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NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
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SOUTHERN TOPICS

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Working Together To Save Lives

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

At 10:00 AM on January 14 WFO Huntsville initiated full-service operations by disseminating their first set of zone forecasts for the eleven counties in North Alabama. The event marks the culmination of many months of comprehensive planning and preparation, involving the expertise of many individuals at the new WFO, at WFO Birmingham and other surrounding offices, and at Southern Region Headquarters and NWSH. Everyone involved accomplished their tasks in an outstanding manner, which allowed us to achieve this milestone of NWS modernization without a hitch. In hardly more than one year agreements were reached among NWS and the University of Alabama in Huntsville and an entirely new facility - the National Space Science and Technology Center - was built by the university; a new forecast office was designed, constructed and equipped to occupy part of the NSSTC facility; an entire WFO staff was recruited, hired and fully trained; exhaustive outreach activities were accomplished in all the counties of the new CWA; and service programs were transferred to the office.

To my knowledge so much has never been done before so rapidly and so well in creating a new forecast office. We have assembled an excellent staff at Huntsville who no doubt will continue the tradition of providing the highest caliber of weather services to the American public. Congratulations to all who were involved in this effort.



On a sad note, we learned recently that Dr. Bill Klein passed away in Maryland on December 26, having succumbed to Alzheimer's disease. Bill was the first director of the Techniques Development Lab at NWS Headquarters, and he was director of the Systems Development Office when he retired in 1980. It was during his tenure at TDL that he popularized the "Perfect Prog" statistical technique used to interpret the output of NWP models in terms of practical day-to-day and extended weather forecasting. His work led to the concept of Model Output Statistics - MOS, and those who knew him will remember him as a scientist and salesman, who never missed an opportunity to "sell" the concept of MOS and smilingly challenge forecasters to utilize the guidance to further improve their products.

IFPS

THE RDF IS A HIT! The Revised Digital Forecast (RDF) becomes the Area Forecast Matrix this month. We have known how useful this product can be, because it provides a means for us to communicate more detail in our routine products. Here is an excellent example of how valuable it is from a WFO New Orleans customer.

"I found this product very informative for predicting short term weather. I am a concrete contractor and it was a great help being able to have an idea when the weather would make a change. On one occasion I had a concrete pour set up for 4:00 in the morning. Typical weather forecast showed rain on that day. Of course rain was still a possibility but the digital forecast showed the weather dissipating about 3:00 a.m. give or take an hour or so. We kept the pour schedule in place and the sky was clear at 2:00 a.m.

"Without this product I may have postponed this concrete pour. On other occasions I found that I could use this product to determine when to stop pouring concrete during the day so as not to get caught in a storm expected late in the day."

IMPLEMENTATION DATE REACHED. Sunday, December 15, was a milestone in the SR IFPS era. All SR offices were producing grids and graphics on this date as we moved into the new year. We congratulate all offices for the hard work and dedication of their staff which resulted in all reaching this important goal.

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

REGION LAUNCHES NEW SERVICE BACKUP PLAN. On January 14, the Southern Region instituted an innovative "sister" backup plan. Based on frequent discussions with WFO staffs, NWSH, technicians at the Radar Operations Center, and NWSEO, the plan went through a number of iterations, all aimed at taking full advantage of technological advances made possible through the

modernization. The goal of the plan is to reduce overall configuration workload on the WFO staff, and it couples offices on the basis of their proximity, stability of communication lines, and similar weather regimes. We want to extend our appreciation to all those involved in making this plan a reality.

WARNING ERROR TRACKER PROGRAM. The Southern Region Warning Error Tracker program has been online for almost six months, and we have made great strides to correct many of the nagging problems in the WarnGen templates. Thanks to everyone who worked on this issue. Almost all of the offices made large improvements through the year, but the five WFOs with best success rates for the year 2002 were Norman, Albuquerque, Amarillo, Lubbock and Mobile.

The numbers were reset beginning January 1, so now is the time to begin working toward your office making the top five for 2003!

