UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Fort Worth, Texas

January 2005

SOUTHERN TOPICS

Working Together To Save Lives

Southern Region Home Page
Previous Topics

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

The National Weather Service Southern Region lost three outstanding employees who retired in January. The departure of Systems Operations Division Chief Tom Grayson, Scientific Services Division Chief Dan Smith and Memphis Meteorologist-in-Charge Jim Duke led to the following new appointments.

Birmingham MIC Ken Graham has been selected as the new SOD Chief. In his new position, he will be responsible for the operation, installation, and maintenance of all operational observing and weather information systems in the Southern Region, as well as local and wide area administration networks and electronic mail. Ken offers a good mix of field experience, technical abilities and administrative skills to provide vital leadership for an outstanding SOD team.

National Fire Weather Program Manager David "Rusty" Billingsley was selected as the new SSD Chief. In his new position, he will be responsible for maintaining the high level of meteorological science practiced at Southern Region field offices; and, will oversee training and professional development activities, scientific collaboration with the scientific community and the development of new techniques to apply technological advances to operational needs. Rusty offers a wide range of meteorological and administrative experience as well as a strong background in computer science, academic research and the Cooperative Institute program.

WFO Quad Cities/Davenport MIC Jim Belles has been selected as the new MIC at the Memphis office. Belles brings a strong blend of relevant experience, technical knowledge and people skills to this vital operational leadership role in this very active severe weather area of the country. Jim served previously as the WCM in Memphis.

I would also like to recognize and thank all the candidates who applied for these positions. Their excellent qualifications made for a difficult decision-making process.

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

Visit to King Ranch Yields Jackpot of Data. WFO Corpus Christi HMT Steve Smart and WCM John Metz met with the area manager for King Ranch and discovered a wealth of untapped weather data. King Ranch is a national historic landmark and is recognized as the birthplace of the American ranching industry. Today King Ranch sprawls across 825,000 acres of South Texas and is the home of 60,000 cattle and 300 quarter horses. During their visit, Steve and John discovered that King Ranch maintains a collection of over 80 rain gauges across its property and this data is now being provided to WFO Corpus Christi. Although the data is collected on a weekly basis, the WFO will be working to install more real time reporting stations. In addition, the ranch was interested in participating in the Skywarn program which will yield storm reports from ranchers in very unpopulated areas of south Texas.

Tsunamis. 'Tsunami' is the hot word so far in the news for 2005. Southern Region has always been aware of the vulnerabilities of tsunamis to our part of the world, and tsunami procedures were already in place at WFO San Juan for the commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Interim plans are now in place for the rest of the SR WFOs along the Gulf coast and east coast of the U.S. Coordination between SR, ER, AR and the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center (ATWC) has led to the development of a procedure by which the ATWC will monitor any seismic activity that could affect the Atlantic or Gulf. The next step is to coordinate official tsunami products for dissemination from ATWC to our customers. The goal of the SR Tsunami Program is: "Plan, Communication, Response." Outreach and education is crucial to the success of saving lives.

If you have any questions or media requests concerning tsunamis or the tsunami program, please direct them to Melinda Bailey, the Southern Region Tsunami Program Manager. There is also an SR Tsunami IntrAnet webpage that contains numerous links, resources, TsunamiReady information, operational documents, and sample tsunami presentations and outreach material. You can find this web page at the following URL:

http://lucretia.srh.noaa.gov/srh/marine/tsunami.html

Pre-December 26th Tsunami activities at WFO San Juan. Given all the recent attention paid to the tragic news from the Asian tsunami, it's important to recognize that active tsunami awareness planning in Puerto Rico has been ongoing for well over a year now. On December 10, WFO San Juan MIC Israel Matos participated in a teleconference with USGS, NOAA and US NORTHCOM, a military organization whose mission is to act as "last resort responders" to assist civilian agencies if they are overwhelmed in the event of an emergency, including natural hazards. The entities were concerned about tsunamis in their area of responsibility, which includes the Caribbean. NORTHCOM was in need of timely information from NOAA/USGS in the event of a catastrophe which might affect their transportation nodes. Israel discussed the Puerto Rico Tsunami Program,

referred them to the Puerto Rico Seismic Network homepage on Tsunamis, and also recommended they contact the NOAA Homeland Security Operations Center.

