



Fall 2007

Volume 5, Issue 3

## Open House - Saturday October 6

by Jim Allsopp, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

The National Weather Service Forecast Office in Romeoville will hold an open house on **Saturday October 6, 2007 from 900 a.m. until 300 p.m.**

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At the open house visitors will see and learn about;

- Official NWS weather observations – surface and upper air – a weather balloon will be on display
- Volunteer weather observing networks including the Cooperative program, CoCoRaHS, and the Chicago-Rockford Area Snowfall Teams
- The NOAA and NWS organization, the Chicago Weather Forecast Office area of responsibility, and programs
- An overview of our web pages and NOAA Weather Radio – All Hazards
- Displays of satellite, Doppler radar, and weather maps
- Forecast operations and the warning decision process
- A look at the Doppler radar data acquisition building (sorry, visitors are not permitted inside the radar dome)
- An overview of computer systems and communications.



The open house will be held rain or shine. Each tour will take approximately one hour. The first tour will begin at 900 a.m. and the last will begin around 300 p.m. (and end about 400 p.m.) There is no registration. People will be taken first come, first served. It is open to all ages – a great outing for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other youth groups.

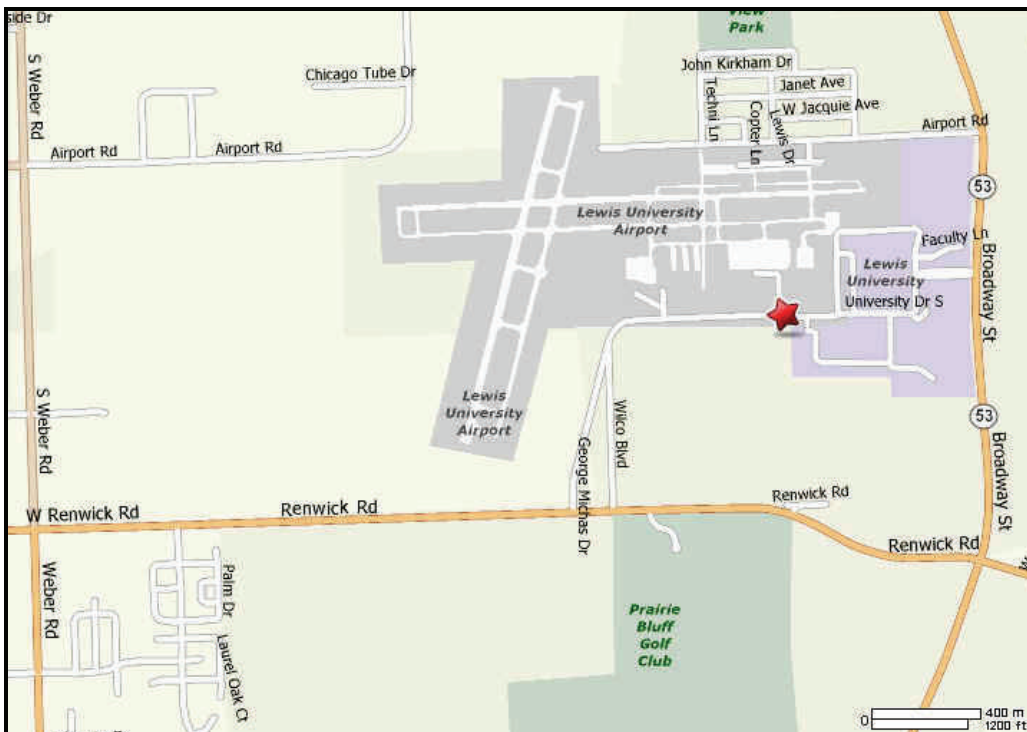
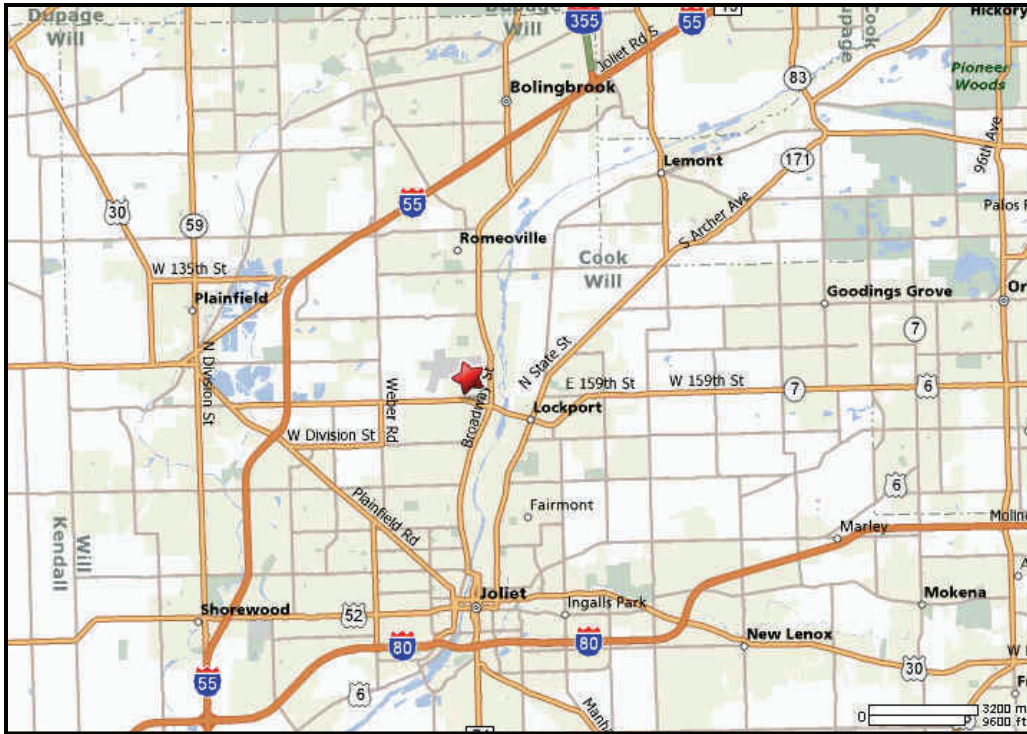
For security reasons – no bags, backpacks, purses are permitted in the building. Please leave them in your car. Cameras are allowed.