LOUISIANA TROPICAL SEASON POST-MORTEM. On December 17 a meeting was held at Louisiana State University involving several hurricane cross-interest groups and more than 100 representatives who gathered for a collaborative tropical season post-mortem. Participants included Southeast and Southwest Louisiana Emergency Management, Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness, LSU Spatial Reference Center and LSU Hurricane Center, Louisiana State Police, Southern Region Climate Center and the state climatologist, Mississippi Emergency Management, Army Corp of Engineers, FEMA, U.S. Geological Survey, Louisiana One Coalition, and the Office of the Governor. In addition to these stakeholders, cross-agency ties were solidified as Tim Osborn, NOAA Lafayette-Coastal Storm Surge and Flooding, Charlie Challstrom, director of NOAA's National Geodetic Survey, NHC director Max Mayfield, Capt. Steve Barnum from NOAA Coastal Ports, and Paul Witsaman, SRH aviation and fire weather program leader, teamed up with representatives from NOAA's NCDC, the National Data Buoy Center, LMRFC and WFOs New Orleans Area and Lake Charles in round table discussions. Other participants represented levee districts and port representatives. The meeting was sponsored by WFO New Orleans Area, NOAA's Lafayette Coastal Storm Surge and Flooding Office, and LSU's Spatial Reference Center.

Many discussions were shared and questions answered concerning the 2002 storm season. This was the first season in over 100 years with two storms (Isidore and Lili) affecting the Louisiana coast within one week of each other (four passed over the Louisiana coast including Bertha and Hannah). Estimates of over \$700 million in insured damages were given by the Louisiana State Insurance Commission. Crop and agriculture damages were in excess of \$500 million and still counting. The nation's oil supply was drastically hit during the shutdown period. Louisiana State Elections were impacted. Businesses and schools were also closed. Road closures were common and flooding was extensive. There were several tornadoes. The lowering of coastal elevations, rise of sea level, and loss of wetlands are making the responsiveness of the state and coastal parishes to NWS forecast, storm, and hurricane advisories, more critical.

The growing vulnerability of the coast and southern Louisiana to storm and surge places a growing premium on evacuation planning and prompt reaction to forecasts and storm track information. The impact of storms, even storms passing storms, will grow with each year. LSU Chancellor Mark Emmert applauded efforts being made in partnering for the safety of the community. This echoed earlier comments made by Col. Mike Brown, Deputy Director of the Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness. The event was closed with comments from Max Mayfield and Paul Witsaman. It was obvious that a portion of one day was not enough to give all participants their due at such a meeting, and plans have already begun to expand to at least a day and half next year.

MARINE

VOS Meeting. Regional representatives, the NDBC and all PMOs were invited to Kansas City for a Voluntary Observing Ship meeting last month. The meeting's goals were to improve communication and collaboration. As the meeting went on, and concluding the meeting, everyone agreed it went well. Teams were formed, goals were established and a better working relationship was established as questions were brought out in the open and answers were given allowing everyone to work together to provide the best service to our customers in the VOS program.

Chevron Texaco as Observing Sites. The Chevron Texaco Company has indicated to WFO New Orleans Area that they will provide a location for a tide and water level station at their Platform B station at Rabbit Island in East Cote Blanche Bay. They also are willing to work with NOAA and the state to host a number of stations along the coast at their various platforms to help in providing tide and water level information to the state.

PUBLIC

Directive 503 Update. Directive 503, which is expected to be signed this month, provides instructions for the products: ZFP, AFM, SFP, SFT, CCF and REC. A PNS will be sent out from NWS Headquarters on the changes with an expected implementation date of February or March.

Fire Weather. On December 13, a fire weather meeting was held at WFO Birmingham. Attending the meeting were the WFO fire weather focal points from Birmingham (Mark Rose), Mobile (Eric Christensen), and Huntsville (Steve Shumway). Representatives from the Bankhead National Forest and the Alabama Forestry Commission also attended the meeting. The Alabama Annual Operating Plan, the new Web-based NWS Spot Forecast program, and other fire weather related concerns topped the agenda for this meeting.

On December 16, Steve Shumway from WFO Huntsville visited the Bankhead National Forest in northern Alabama. A trip to a local RAW site also occurred. A couple of days later several staff members from WFO Huntsville visited the Little River Canyon National Preserve in Dekalb County. The purpose of both trips was to meet with personnel from the US Forest Service and the National Park Service to discuss various fire weather issues and concerns.

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

SR RFC SERVICE ENHANCEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER WORKSHOP. Representatives from all SR RFCs, SR HSB, and invited external partners met in Atlanta to share ideas, programs, techniques and services. This annual meeting serves as a forum for each RFC to present and share their new products or techniques. In addition, a portion of the meeting was reserved for NWS partners such as the USGS, USACE, and NOAA Coastal Services Center to pass along new ideas within their own organization. Representatives from the four ongoing RFC teams (Web presence, WHFS database sharing, information sharing, and LINUX PC backup system) provided updates on their accomplishments to date. Further information about the status of the four RFC teams can be found on the SR HSB Web page under the HPMC Conference proceedings. Thanks to the staff at SERFC for hosting this regional workshop.