Fire Weather Program Manager does a slow burn. Paul Witsaman, Southern Region Fire Weather Program Manager recently traveled to Camp Bowie, TX to participate in a prescribed burn in conjunction with the TX Forest Service and Army National Guard. The trip allowed Paul to coordinate with burn personnel as part of a larger project to study the utility of using aircraft to collect upper air data in the proximity of fires. The upper air data collection phase of the test is scheduled to occur in March. In addition to observing how a prescribed burn team works together, Paul actually got his hands dirty by taking weather observations using the belt weather kit. Great going, Paul!

In addition to the operational support provided by our SR IMETS, a number of our SR fire weather focal points have met with their fire weather and land management partners to observe prescribed burns. In a few cases, WFO forecasters have accompanied the focal points at the burns, affording them a good first hand at the manner in which their fire weather products are being utilized. We encourage this kind of interaction with our valued fire weather partners as we move into the various burn seasons across Southern Region.

Southwest Airlines Visit. Four NWS meteorologists visited Southwest Airlines Corporate Headquarters in January 2005. The group included: Chip West, MIC CWSU Atlanta; Monte Oaks, WFO San Antonio meteorologist; Dan Noah, WCM WFO Tampa Bay; and Paul Witsaman, Southern Region RAM.

The group toured the large facility, spending the majority of their time in the large dispatch center. They learned how weather impacts our nation's 4th largest air carrier and how NWS products, especially TAFs, are integrated into their operations. Rick Curtis, Southwest Airlines Manager of Dispatch Solutions Systems provided valuable insight into the importance of NWS TAFs to Southwest's operations.

This is just the latest of a number of trips that have been made to the Southwest headquarters during the past year. As was the case with the previous groups, Chip, Monte, Dan and Paul each came away with a better understanding of the importance of quality TAFs to this large consumer of NWS aviation services.

Arkansas Balloon Safety. Newton Skiles, WFO Little Rock Aviation Focal Point attended the Arkansas Hot Air Balloon Safety Seminar on Saturday, January 15, 2005 at the Arkansas Aerospace Education Center in Little Rock. Twenty-seven people attended the seminar, sanctioned by the Balloon Federation of America. The seminar covered weather, maintenance, operations, first aid, and ground team safety.

Newton covered a variety of topics, including atmospheric pressure systems, fronts, temperature inversions, and wind impacts on ballooning. He also described aviation services offered by the National Weather Service. The presentation was well received, and Newton was invited to do another presentation at next year's seminar.

Nashville forecasters visit local Flight Service Station. WFO Nashville forecaster Mark Rose, service hydrologist Michael Murphy, WCM Jerry Orchanian, and MIC Larry Vannozzi recently visited the Flight Service Station at Nashville International Airport. Following a tour of their operations, the FSS personnel provided some feedback on the Nashville aviation products. They were pleased with the level of service being provided, but stressed how important timely TAF amendments are to their customers for briefing purposes.

Even in this age of the Internet, Flight Service Stations remain one of our primary avenues for disseminating NWS aviation forecasts to the general aviation community. Outreach trips like Nashville's serve an important purpose in ensuring that our TAFs are meeting the needs of this important segment of our aviation customer base.

WFO Birmingham Designates the nation's 4th StormReady "Supporter". Member of the Birmingham staff recently designated the Summit Lifestyle Center, located in suburban Birmingham, as Alabama's first "StormReady Supporter". The designation ceremony took place at the Summit Lifestyle Center Guest Services booth, near one of the largest anchor stores in the heavily-used shopping center. The ceremony will mark the Summit Lifestyle Center as the first StormReady Supporter entity in Alabama, and just the 4th site in the nation with this special designation.

