Here, Miguel Miller shows weekend weathercaster Susanna Rivera Torres (right) the NWS website, including our Spanish NWS Web Page. Looking on is Technical Director, Karina Guzman, Technical Director for Univision.



HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

Drought Monitoring System (NIDIS) Moves Forward

On December 6, the Senate passed H.R. 5136, approved by the House on September 26, without amendment by unanimous consent, clearing the bill for the President. The bill had the strong support of the Western Governors' Association (WGA) and Western States Water Council (WSWC). Entitled the National Integrated Drought Information Systems (NIDIS) Act of 2006, it provides for an effective drought early warning system, developed under the leadership of the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). It will provide reliable and timely drought forecasts and assessments, communicating drought conditions and expected impacts to federal, state and local decision makers as well as the public in an attempt to avoid or mitigate damages. It will build on exiting partnerships and forecasting and assessment capabilities. Further, it provides for coordinated drought research, to the extent practical, in support of NIDIS. The bill authorizes a total of \$81M for FY2007-FY2012.

HCSD, CNRFC and OCWWS Participating in Annual American Geophysical Union at San Francisco

Andrea Bair is attending and participating in the Annual Conference of the AGU, American

Geophysical Union at San Francisco. Andrea will present two poster sessions, one titled: "Forecast Performance of the New Local Three Month Temperature Outlook" and the second, "July 2006 State of California Record Breaking Heat Wave". Andrea will also participate in the NOAA/NWS Booth (there are a total of 160 booths) that is sponsored by OCWWS/HSD. Other WR participants include Rob Hartman, Dan Kozlowski and Kevin Werner along with several representatives from OCWWS and OHD. There are 21 simultaneous programs including the following that are related to NWS programs: Atmosphere Sciences, Global Environment Change, Hydrology, Ocean Sciences, Paleoclimatology, Outreach, etc.

CBRFC attending Colorado River Water Users Association Meeting...

This week Steve Shumate, DOH and Brenda Alcorn, Senior Hydrologist, both from the CBRFC will attend the annual meeting of the Colorado River Water Users Association in Las Vegas. This meeting is attended by around 2000 people that consist of key water policy makers, water scientists, and State representatives that are involved with the Colorado River Basin. Steve and Brenda will staff a booth that supports the NOAA/NWS Water Resources programs.

GIS Skills Matrix in the Works

Jenna is compiling the GIS Skills Matrix for the region as offices send in their information. Jenna will also begin printing the WR maps this week. Jenna has also started to layout the content of a GIS webpage for the HCSD website.

NCEP Environmental Modeling Center (EMX), and Climate Prediction Center (CPC) Brief the Field on the Climate Forecast System (CFS) Model

Suranjana Saha from NCEP's Environmental Modeling Center (EMC) and Huug van den Dool from NCEP's Climate Prediction Center (CPC) briefed the SOOs and DOHs on their December conference call about the Climate Forecast System (CFS). The CFS is a lower resolution version of the GFS coupled with an Ocean and Land Surface Model. The CFS is the model NCEP developed to support extended (greater than 1 week) forecast time scales. The CFS potentially could be a useful tool for forecast offices to examine when trying to anticipate large scale regime changes such as monthly variations like a shift of precipitation southward along the coast this winter. The model runs once a day and data is available on the web. The current CFS configuration is relatively new. It was developed 2 years ago.

HCSD Briefs WR on the AHPS CFI Survey

Scott Dummer briefed WRH on the Results of the National AHPS CFI Customer Satisfaction Survey distributed this past summer. The survey found that NWS Hydrology products and service remain strong and customer satisfaction scores are among the highest in the government. Communications with the NWS score extremely well. The respondents would like the NWS to continue to fine-tune their graphics and include more functionality. They would like the NWS to move forward with inundation mapping, and provide uncertainty information for short-term forecasts.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

Professional Development and Training:

AWOC: A special **Thanks** to everyone for completing the AWOC course. We have a few offices, due to technical difficulties with the WES, who will finish up the last of the WES cases soon.

MIC/HIC Monthly Call – Topic was best practice sharing

Proposals for COMET Outreach Partners and Coop Projects Now Being Accepted: COMET has announced that the Outreach Program is currently accepting submissions for Partners Proposals. In addition, the National Weather Service has issued a new Request for Proposals for Cooperative Projects. For more information: <http://www.comet.ucar.edu/outreach/prop.htm>.

Mandatory No FEAR Act Training – Due Dec 15: The Department of Commerce is requiring the completion of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act). **Completion of the module is due Dec 15.** The training module must be accessed through the LMS system to receive proper credit.

Hydro-Meteorology Testbed Update: HMT West's first Intensive Observing Period (IOP1) of this cool season wrapped up on Sunday, December 10th. The next IOP will likely occur later in the week with the next Pacific system moving ashore. Project details for this year's deployment are at: <http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/programs/2007/hmt/>

Southern California Debris Flow Project: The Southern California debris flow project held a conference call last week. Most of the observing systems from NOAA, USGS, and UCLA are in place in and around the Day Fire burned area intensive research area near Pyramid Lake. This includes an NSSL SMART-R mobile scanning doppler radar.

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

Active Directory: On December 6 Mike Pereira, WFO Boise ESA, briefed SOD and SSD on the Activities regarding Active Directory roll out associated with the Desktop team for the IT Consolidation. An implementation plan will be developed and coordination calls made with the WR ITO Systems Working Group and with the offices as details are developed.

Web Farm Infrastructure Upgrade: SOD IT recently changed web farm infrastructure:

- * AHPS front end server upgraded, can add an additional server if needed
- * Observations database servers
- * Added an additional Load Balancer
- * Radar imagery now done with re-directs
- * Added an additional satellite server

- * Four new front end servers added to WR Web Farm, total is now 13
- * Load Balancers have been configured to send more traffic to the newer faster servers

Battery Monitor System: Facilities Engineering Technicians, Lee Jenson and Randy Miller traveled to WFO Las Vegas the week of December 11th. A new Battery Monitor System (BMS) was installed on the WFO UPS system. The radar was visited as well to repair a grounding issue and investigate a harmonics issue on the Nexrad UPS.

Facilities Maintenance: Facilities Engineering Technician Tom Page traveled to WFO Flagstaff the week of Nov 27th. Working with the ET staff, many facilities tasks were completed including routine building service, changing lights and ballasts, adjusting doors and repairs to the HVAC system. Numerous Facilities maintenance tasks were completed at the remote Radar site as well.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Boise Office celebrates National American Indian Heritage Month

On November 30th, the Boise WFO celebrated National American Indian Heritage Month by hosting a seminar and a round table discussion with the employees from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The discussion was led by Body Shaw who is the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and a native of the Warm Springs Indian tribe. Mr. Shaw discussed the mission of the BIA, and emphasized their role in the protection and development of natural resources on Indian reservations. Management of wild land fire is a common thread between all of the agencies with offices located at the National Interagency Fire Center including the NWS and the BIA.

There was also a very interesting discussion by Mr. Shaw and the BIA staff members, who represented at least 4 separate tribes on North American Indian Culture. They discussed some of the hurdles they each faced in growing up, including differences between life on the reservation and life outside. All were excited to be working in a job which allowed them to use their education and experience to preserve part of the culture of their Indian heritage.