DAM BREAK WORKSHOP. The SERFC hosted a four-day workshop designed to give participants in the SERFC service area valuable information and a better understanding of a variety of topics relating to dam breaks, dam safety and reservoir operations. Almost 30 attendees representing 16 WFOs, the Office of Hydrologic Development, and the OCWWS Hydrologic Services Division, and invited partners gathered from across the southeastern U.S. Representatives from the Georgia Safe Dams Program, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and Georgia Power Corporation gave excellent presentations. NWS speakers included Janice Sylvestre of the Office of Hydrologic Development and Ken Mack of the Hydrologic Services Division. One full day was spent on a field trip visiting five local dams ranging from a large reservoir to several smaller local dams. We plan to provide all WFOs and RFCs copies of the material presented at this workshop.

SR HSB WEB PAGE. We updated our SR HSB Web page presence. This update includes the corporate Web page image, updated links to various information sources, and new links to information. The new information includes the proceedings from the SR breakout session at the National Hydrologic Program Managers conference, issuance dates for the 2003 Spring Flood Outlook information, and precipitation frequency information. The Web address is <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/hsd/html/hsd.html>.

NWS/TVA MEETING. An NWS/TVA meeting was held during the second week of December to discuss the interagency agreement between both agencies. HSB chief Ben Weiger, LMRFC DOH Bob Stucky, WFO Morristown MIC Jerry Mcduffie, and service hydrologists Mike Murphy, Brian Boyd, and Roger McNeil from WFOs Nashville, Morristown, and Birmingham, respectively, represented the NWS at the meeting. Representatives from both agencies agreed to draft new language for the interagency agreement.

PERSONNEL CHANGES IN OUR HYDROLOGY FAMILY. We have had some personnel changes in our hydrology family during the past few months.

Connie Klimczak is a new hydrometeorologist at the Lower Mississippi RFC. After receiving her MS in meteorology from FSU, Connie worked at MIT Lincoln Laboratory from 2000-2001. Her work at Lincoln Lab involved operation and testing of the Integrated Terminal Weather System (ITWS) at the New York City metropolitan airports. She also worked at Aeromet, Inc. in Tulsa as a research meteorologist before she arrived at the LMRFC.

(Harold) Lee Crowley is a new hydrologic forecaster at the Arkansas Red Basin RFC. Lee currently resides in the Tulsa area and has a BS in geosciences with operational meteorology emphasis from Mississippi State University. Lee is a former employee of the USDA at the World Agricultural Outlook Board's Stoneville, Mississippi field office.

Welcome Connie and Lee to your new positions.

TURN AROUND...DON'T DROWN. Hector Guerrero (WCM, WFO San Angelo), SR Web master Dennis Cain and Kandis Boyd (Hydrology Program Manager) have been working to trademark and market the slogan *Turn Around...Don't Drown*. The first official use of this slogan occurred during the WFO San Angelo Severe Weather Awareness Week last March, as part of a poster which incorporated the slogan. It has been used by several offices since then to promote flood and flash flood safety. The group has been working on a trademark for the slogan and to encourage its use at all SR offices.

STANDARDIZATION OF WHFS REFERENCE TABLES. The WHFS Reference Table Guidelines Team was assembled earlier this year with the goal of building the necessary structure to provide an accurate and consistent WHFS database for all WFOs and RFCs. A uniform WHFS database will allow seamless and consistent sharing of WHFS databases between field offices. The project was accomplished by first identifying the appropriate reference tables, then choosing accurate entries for each of the tables, writing the necessary software and documentation and finally providing the guidelines which specify the entries for each table. Southern Region WFOs are in the process of implementing the guidelines created by the team. Once the software has been executed at each field office the WHFS database can then be transferred easily and consistently for back-up and data exchange purposes. A national team based in Southern Region is working on the data transfer process and is nearing completion.

MPE TELETRAINING. A Southern Region team was formed to develop teletraining materials for the AWIPS Multisensor Precipitation Estimator (MPE) tool for WFOs. Team members include WGRFC senior HAS forecaster Cyndie Abelman, LMRFC HAS forecaster Carolyn Levert, SERFC senior HAS forecaster Judi Bradberry, and ABRFC HAS forecaster Larry Lowe. The team is working with Bernard Meisner (SSD) to integrate the presentation materials into VISITVIEW teletraining. The team goal is to have the training material completed by the end of January. Once the material is ready teletraining sessions will be scheduled for all SR WFOs.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

UNIVERSITY ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM. Information regarding this year's UAP has been sent to all offices, and is also attached to this month's *Topics*. Please contact SSD if there are any questions or for more information, and note applications must be submitted by **February 21**.