WFO Lubbock meets with local ABC and CBS media partners. WFO Lubbock MIC Justin Weaver and WCM Brian LaMarre were recently invited to attend an internal, pre-severe weather season meeting at KAMC and KLBK studios. The meeting reviewed the procedures for severe weather operations. In addition, Justin provided an overview of WFO Lubbock's plan to implement Instant Messaging service with local media and emergency management partners. Brian gave a briefing on the benefits of Blast-Up Conference Calls with media and emergency management during significant severe weather outbreaks, and a detailed review of VTEC. Hand-outs were distributed containing examples of Severe Thunderstorm Warnings, Tornado Warnings and Severe Weather Statements using the new VTEC coding to be implemented on February 8, 2005. The meeting was a great success in terms of fostering the NWS-media partnership and sharing of ideas. As Brian mentioned during the meeting, *the partnership between the media and the NWS is very important; after all, we share a common goal – to inform the public, save lives, and disseminate the best possible information to our audience when they need it the most!*

Q&A session via ham radio- ITO Mike Davis and Forecaster Mark A. Rose fielded several questions via ham radio from a home-school group that was touring the Red Cross in Murfreesboro. The Question &Answer session was facilitated by Tom Delker, a radio operator who is employed by the Red Cross. There were 13 home-schoolers in attendance, ranging in age from 7 to 14.

WFO Albuquerque Promotes Skywarn. Six members of our WFO Albuquerque staffed a booth at the 4th Annual Convention of the Quivira Coalition. The Mission of the Quivira Coalition is to foster ecological, economic and social health on western landscapes through education, innovation, collaboration, and progressive public and private land stewardship. The common goals of ranchers, environmentalists, public land managers, scientists, and policy makers are addressed by this organization. Our table had a poster describing ASSET (Albuquerque Storm Spotter Enhancement Team), and a slide show documenting the weather hazards across New Mexico. We distributed spotter information cards and ASSET brochures, and signed up about 25 new spotters - many of them ranchers from some of our exceptionally remote areas.

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

WFO Tallahassee participates in Suwannee River Hydrologic Observatory project. WFO Tallahassee is participating with Florida State University, University of Florida, University of North Florida, USGS, and other agencies on the Suwannee River Hydrologic Observatory grant proposal project. This project, if it wins national funding, will allow the establishment of a Suwannee River Hydrologic Observatory that will study all water related aspects of the Suwannee River Basin including ground water interchange, water quality and extreme events such as floods and drought.

WFO Tallahassee obtains flood survey data. Joel Lanier, senior service hydrologist at WFO Tallahassee, has established contacts with FEMA and URS Corporation to obtain inland and coastal flood survey data from Hurricanes Frances and Ivan. FEMA funds URS Corporation who coordinates the field work including making water level markings and follow-on horizontal and vertical elevation surveys. The data set, which will be made available within the month, will be provided to the NWS at no cost and will be used by the SERFC for river modeling work on the St. Johns River.

HCM Products for the WFOs. The Data Review Group recently added Hydrologic Coordination Message product category PILs to AWIPS for WFO use. These products are currently used by the RFCs to coordinate information with their servicing WFOs (e.g., 24x7 operations, flood coordination, etc.). Effective immediately, they are now available for WFO use. Some potential uses include, but are not limited to, coordination regarding collaborative WFO/RFC activities (outreach, training, hydrologic operations) and hydrologic program management coordination between adjacent WFO HSA offices.

AHPS Workshop at WFO Houston. Kandis Boyd, SR Hydrologic Services Program Manager, Bob Corby, DOH at WGRFC, and Tracy Howieson and Frank Bell, hydrologic forecasters at WGRFC, participated in an AHPS workshop conducted January 26-27, 2005 for the staff at WFO Houston. Jayant Deo, a contractor for the AHPS program, also participated in the workshop. Jayant talked about the paradigm shift associated with hydrologic information delivery via the AHPS Web pages. Kandis provided an overview of the NWS AHPS program. Tracy gave presentations on the Ensemble Streamflow Model that is used to generate probabilistic hydrologic

forecasts and information on how to interpret the probabilistic hydrologic forecasts. The workshop concluded with collaborative discussions regarding the probabilistic hydrologic forecast information graphic configuration details. These information graphics will be accessible via WFO Houston's AHPS web page.

