



NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

January 5, 2007

Happy New Year 2007!

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Retirements

As the new year begins, we say good bye to some of our employees. January is a popular month for retirements, as long time employees close out their federal careers. We wish them all many healthy, happy years in retirement, yet they will be missed, not only in their local offices but in the region as well. Thanks to our three newest retirees for their service and commitment to the American people.

Jim Fischer, SOO, WFO Reno NV, recently retired after thirty years in federal service, 28 of those with the National Weather Service (NWS). Jim joined the NWS in 1978 as an intern in Sioux Falls, SD, and was promoted to a journey forecaster position in Reno in 1983. Jim found a home (no more to roam) and in 1994 became a lead forecaster and in 2002 the WFO Reno SOO. Prior to joining the NWS Jim served in the U.S. Army, which included a tour in Vietnam. Jim participated on many NWS teams and has provided valuable advice and insight to both WRH as well as his local office. We wish Jim the very best on his "big promotion!"



Ken Parker retired after completing 33 years with the National Weather Service . Ken's interest in becoming a meteorologist started as a seventh grader. He began his career in 1973 with a summer job in Elko, NV while working to obtain a B.S. Degree in Meteorology at the University of Utah. After training assignments at the Boise WSFO and Western Region Headquarters, he pursued jobs as an Agricultural Meteorologist in Santa Maria, CA and in the SLC and Oakland CWSUs where customer interaction was high. In 1990 he returned to Boise as DMIC. When Modernization and Restructuring led to the elimination of the DMIC position, Ken jumped back into operational meteorology as a Lead Forecaster in Boise. We wish Ken the best during his retirement years!

Dave Westnedge retired after completing 41½ years of service with the National Weather Service. Dave's most recent assignment was that of DHIC at the River Forecast Center in Portland, Oregon, where he has been since 1990. Prior to that assignment, Dave worked in at the River Forecast Center in Salt Lake City for 21 years. Dave began his career as an intern in Washington, DC, after graduating from the University of Washington. After his internship, he moved west to work in Helena, Montana before coming to Salt Lake City. Dave has been an outstanding employee, and we wish him the very best as he enjoys his retirement!

In Remembrance

Don Noxon, a long-time Hydro Meteorological Technician at the Weather Forecast Office in Sacramento, passed away on November 29th. Don worked at the Sacramento office for twenty years, after assignments in Stockton and Redwood City California. Don began his National Weather Service career shortly after retiring from the US Air Force. Don worked at the Sacramento office, first as a Radar and Public Service Specialist, then as a Hydro Meteorological Technician as the WSO modernized to become a WFO. Don had a keen interest in computers and amateur radio, and he was able to apply both of these interests at the office. He was assistant AFOS program leader in the WSO. He was the CRS focal point from the start of that program, and he devoted many hours developing and improving Sacramento's CRS. As one of the office's "HAM's", he regularly took part in the office's annual SKYWARN Recognition Day HAM Radio event. Don always was a cheerful and positive influence in the office. His good nature and hearty laugh will be dearly missed.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

SERVICE OF THE WEEK: Believe it or not, the fire weather season remains active in southern California (hopefully to taper off soon). WFO Los Angeles at Oxnard recently received a call from Dave Lenniger at LA County Fire praising the WFO us for great service during this past strong wind event. He stated the WFO was "right on the money" with predicted wind speeds. Furthermore, a Fire Weather Watch and Red lag Warning gave them additional support to provide extra staffing and resources during the past few days. Due to this extra staffing and resources, they were able to quickly jump on a fire that broke out in Acton CA on December 28. Despite the strong winds and low humidities, they were able to quickly put out the fire, with only ten acres burned. Dave Lenniger was also very appreciative of all the coordination that was done on the fire weather desk this week. Special thanks to Todd Morris and Joe Sirard for being proactive with the Fire Weather Watch and Red Flag Warning products.