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ssd/html/uniassinmsg.htm>

COMET COOPERATIVE PROJECTS RFP. COMET has issued a Request for Proposals for Cooperative Projects as part of its 2003 Outreach Program. Cooperative projects link researchers with one or more NWS office and are funded usually for two years at around \$30K/year. A description of the program and submission requirements for proposals can be found at <http://www.comet.ucar.edu/outreach/coop.htm>. While proposals originate from universities, it is expected they will be developed in conjunction with the NWS office(s). A requirement is that proposals be endorsed by the regional director. To accomplish that a draft of the proposal should be sent to SSD before January 20, 2003. The final proposal must be submitted to the COMET Outreach Program no later than **March 14**.

CSTAR RFP. The NWS Collaborative Science, Technology, and Applied Research (CSTAR) program has issued a Request for Proposals for projects that will engage researchers and students with one or more NWS office in multi-year studies aimed at enhancing warning and forecast operations. The RFP was published in the *Federal Register* on January 7, and copies have been emailed to all SR offices. NWSH will ensure the UCAR universities are made aware of the RFP. All proposals must be submitted to NWSH no later than February 21. The RFP identifies a broad range of specific science priorities which should be addressed in the proposals. For more information about the CSTAR program and the application process, please refer to the RFP or contact SSD.

WINTER STORM RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAM. The operational NWS Winter Storm Reconnaissance program begins in a few weeks and will extend through mid-March. The WSR program involves using the NOAA Gulfstream-IV and two USAF C-130 aircraft to target specific areas over the northeastern Pacific for dropsondes, based on guidance from NCEP models. The purpose is to use those additional observations to improve model forecasts downstream - over the continental U.S. - as much as 5-7 days later. We have included a technical attachment this month which describes this successful program, including how it is determined which areas to target for the recon flights. Additional details and links to references can be found at NCEP's Web site:

<http://wwwt.emc.ncep.noaa.gov/gmb/targobs/target/wsr2003.html>.

Forecasters are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the program because they have an opportunity to be directly involved. The C130s will be based in Anchorage, while the G-IV will fly from Hawaii. On the order of 20 flights will be possible as part of the WSR program this year, targeting areas identified by the NCEP Senior Duty Meteorologist (SDM) as the most relevant for improving forecasts for events requested by field office and NCEP forecasters. SR offices can participate in this program by providing input to SSD, which will serve as the regional WSR focal

point. As with requests for GOES rapid-scan operations, any of the SSD staff will forward that input to the SDM. During off-hours contact SSD using the pager numbers that have been distributed.

NPOESS USERPORT. COMET has announced the availability of a new NPOESS/COMET Userport Web site which provides links to information and training on the use of polar-orbiting satellites from NOAA, NASA, and the Department of Defense. The site also previews features that will be available on NPOESS, the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System. Internet discussion groups and listservers are also available on the site. Additional links and features will be added as new training is developed and more information becomes available. The Web site may be accessed at <http://meted.ucar.edu/npoess/index.htm>.

The Userport Web site has several goals:

- To provide new ways to access data, products and information on current and future polar-orbiting satellites,
- To collect, organize, create and provide access to interactive training and education modules on polar satellite meteorology and related topics,
- To encourage the use of current and new data and products from polar-orbiting satellites in operational and research settings,
- To help keep various communities of interest (operational forecasters, researchers, modelers, vendors, ...) informed about the transition from the current generation of POES satellites to the NPOESS era, and
- To provide a forum for current and prospective users to interact with project leads, vendors, and other users to provide input to the NPOESS program.

This Webcast uses the Macromedia(R) Flash player to deliver audio. This plug-in will automatically install itself for users of Microsoft(R) Internet Explorer(R). Netscape(R) users may follow the link from the main lesson page to obtain the free Flash player or visit <http://www.macromedia.com/downloads/now>.

SEA BREEZE MODULE. Also available now from COMET is a new Web-based module on sea breezes. The module examines factors that lead to sea breeze formation, modifying effects on sea breeze development, how mesoscale NWP models handle sea breezes, and sea breeze forecast parameters. The module utilizes a case from Florida and compares surface and satellite observations to a model simulation using the USAF MM5. As with other COMET modules this one features audio narration, rich graphics, and a companion print version. This case is available from the "New" listing on the MetEd homepage (<http://meted.ucar.edu>), or it can be accessed directly at <http://meted.ucar.edu/mesoprim/seabreez/index.htm>. It should take about one hour to complete.