*Picture of Doppler radar at WFO Chicago*

**Directions;**

We are located at 333 West University Drive in Romeoville, Illinois. We are next to, but not part of Lewis University. **There is no access to our building from Lewis University.** Entrance is through the Lewis Airport off Renwick Road, about midway between Weber Road and Route 53.



**More Detailed Directions:*****From Chicago;***

Take I-55 to the Joliet Road exit at the I-355 interchange. Follow Joliet Road/Route 53 about 6 miles. Go past Lewis University to the next stoplight, Renwick Road. Turn right on Renwick and go 1 mile. Turn right at the Lewis Airport entrance (at the orange windsock). Follow the airport road around the curve, then straight ahead until it ends at the National Weather Service parking lot.

***From the north suburbs;***

Take I-294 to I-55 south. Take I-55 to the Joliet Road exit at the I-355 interchange. Follow Joliet Road/Route 53 about 6 miles. Go past Lewis University to the next stoplight, Renwick Road. Turn right on Renwick and go 1 mile. Turn right at the Lewis Airport entrance (at the orange windsock). Follow the airport road around the curve, then straight ahead until it ends at the National Weather Service parking lot.

***From the northwest suburbs;***

Take Route 53/I-290/I-355 to the Joliet Road exit at the I-55 south interchange. Follow Joliet Road/Route 53 about 6 miles. Go past Lewis University to the next stoplight, Renwick Road. Turn right on Renwick and go 1 mile. Turn right at the Lewis Airport entrance (at the orange windsock). Follow the airport road around the curve, then straight ahead until it ends at the National Weather Service parking lot.

***From the south suburbs and northwest Indiana;***

Take I-80 to Briggs Street. Go north on Briggs. Go about 6 miles until Briggs ends at Division Street. Go left on Division. Go to the stoplight at the bottom of the hill, State Street. Turn right on State. At the second stoplight, Route 7, turn left and go across the Des Plaines River bridge. On the other side of the bridge is a stoplight for Route 53. Continue straight, past 53, for 1 mile, then turn right at the Lewis Airport entrance (at the orange windsock). Follow the airport road around the curve, then straight ahead until it ends at the National Weather Service parking lot.

***From the west suburbs;***

Take Naperville Road to Weber Road south to Renwick Road. Turn left on Renwick and go about 1 1/4 miles. Or take Route 59 or Route 30 through Plainfield to Renwick Road. Go left on Renwick. About 1 1/4 miles past Weber Road, turn left at the Lewis Airport entrance (at the orange windsock). Follow the airport road around the curve, then straight ahead until it ends at the National Weather Service parking lot.

***From the far southwest suburbs;***

Take I-55 north to Route 30. Turn right on 30, then left at the first stoplight by the Honda dealership, Mall Loop Road. Then take another quick left and you will be on Essington Road. Go around the curve, then turn left at the stop sign at Old Renwick Trail, then turn right at the stoplight. This is Renwick Road. Go about 1 1/4 miles past Weber Road, then turn left at the Lewis Airport entrance (at the orange windsock). Follow the airport road around the curve, then straight ahead until it ends at the National Weather Service.