Hydrology Program Supplement Update. The Southern Region Supplement, "Authorization for Changes to Hydrologic Services", has been posted to the NWS Directives System website. The URL is: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/010/pd01009001s012005a.pdf.

We are also in the midst of working on several other hydrologic supplements. This includes the following subjects and their status:

1. River Flood Outlook Product – regional coordination complete.
2. Impact of Stream Gage Closures on Hydrologic Forecast Services – regional coordination complete
3. Hydrologic Administrative Reports - draft in process
4. WFO Hydrologic Service Areas– draft in process
5. Drought Information Statements – draft in process

National Flood Safety Awareness Week. National Flood Safety Awareness Week will be held March 21-25, 2005. National Flood Safety Awareness Week is intended to highlight some of the many ways floods can occur, the hazards associated with floods, and what you can do to save life and property. More information can be obtained at the following website:

http://weather.gov/floodsafety/

Each day of National Flood Safety Awareness week will target a different hydrologic event:

Monday	Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (AHPS)
Tuesday	Turn Around Don't Drown (TADD)
Wednesday	Tropical Cyclone Inland Flooding
Thursday	Flood Hazard Mitigation
Friday	Flood Safety

The Press Conference "kicking off" this event will be held on Thursday, March 17, 10:00 a.m. at the Department of Commerce. Bill Proenza, Director of National Weather Service Southern Region, will be one of the featured speakers during the press conference.

Partnership Leads to Improved Water Level Forecasts. WFO Corpus Christi Meteorologist Waylon Collins met with Dr. Philippe Tissot of the Division of Nearshore Research (DNR) at Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi to discuss water level forecasting along the Texas coast.

WFO Corpus Christi has been providing numerical model output to Dr. Tissot for several years and this partnership continues. The numerical model output fields include 48 hour surface temperature, pressure and winds. This data serves as one of several inputs into an artificial neural network that is currently under development at the DNR. Dr. Tissot is developing his neural network model to produce significantly improved water level forecasts which NWS offices along Texas coast will be able to use to improve forecasts for coastal flood and storm surge events. Check this link for more information: http://tcoon.cbi.tamucc.edu/Forecasts/HomePage

DIGITAL SERVICES

Instructions on the web for downloading gridded data. For some time, SR has provided the capability for our customers to receive our grids in raw form. We now have prepared a webpage explaining the two methods for downloading and retrieving our netCDF files. We encourage you to share this instructional link with your customers:

http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/cwwd/gridfiles.htm.

Internet Services Brochure. If you'd rather hand out a brochure describing the grid retrieval process, you can print an SR Internet Services Brochure from this webpage: http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/cwwd/cwwd.htm. The brochure not only provides a link to the instructions on how to retrieve our gridded data, but ALSO includes most of the services that customers can receive from our websites – in ONE brochure! This brochure is an excellent resource to showcase all the many services we provide via our websites. Check out the brochure today, and feel free to contact Dennis Cain or Melinda Bailey and let them know if you need the brochure in a different format, or if you want local information added to the brochure.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

NCEP COMPUTER UPGRADE. The transition of operations to Phase II of the Central Computer System (CCS) was completed at 1200 UTC on Tuesday, 25 January. The new CCS, for the first time, is comprised of two, identical, geographically separate systems, which will provide full backup capability for the entire suite of over 5 million numerical guidance products. The primary machine is located in Gaithersburg, MD, and the backup machine is located Fairmont, WV. Should the primary machine require maintenance or fail, NCEP estimates the backup machine can be placed online in about five minutes. The switchover to the new system was accomplished with no delay or loss of forecast guidance products. Some minor problems were encountered related to the associated AVN to GFS and Eta to NAM name change, but these problems were quickly resolved.