NEW PARTNERS PROJECTS. Over the past few weeks a number of new Partners Projects have been approved by COMET for funding, including:

Florida Institute of Technology (with NWS Melbourne) - *Assimilation of MODIS temperature and water vapor profiles into a mesoscale analysis.*

University of Miami (with WFO Miami) - *Improving workstation-Eta performance through incorporation of high resolution diagnostic datasets at NWS-Miami.*

Saint Louis University (with WFO Melbourne and SPC) - *Using MM5 short-term integrated kinematic fields to distinguish TC Gabrielle's (2001) mesocyclones which produced tornadoes from those which did not in Florida.*

University of North Florida (with WFO Jacksonville) - *Development and evaluation of a prototype wireless storm spotter and mariner reporting system (WSSMRS).*

Texas A&M (with WFO Houston) - *Analysis and simulation of Allison (2001) over Texas.*

COASTAL STUDIES SEMINAR. On December 19, WFO Miami SOO Pablo Santos presented a seminar on local modeling activities at the WFO as part of the Coastal Studies Seminar series of the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. Pablo and the WFO will be collaborating with Prof. Bruce Albrecht and Dr. Brian Etherton from the UM on the implementation and verification/validation of the WsEta model for South Florida, including the Straits of Florida. Pablo's seminar was the first on a meteorological topic as part of the Coastal Studies Seminar series.

NEW HYDRO TRAINING MODULE. The NWS International Activities Office, in collaboration with NWSTC, developed a Web-based training module on the NWS River Forecast System (NWSRFS) which is used operationally at all RFCs. The module was developed with the international community as its target audience, but it will also provide familiarization for NWS personnel on the river forecast system used at the RFCs. The course is at: <http://www.nwstc.noaa.gov/HYDRO/RFS/NWSRFS.html>.

It also contains information about the Ensemble Streamflow Prediction (ESP) model run by the RFCs to generate probabilistic hydrologic forecasts. As we implement the Advanced Hydrologic Prediction (AHP) Service Web page in the region this fiscal year, and continue to implement AHP services in our region over the next 5-7 years, one of the basic AHP services at each forecast point will be a probabilistic hydrologic forecast. These forecasts will be included on AHPS Web pages at each office. Note also that in FY04 a new Advanced WHFS in-residence course will be taught at the NWSTC and will include more in-depth training on the ESP model.

JOINT EFFORTS RESULT IN NEW MARINE OBSERVATIONS. As a result of collaborative work by the WFO Jacksonville staff, Mike Crane and others at NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Lab in Miami, and the NCEP/TPC marine forecasters, twice-daily marine weather reports are now posted to AOML's ftp Web site at: <ftp://ftp.aoml.noaa.gov/od/pub/csi>. This project began with Mike's work with the Jacksonville WFO on data acquisition during AOML's Project ACCESS two years ago, and it was expanded with the NOAA Coastal Storms Initiative. Crowley Marine, a Jacksonville tug and barge company, provides data from their tugs which routinely transit from the Port of Jacksonville to San Juan, Puerto Rico, as well as other Caribbean ports. The vessels report their position, weather and status to the company twice a day, and the company has agreed to make the data available to NWS marine forecasters in Florida.

Initially the data were emailed to WFO Jacksonville in document form, and later provided in spreadsheet form to SOOs or marine focal points at Jacksonville, San Juan, Miami and the TPC (thanks to the development efforts of Miguel Izaguirre at AOML). The procedure has evolved now into the FTP site. Next, the data, an example of which is shown below, will be incorporated into AWIPS via LDAD. Thanks to Crowley Marine, they and other customers can now benefit from improved marine forecasts from the Florida WFOs. In addition, WFO Jacksonville's PMO, Larry Cain, has assisted Crowley vessels with barometer calibrations.