Tucson HMT Completes Ten Thousands Sky Dives: Mic Sherwood and five of his long time jumping friends met at Eloy, Arizona on October 20, 2006 to celebrate Mic's 10,000th jump. There was some preflight planning and picture taking by his wife (also a skydiving instructor) and other friends before the group of six headed for the 'wild blue yonder' in "Otter 43". They took off at approximately 5:10 pm local and 20 minutes later reached their jump altitude of 14,500 feet. Leaving the plane at the same time Mic's friends immediately formed a 'V' with Mic at the point. A minute later the group separated and each deployed their canopy



Mic (2nd from the L) and his five friends

within seconds of each other. All made uneventful landings as the sun was setting on what might be the “only” green grass in Eloy. Right after gathering his parachute Mic was asked “What are you going to do now?” Mic’s reply - “I’m going to Disneyland!” Mic has since received his Certificate from the USPA. It is Certificate number ‘70’ which means that only 69 other people in the world have attained 10,000 documented jumps. Congratulations Mic!!

HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

WR Assists with the NWS Hydrologic Services Booth at AGU

OCWWS/HSD hosted an outreach booth to promote awareness of NWS Hydrologic Services at the American Geophysical Union’s (AGU) annual conference in San Francisco, CA the week of December 11-15, 2006. In addition to various oral and poster presentations, NWS Western Region employees helped staff the booth with Rob Hartman (CNRFC), Dan Kozlowski (CNRFC), Kevin Werner (WRH-SSD), and Andrea Bair (WRH-HCSD). This conference, boasting approximately 14,000 participants, was an ideal target for promoting NWS Hydrologic Services, because of the diverse number of disciplines participating.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

Technology Infusion:

Progress continues on the FLARE, Instant Messaging (IM), Cell Phone Warning, and StormLog projects. Red Flag warnings have been added to FLARE; vendor training to assist in the IM solution is later this week and work is being done on IM and Active Directory (AD) collaboration; vendor training for the Cell Phone Project was postponed and will be rescheduled; and StormLog is undergoing a schematic and security review.

Service Evolution/Verification Project: For the winter season, WFO's in WR have been broken into 6 working groups to examine how forecast grids perform during different weather regimes using BOIVerify. The first set of working group conference calls was held during the week of Dec. 4th to discuss project logistics and regime selection. The working groups are encouraged to post/share their ideas on the Western Region Forum (<https://internal.wrh.noaa.gov/forum/>) under the verification link. SSD is also working to launch a "high-impact" group, a team of SOO's who will be discussing/examining ways to verify high impact weather events. Information about the Service Evolution/Verification project can be found online at: http://ww2.wrh.noaa.gov/ssd/digital_services/projects/verification.php

Minor "adjustments" have been made to the [Western Region Bulletin Board](#) by placing each service evolution working group in its own forum under the heading "Service Evolution". All of

old posts have been moved to the appropriate forum, but this should make discussions a little more organized and provide freedom to start additional topics. It's recommend that the "watch this forum" link be selected on your forum so all are aware of new topics being posted.

AMS Conference Coming to Western Region: The 22nd Conference on Weather Analysis and Forecasting/18th Conference on Numerical Weather Prediction, sponsored by the American Meteorological Society, and organized by the AMS Committee on Weather Analysis and Forecasting, will be held 24-29 June 2007 at The Yarrow Resort Hotel & Conference Center in Park City, Utah. Preliminary programs, registration, hotel, and general information will be posted on the AMS Web site (www.ametsoc.org/meet/fainst/2007WAFNWP.html) by the end of March 2007.

This conference is focused on the "Analysis and Prediction of High-Impact Weather". Specific goals include: 1) to assess our current abilities to analyze and predict weather events that contribute to significant numbers of fatalities or economic loss and 2) to highlight research underway to improve those capabilities through improved understanding of the underlying physical processes, as well as improved numerical methods. The scope of the conference is not limited to specific types of high-impact weather. However, this conference emphasizes examining the success or failure of analysis and prediction methods for such events in an aggregate sense, rather than relying solely on case studies of local interest. The Committee solicits papers and posters on the following topics: (1) assessments of methods to define and characterize high-impact weather events; (2) examination of the accuracy and value of analyses and predictions of such events; (3) advancements in the application of ensemble filters to data assimilation and NWP; (4) applications of global and regional model and reanalysis products to assess the occurrence of high-impact weather; (5) improvements in deterministic and probabilistic methods; (6) research and operational forecasts of high-impact weather systems; (7) operational, research, and commercial applications of gridded data bases (e.g., National Digital Forecast Database). Please submit (oral or poster presentation) your abstract electronically via the Web by **26 February 2007** (refer to the AMS Web page at www.ametsoc.org/meet/online_submit.html for instructions). An abstract fee of \$70 (payable by credit card or purchase order) is charged at the time of submission (refundable only if abstract is not accepted). Authors of accepted presentations will be notified (via e-mail) by **13 April 2007**.