GOODBYE ETA, HELLO NAM. With the conversion of the NCEP computer system the "Eta" model name was retired. Just as the GFS (Global Forecast System) has become the common name for the global forecast model -- replacing the AVN and MRF names – so the NAM (North American Meoscale) will be the common name applied to NCEP's mesoscale model. The new name means we'll no longer have to make any major modfications to ingest or display systems as we did in the past with the evolution from the LFM to the NGM to the Eta. An upcoming AWIPS Build will include the NAM model name in the software menus. One last upgrade to the "model formerly known as Eta" will be made later this year. Then, in March, 2006, NCEP plans to upgrade the NAM to WRF (Weather Research and Forecast) system code.

WRF WINTER FORECAST EXPERIMENT. The WRF Developmental Testbed Center's Winter Forecast Experiment (DWFE) is now underway. The model development community is actively seeking input from the operational community. NWS forecasters can use the FX-Net software to compare the output of the two DWFE versions of the WRF model and the NCEP Hi-Res Window WRF version with the standard suite of operational models. Comments and evaluations can be submitted via an interactive Web form. Please refer to the pages on the SR Intranet **http://intranet.srh.noaa.gov/srh/ssd/WRF/** for more information.

NEW COMET TRAINING MODULES. The COMET Program has announced the release of two new training modules. "Rip Currents: Nearshore Fundamentals" is the second of three modules on forecasting rip currents and provides insight into how nearshore circulation and wave dynamics are involved in rip current formation. Topics covered in this module include: nearshore terminology, circulation and waves, rip current characteristics and rip current forcing mechanisms. The module may be found at **http://meted.ucar.edu/marine/ripcurrents/NSF/** and is 23 minutes in length.

"Physics of the Aurora: Earth Systems." introduces the systems and processes through which the Earth's magnetic field and upper atmosphere capture the solar wind to light up the polar sky. This module is available in both broadband and text versions. The broadband version includes photos, 3D illustrations, charts, simulations, animations, aurora movies, narration, music, and interactive exercises. The text version includes all of the interactive charts and exercises as the broadband version, but presents the bulk of the content via text and graphics.

SSD GOES MOBILE. Jack Settelmaier, SSD's Techniques Development Meteorologist and Digital Services focal point, visited several Gulf Coast WFOs in January. En route to and from the two-day GFE Workshop at WFO Mobile, Jack visited WFO's Jackson, Slidell (plus the LMRFC), and Lake Charles. Jack met a many of the offices' staff members by scheduling his visits across the afternoon shift-changes.

Topics near and dear to the heart of SSD were discussed -- primarily with the office SOOs and DOH -- including use of the Weather Event Simulator, Office Training Plans, Individual Development Plans, maintenance of training records, and AWOC completion status. Wearing his

Digital Services hat, Jack also discussed with the staff the evolution of digital services and the impact it has had on office operations. Jack extends his thanks all the offices for being so welcoming and for openly sharing their thoughts and feelings on a number of topics with him.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS
JANUARY 1 - 31, 2005

Southern Region Losses

Name	From (Office)	Action/Transfer	From Title/Grade
Daniel L. Smith	SRH/SSD	Retirement	Chief, Scientific Services Division, GS-15
Thomas H. Grayson	SRH/SOD	Retirement	Chief, Systems Operations Division, GS-15
James W. Duke	WFO MEG	Retirement	Meteorologist-in-Charge, GS-15
Jeffrey C. Lustig	WFO MEG	Retirement	Forecaster, GS-12
William Tomey	WFO CRP	Retirement	Electronic Tech, GS-11
Frank W. Alsheimer	WFO TBW	Transfer to ER	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Sarah Allen	WFO JAN	Transfer to ER	Meteorologist Intern, GS-7
John Gordon	WFO HUN	Transfer to CR	Meteorologist-in-Charge, GS-14

Southern Region Gains

Name	To (Office)	Action/Transfer	To Title/Grade
Peter L. Wolf	WFO JAX	Transfer from CR	Science and Operations Officer, GS-14