Vessel	Date/time (UTC)	Lat	Lon	Press	Wind		Swell		Course
					dd	ff	dir	hgt (ft)	
Ensign	2002/12/23 08:00	28.35N	79.8W	1030.56	135	9	se	23	120
Explorer	2002/12/23 08:00	25.5N	74.93W	1044.12	90	9	e	23	131
Pilot	2002/12/23 08:00	21.87N	70.07W	1013.95	90	9	e	24	308
Pioneer	2002/12/23 08:01	20.6N	72.47W	1018.70	90	19	e	57	279
Sentinel	2002/12/23 08:01	18.67N	66.37W	1023.78	90	14	e	36	126
Monitor	2002/12/23 08:01	35.48N	74.42W	1017.34	270	31	sw	69	156
Patriarch	2002/12/23 08:01	27.57N	70.52W	1022.0	315	9	nw	24	334
Cavalier	2002/12/23 08:01	28.02N	88.35W	1021.41	135	9	se	03	130
Sea Swift	2002/12/23 08:01	14.58N	81.2W	1019.03	45	19	ne	57	344

RECENT PAPERS. Kudos to Southern Region authors of the following recent papers and publications.

In the December 2002 issue of *Weather and Forecasting*:

“Modulation of ENSO-Based Long-Lead Outlooks of Southwestern U.S. Winter Precipitation by the Pacific Decadal Oscillation,” by David Gutzler (Univ. of New Mexico), Deirdre Kann (WFO Albuquerque), and Casey Thornbrugh (Univ. of New Mexico).

New Southern Region Technical Memoranda include:

NOAA Technical Memorandum NWS SR-221: *An Evaluation of Temperature Variations Around the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Their Associated Synoptic Weather Patterns*, by David M. Gaffin, David G. Hotz and Terry I. Getz (WFO Morristown).

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ssd/techmemo/sr221.pdf>

NOAA Technical Memorandum NWS SR-222: *Bridging the Gap Between Research and Operations in the National Weather Service: Collaborative Activities Among the Huntsville Meteorological Community*, by Chris Darden (WFO Huntsville), Beth Carroll (University of Alabama), Steve Goodman, Gary Jedlovec and Bill Lapenta (all of NASA/MSFC, Huntsville, AL). <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ssd/techmemo/sr222.htm>

NOAA Technical Memorandum NWS SR-223: *Partnership Between the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission and the Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Slidell, LA.*, by Alan Johnson, Paul Trotter and Fred Zeigler (WFO New Orleans Area).

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ssd/techmemo/sr223.pdf>

NWS BRIEFS TEXAS GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION COUNCIL. On December 5 SSD (Jack Settlermaier) briefed participants in the quarterly meeting of the TGIC in Austin, Texas, on current NWS initiatives in regard to applications of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. For anyone interested in Jack's slides, please contact him. While the TGIC meeting was a regularly-scheduled quarterly business meeting of the council, the theme of the meeting had a decidedly weather-focus. For instance, Jack's presentation was preceded by one given by Gerald Creager of Texas A&M, who spoke on status and plans for a statewide Texas mesonet. The TGIC is well-represented within the state of Texas by federal and state agencies, universities, and state and regional associations. The TGIC's 2002 Biennial Report on GIS technology, aptly titled *Digital Texas*, can be viewed from their website at <http://www.tgic.state.tx.us/>.

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION BRANCH

AWIPS. With the exception of WFO Morristown, which is currently running IFPS 12.1, all Southern Region WFOs are awaiting the final version of the IFPS 12.2 Modification Note before beginning installs of IFPS 12.2. The draft version has been received which should allow Southern Region WFOs to move forward with IFPS 12.2 installations this month.

All but eight Southern Region offices have installed AWIPS Build R5.2.2. The remaining offices will complete the install by the end of January. Maintenance Release (MR) 5.2.2.1 should be installed after R5.2.2 installation is complete and MR 5.2.2.2 should have been released for installation early this month.

The AWIPS Archive Server (AX) scheduling and installations have begun. All AX installations should be complete by the end of January. Twenty-two offices have scheduled their install dates and three offices have completed the install already. If you have not already done so, please schedule your install date as soon as possible.

The Emergency Management Decision Support (EMDS) system has been a part of the AWIPS baseline since Build R5.2.1. Southern Region is now ready to begin activating each WFO's EMDS application. We hope to begin this process this month and have all sites up and running as soon as possible. WFO Tulsa was the first to begin using EMDS in December 1999. Since then, we have added four additional sites (Miami, Atlanta, Midland and Amarillo) helping to debug and finalize the software. More information on EMDS will be forthcoming during the month of January.

SRH/SOD regional systems specialist Joe Villescuz and electronics program manager Steven Baker traveled to the Space Flight Meteorology Group (SMG) at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston to help with the installation of the AWIPS Communications Processor (CP) replacement and Waveswitch Local Area Network (LAN) upgrade. With the successful modification at SMG, this now completes all of the Southern Region sites as being configured with the new AWIPS CPs and High Speed LAN equipment.