## Is Your Business StormReady?

by Jim Allsopp, Warning Coordination Meteorologist



On July 13, 2004 a large, violent tornado completely leveled the Parsons Manufacturing facility near Roanoke, Illinois, just outside of Peoria. The 150 people at the facility walked out without any serious injuries. The reason? Preparedness and planning. Parsons had NOAA Weather Radios, storm spotters, designated reinforced cinder block and concrete storm shelters, an evacuation plan, severe weather training for employees, and they practiced the severe weather plan by conducting periodic tornado drills. Every business, school, hospital and nursing home should have a similar severe weather plan.



*View from Parsons Manufacturing parking lot July 13, 2004*



*Parsons before the tornado*



*Parsons after the tornado*

To read more about the Parsons tornado, [go to the following link](#) from the National Weather Service office in Lincoln, IL.

Several years ago the National Weather Service developed the StormReady program to encourage communities and counties to develop better severe weather preparedness plans. Some of the requirements include having a 24 hour warning point and emergency operation center, redundant methods of receiving severe weather watches and warnings from the NWS, redundant methods of disseminating severe weather warnings throughout the communities, multiple methods of monitoring local weather conditions, having a network of trained storm spotters in communication with NWS, and a public education program. Communities that meet certain NWS requirements are recognized as Storm-Ready communities.

Recently, the NWS has expanded the StormReady program to recognize businesses, schools, and other facilities that follow the spirit of the StormReady program. The designation for businesses is called StormReady Supporter. In north-east Illinois and northwest Indiana the requirements to become a StormReady Supporter include;

- Have a warning point that can receive and disseminate NWS watch and warning information. Typically, this would be a security office or emergency response team.
- Trained severe storm spotters who are in communication with a local or county emergency management agency or National Weather Service forecast office.
- Redundant ways to receive NWS warnings, one of which is a NOAA Weather Radio.
- Capability to monitor local weather information through internet, TV, radio or commercial vendor.
- Means of ensuring timely warning dissemination to people at the facility. Possible methods could be through pagers, pop-up messages on facility computer network, intercom, alarm, sign board, flashing lights, etc.
- Employee education programs about severe storm safety.
- Designated tornado shelter areas at the facility.
- Annual tornado drills.



If your facility meets these requirements and is interested in becoming a StormReady Supporter, contact Jim Allsopp at [jim.allsopp@noaa.gov](mailto:jim.allsopp@noaa.gov). For more information on the StormReady program visit [www.stormready.noaa.gov](http://www.stormready.noaa.gov).

## Think Tornadoes Can't Happen in Illinois in Winter? Think Again!

by Jim Allsopp, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

December 18, 2007 will be the 50th anniversary of Illinois' worst winter tornado outbreak. During the afternoon of December 18, 1957, eighteen tornadoes raked eastern Missouri and southern Illinois. Sixteen of the twisters struck Illinois. An F5 tornado completely wiped out the community of Sunfield in Perry County. An F4 tornado hit the southwest side of Mt. Vernon in Jefferson County, and another F4 carved a 30 mile path from near Gorham to Murphysboro to just west of West Frankfort. This tornado closely followed the path of the 1925 Tri-State Tornado. Thirteen people were killed in Illinois and another four died in Missouri. Ten of the fatalities occurred in Murphysboro.

While strong or violent tornadoes have never been documented as far north as the Chicago metro area in the winter months of December through February, tornadoes have occurred as late as mid November (November 12, 1965 Channahon in Grundy County to Tinley Park in Cook County, and Munster in Lake County IN) and as early as the first week of March (March 4, 1961 south side of Chicago).

## Skywarn Recognition Day

by William Wilson, Lead Forecaster



*Ham radio operators at the 2006 Skywarn Recognition Day at NWS in Romeoville*

Skywarn Recognition Day was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League. It celebrates the contributions that volunteer Skywarn spotters and Amateur Radio Operators (Hams) make to the National Weather Service for public safety. Spotters, using radio in the Amateur Radio frequencies report severe weather such as flash floods, tornadoes and damaging wind to local county network control radio operators. Then the reports are relayed by radio to the National Weather Service Office in Romeoville. The meteorologists use these reports in preparing warnings for Illinois and Indiana.

The SkyWarn Recognition Day will be Saturday, December 1, 2007, beginning at 0000 UTC (600 p.m. CST). It will last 24 hours. Amateur Radio Operators will come to operate radios, communicating on most of the amateur radio bands, at the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Romeoville Illinois. We will make contacts with amateur radio operators at other National Weather Service Offices across the United States and across the world. If you are an amateur radio operator, come by the Forecast Office in Romeoville during Skywarn Recognition Day. There will be no open house for Skywarn Recognition Day this year since there will be a public open house in October, but HAMS are welcome to come by and operate.