Within Region Transfers/Actions

Name	To (Office)	Action/Transfer	To Title/Grade
Jonathan L. Howell	WFO MEG	Reassignment on station	Forecaster, GS-11
Richard Davis	WFO TBW	Promotion on station	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Lora Wilson	WFO JAN	Promotion on station	Meteorologist Intern, GS-7
Rebecca Gould	WFO MAF	Promotion on station	Meteorologist Intern , GS-7

DIVERSITY/EEO AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Student explores career options in Meteorology. A local high school student interested in a career in meteorology spent a half day at WFO Corpus Christi learning from the experts. John Metz (WCM) gave the student and her father a tour of the facility and explained the valuable role the NWS plays in providing forecast and warning services to the citizens of this nation. Ron Morales (SOO) provided educational guidance and discussed meteorology schools she could attend, and Jason Runyen (forecaster) gave an AWIPS demonstration and explained how meteorologists monitor and forecast the weather.

WFO San Juan school outreach efforts. Members of the WFO San Juan staff recently provided tours and talks for a number of students from area schools. Lead Forecaster Brian Seeley visited the Fort Buchanan Antilles Elementary School to conduct a hurricane and other weather hazards presentation for 13 sixth grade students. WCM Rafael Mojica conducted an office tour for 25 fifth grade students from the Felicita Oliviera Elementary School from the southeastern Puerto Rico municipality of Santa Isabel. Later, Rafael conducted a tour for 27 science club members from the CupeyVille High School in San Juan. Finally, Lead Forecaster Brad Diehl conducted an office tour for 29 students from the Junior ROTC class from the Mayaguez High School.

WFO Amarillo Sponsors "Tornado Hole" for Science Center Miniature Golf Course. It is called "Fore Amarillo." The Don Harrington Discovery Center has called on the community and put together a temporary miniature golf course for kids. Each hole is designed to be educational as well as fun. Amarillo ESA Ken Hunter and ET David Wilburn spent many hours constructing the tornado hole. A small motor runs the spinning of the tornado. The golf ball enters the tornado and is spiraled to the top of the tornado and then is dropped through the "rear-flank downdraft chamber". "It's the most popular hole", said Ganesh Ganpat, Discovery Center Executive Director. The special golf course exhibit runs from January through May 2005.

From left to right: Amarillo ET David Wilburn, Discovery Director Ganesh Ganpat and Amarillo ESA Ken Hunter.

WFO Nashville media and community outreach. WCM Jerry Orchanian recently taped a number of interviews with various radio and television outlets in Tennessee in connection with Winter Weather Awareness Week. Included in these efforts was a taped interview with the

Tennessee Radio Network, a 40 minute live interview with a Manchester, TN radio station, and a taped interview with the Fox TV affiliate in Nashville.

WFO Austin/San Antonio reached approximately 125 external users during the last quarter of 2004. During this time, MIC Joe Arellano taught a Skywarn training class to volunteers of the Austin Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. The class is thought to be the first CERT training class held entirely in Spanish in the U. S. The program included the basics of storm models, principles of spotting, and history of severe storms and flooding in South Central Texas. In conclusion there was a detailed discussion of safety rules.

WFO Brownsville Staff "Planting the Seeds for a Bright Future" Six elementary schools combined to hold a career fair at the Brownsville Special Events Center where DAPM Jim Campbell, ASA Rachel Gutierrez and HMT Alfredo Vega attended and planted some National Weather Service seeds to approximately 800 fifth graders. The students were provided weather service handouts and given career path information in meteorology. Rachel and Alfredo were able to reach many of the primarily Hispanic students by speaking Spanish.

WFO El Paso Bust Weather Myths. Lead Forecasters Tim Brice and Tom Bird explained the operational duties and impact of each type of forecasting and data collection to over eighty 6th graders from the Science Magnet Program when they visited WFO El Paso. The NWS personnel challenged the students to take their studies seriously, especially math and science if a career in meteorology or a related field was the goal. WCM John Fausett had an opportunity to emphasize weather safety for various weather phenomena which could be encountered locally or when traveling elsewhere. The staff had an excellent opportunity to bust several weather myths and arm the students with some potentially lifesaving knowledge.