ASOS. We are continuing with system upgrades implemented by NWS Headquarters. The region has been given the go-ahead to install the latest software version V2.7A-3 in eight Southern Region sites. Implementation will begin during the first two months of 2003.

NWR. Installations and refurbishment continue at a fast pace across the region. Three new installations were completed during December: Winchester and Vale, Tennessee and Rio Grande City, Texas were fitted with new dual Crown 1Kw transmitters. Winchester will be receiving broadcast audio from WFO Nashville, Rio Grande City will be serviced by WFO Brownsville, and Vale receives its audio input from WFO Memphis. In addition, Florence, Alabama received new coaxial cable to repair the older degraded cable.

UPPER AIR. SOD regional systems specialist Charlie Lake attended an upper air collaboration conference with other regional specialists, WSH engineering staff, and NWSTC staff. Discussion topics included installation schedules for the new Radiosonde Replacement System (RRS) training, legacy system status, and current system repairs.

A note of concern that became apparent during the conference is the National Reconditioning Center shortage of personnel to support the upper air logistics and maintain replacement parts in stock for the legacy system.

WSR-88D. Regional system specialist Joe Villescaz coordinated equipment and personnel to help WFO Houston so that a successful klystron replacement could take place. Personnel from the Radar Operations Center in Norman assisted local technicians in removing and replacing the klystron at the RDA. With the experienced personnel on hand, the klystron replacement was completed with minimal downtime.

Joe continued his coordination with the ROC team as they traveled to Melbourne to assist in a gearbox assembly replacement in the WSR-88D pedestal. The maintenance took a day and we are glad to report proved to be invaluable. To assist with future gearbox repairs the local technicians took digital photos of work being performed. Photos will soon be distributed to all WFO's so technicians can see first-hand how important a role the preventive maintenance schedule plays in the upkeep of electronic systems.

Southern Region worked with the beta test director from Norman to select sites to test the new ORPG Build 3.0. The SR sites selected to participate in the beta testing are WFOs Corpus Christi, Norman and Tulsa. The testing is underway and should be completed by late February.

IT. Two new PCs have been sent from the CRAFT project to support the LDM transfer of Level II archive data. SRH assisted in building the systems and sent them to WFOs Amarillo and Lubbock for installation and configuration.

OBSERVATIONS AND FACILITIES BRANCH

FISCHER PORTER UPGRADE. The upgraded Fischer Porter precipitation system in Puerto Rico has been turned off until the problems with the coastal environment equipment can be resolved. Preliminary troubleshooting of the equipment indicates there may be a problem with the inability of the solar panel to keep the battery charged when the radio equipment operates continuously.

WXCODER II SUPPORT. The data acquisition staffs at WFOs Corpus Christi and San Juan are providing Spanish and French translation services for the scripts to be used by the WxCoder II software. The WFO San Juan staff translated the scripts to Spanish while Tom Dever, WFO Corpus Christi, volunteered to do the translations to French. WxCoder II is the software package that allows volunteer observers to forward their weather observation to the local WFOs via the Internet.

SURFACE OBSERVATION PROGRAM. During October and into early November Southern Region received 66 requests from the aviation community for new certificates, cancellations, and changes in type of surface certificates.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND SAFETY. The planned deactivation of 15 ART-II upper air transmitters in the Southern Region will require extreme caution for the storage and handling of PCB-containing transformers prior to their disposal. These transformers weigh approximately 80lbs and removing them from the transmitter assembly will also require coordination by the responsible site personnel to avoid injury. PCBs are regulated by the EPA and according to NLSC citations can be issued for improper handling, storage or disposal. The NLSC instructions and a list of potential disposal vendors was sent to the 15 affected sites by SRH.

An indoor air quality (IAQ) survey is planned for WFO Mobile by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) this month. Several claims raised by employees working in the WFO about the presence of mold prompted the survey. A previous IAQ survey by PHS was done at WFO/RFC Fort Worth and that survey did not detect measurable levels of contaminants that would impact the health of employees. PHS has also recently finished noise dosimetry measurements at WFO Albuquerque and will be issuing a report for noise exposures at the WFO, RDA, and ASOS at the Albuquerque airport.

A new safety course prepared by DuPont Corporation has been mandated by NOAA for all NWS senior managers and supervisors, with the senior managers to take a 2-day course at a yet to be determined location, while the supervisors will receive a four-hour presentation in a format that is not yet defined. As soon as more details are known about these two courses, they will be shared with the affected employees.