WR SOO/DOH Workshop: The next WR SOO/DOH Workshop is proposed for April 17-19, 2007.

Training Update:

COMET: New Training Modules: The COMET updated a module titled: "Satellite Meteorology: Introduction to Using the GOES Sounder." This module was adapted for the Web from a CD-ROM released in 1998 and reviews GOES sounder characteristics, data products, and applications concurrent with the GOES I(8)-P satellites. The module available at <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/satmet/goessounder/index.htm> and takes approximately one hour to complete.

Warning Decision Branch – Clutter Suppression: The fielding of the ORDA is complete and one of the many ORDA changes is the technique for clutter suppression. WDTB would like

to encourage all field forecasters to take the DLOC Clutter Suppression module as a refresher. In the LMS, the module is titled "DLOC Topic 3 Lesson 4, Clutter Suppression". Play time for the module is just over 40 minutes and the associated exam has 8 questions.

Teletraining Sessions: The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) calendar for December 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 January 2007 are:

- * MODerate resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) Products in AWIPS (Basic, Jan 5,19,31)
- * CRAS Forecast Imagery in AWIPS (Basic, Jan 25)
- * Utilizing GOES Imagery within AWIPS to Forecast Winter Storms Parts I & II (Intermediate, Jan 17,18)
- * Cyclogenesis: Analysis utilizing Geostationary Satellite Imagery (Basic, Jan 11)
- * TROWAL Identification (Basic, Jan 9)
- * Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential Using GOES Sounder Derived Products (Basic, Jan 10)
- * Water Vapor Channel Satellite Imagery (Basic, Jan 8,23)

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

Snowmobile Safety and Training

Snowmobile riding can be a risky sport. Before you ride, learn how to properly use all the mechanical controls and safety devices of your vehicle. Read your owner's manual. Most importantly, take a safety course before riding.

Safety Tips

- Wear a helmet and eye protection at all times and other protective clothing suitable to the environment.

- Do not let young or inexperienced riders operate snowmobiles without training and supervision.
- Do not use alcohol or other drugs when you ride.
- Learn proper riding skills from an instructor or qualified rider and practice such skills before riding.
- Always maintain a safe distance between riders. Tailgating can lead to collisions and injuries.
- Ride with others and let someone know where you are riding. Never ride alone.
- Obey the laws.
- Stay on trails designated for snowmobiles.
- Be informed of local weather conditions and dress and equip yourself appropriately.
- Know the area you are riding in. Be aware of its potential hazards.
- Always ride at a safe and responsible speed. Know your abilities and don't exceed those levels.
- Make sure your equipment is in top working order; check before heading out.
- Carry a map of the trail or area you intend to travel.
- Clear snow dust off your snowmobile tail lights at frequent intervals.
- Use common sense.

National Traffic and Road Closure Website: An excellent site for people to use when traveling during the holidays or just anytime <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/index.htm>. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/511.htm> This site will give information to people on the 511 travel system. You can use your cell to dial 511 and get traffic information in areas where the 511 program is active.

SOD Program Reviews: Bob Diaz and Joe Lachacz completed a SOD and Safety Program Review at WFO Medford. Joe Lachacz and Sean Wink completed a SOD and Safety Program Review at WFO Spokane.



Semi-Annual Maintenance: Facilities Engineering Technician Jim Chaisson traveled to the Billings, Montana CWA performing semi-annual maintenance on the WFO, RDA, and the Emerald Hills NWR site. One of Santa's more curious reindeer came upon Jim to investigate the running generator at Emerald Hills.