A draft NWS Environmental Management Manual has been developed by the NWSH contractor Effective Answers, Inc. to supplement the existing Safety Manual, and it is viewable on the OPS1 Web page for comments. A pilot course is planned for March 2003, to be followed by classes at NWSTC for one person per WFO/RFC beginning in April.

WFO KEY WEST 95% DESIGN REVIEW. The 95% design review for the new WFO Key West building was held in mid-December. Each page of the design drawing set was reviewed, as well as the specifications accompanying the drawings, with civil, electrical, and mechanical comments provided by NWSH, SRH, and CASC. Some items remained open as of mid-December, with closure expected by the drawing completions planned for early this month.

NEW HVAC CONTROL SYSTEM AT WFO JACKSONVILLE. A new graphics-based HVAC control system has been installed at Jacksonville as part of an upgrade to both the mechanical and controls systems. Only designated NWS personnel can access the Jacksonville control system through a web browser using the internal NWS WAN to view the system status or change settings of different equipment. This system is planned for HVAC upgrades now underway at WFO El Paso and WFO Shreveport in the near future.

DICK HAGEMEYER AWARD PRESENTATION. On December 13, MIC Charlie Liles and HMT Joe Alfieri from WFO Albuquerque presented Grady Bright of Melrose, New Mexico with the prestigious Dick Hagemeyer Award. Mr. Bright has completed 45 years of service as a cooperative weather observer. The ceremony took place at Mr. Bright's home, and was attended by many family and community members. Mr. Bright took pleasure in showing the observations taken during the infamous cold wave of January, 1963, which allowed many attendees to reminisce about the good old days.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

DIVERSITY/EEO AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

WFO AMARILLO. WFO Amarillo was recognized recently with the CFC "Committed to Care" Award. This award is given to a federal agency which has continually shown participation and commitment to Combined Federal Campaign goals. The NWS office award was announced at this year's Amarillo United Way campaign wrap-up luncheon.

WFO SHREVEPORT. Forecaster Jason Hansford participated in a documentary for students in a general meteorology class from Bossier Parish Community College from Bossier City, Louisiana. He was videotaped making an upper air release, and answered questions on the education needed to become a meteorologist, principles of meteorology, and operations of the National Weather Service.

Marion Kuykendall, DAPM, gave a talk to an eighth grade career development class at Patti Welder Jr. High in Victoria, Texas, a school with predominantly Hispanic and African-American students. He discussed the operations of the NWS, the classes needed to become a meteorologist, colleges which have meteorology programs, and the classes that are needed in junior high and high school in preparation for the college courses that will be encountered.

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS
DECEMBER 1-31, 2002

Southern Region Losses

<u>Name</u>	<u>From (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>From Title/Grade</u>
Dedric Walker	CWSU ZHU	Resignation	Meteorologist, GS-12
Tommy Burgdorf	WFO MEG	Transfer to CR	El Tech, GS-11
Walter Livingston	WFO FWD	Retirement	HMT, GS-11
Donell Woods	WFO CRP	Transfer to NWSH	WCM, GS-13
Fred Johnson	WFO JAX	Transfer to AWC	WCM, GS-14
Lori Sandoval	SRH SOD	Retirement	ASA, GS-7

Southern Region Gains

<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Jeffrey P. Craven	WFO JAN	Promotion from SPC	SOO, GS-14
Michael L. Rehbein	WFO HGX	Transfer from SPC	Forecaster, GS-12
Connie M. Klimczak	RFC ORN	New Hire	HAS Forecaster, GS-9
Michael B. Scotten	WFO BMX	Transfer from CR	Forecaster, GS-7
Glenn E. Wiley	WFO TSA	Transfer from ER	Forecaster, GS-12
Michael W. Langevin	WFO EPZ	Transfer from WR	Forecaster, GS-12
Timothy Oram	SMG	New Hire	Meteorologist, GS-13
Curtis J. Kockx	WFO SJT	Transfer from WR	ITO, GS-13
James Lee	WFO EYW	New Hire	Met Intern, GS-9
Laura L. Bowers	WFO LCH	New Hire	ASA, GS-6
David Belbey	WFO SJT	New Hire	El Tech, GS-11

Within Region Transfers/Actions

<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Brandon Bolinski	WFO TAE	Transfer from EYW	Forecaster, GS-9
Jason Hansford	WFO SHV	Promotion from SHV	Forecaster, GS-12
John Metz	WFO CRP	Promotion from CRP	Senior Forecaster, GS-13