WFO Jackson Team Teaches Hydrology at Jackson State University (JSU). In the fall, WFO Jackson offered the second annual Operational Meteorology Course as part of the IDAS-RAP NWS Grant. This year the course was doubled from 1 to 2 units and called Operational Meteorology/Hydrology. The course was team taught by WFO Jackson Forecaster and Assistant Service Hydrologist Latrice Maxie and SOO Jeff Craven. Latrice developed the hydrology portion of the course to offer a broader perspective of hydrometeorology to the JSU students. The success of the course has led to the development of a new 3 unit course in Hydrology that will merge the Operational Hydrology portion into the JSU curriculum starting in the Fall 2005.

WFO Miami Promotes Safety. HMT Bob Ebaugh helped organize and participated in a Safety Fair sponsored by the Miami Beach Beach Patrol. The event was held in conjunction with Miami Beach Art Deco Weekend. Bob handed out the Southern Region Rip Current Safety Brochure and provided real-time weather updates as a squall line approached south Florida.

WFO San Juan MIC discusses Puerto Rico Tsunami Program. MIC Israel Matos participated in a teleconference with USGS, NOAA and USNORTHCOM, a military organization whose mission is to act as "last resort responders" to assist civilian agencies if they are overwhelmed in the

event of an emergency, including natural hazards. NORTHCOM was concerned about tsunamis in their area of responsibility which includes the Caribbean. NORTHCOM was in need of timely information from NOAA/USGS that would assist them during a time of crisis. Israel had the opportunity to discuss the Puerto Rico Tsunami Program, referring the participants to the Puerto Rico Seismic Network homepage on Tsunamis, and also recommended contacting NOAA Homeland Security Operations Center.

RECOGNITION

WFO Miami and TPC Honored. WFO Miami's MIC Rusty Pfost and DAPM Sue Cawn along with TPC Deputy Director Ed Rappaport attended a meeting of the South Florida Federal Executive Board (FEB) at the U.S. Coast Guard Integrated Support Command on Miami Beach. The speaker for the meeting was Dr. Steven Covey, author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. At the meeting, Rusty and Ed were presented plaques in recognition of each office's outstanding performance during the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season. The WFO provided conference call coordination three times daily to the FEB's emergency dismissal committee.

Aviation Award
WFO Corpus Christi earned the 2004 4th Quarter Southern Region Aviation Award for their outstanding aviation work during October, November and December. Key members of the CRP team include: Tawnya Evans, Mike Buchanan, Ron Morales, and Armando Garza.

WFO CRP has planned and/or completed several tasks that have resulted in improvements to the aviation program, including the following:

- Completion of an Aviation Workshop in November. Attendees included the Regional Aviation Program Manager from SRH, a Southwest Airlines dispatcher, an FAA Academy PWB Instructor, and a CWSU presentation. Talks included several aviation-specific topics that educated forecasters on impacts of TAFs to customer operations. Ms. Kari Kennedy from Southwest Airlines expressed her appreciation for the work that the WFO was doing in educating the forecasters for the purpose of improving aviation forecasts.

- Implementation of an aviation discussion, effective November 18, 2004. The discussion was appended to the Area Forecast Discussion (AFD), and was advertised to the local aviation community. The discussion emphasizes various aviation impacts, including potential ceiling and visibility problems over coastal areas and areas where TAFs do not exist. This new addition to the AFD, has received positive feedback from several quarters. In particular, instructors at the FAA Academy have provided comments that have led to improvements in the product.

- Daily use of the UPS fog matrix to determine effectiveness of this method of forecasting low ceilings and visibilities. A ground temperature sensor was installed at WFO CRP in

November specifically for use with the UPS tool. Initial analysis shows some forecast skill associated with the use of this tool.

- Development of a training program by the SOO to improve forecaster familiarity with CWSU and AWC products.

- Establishment of AWIPS alerts for all Texas pilot reports (PIREPs), which can be used to verify and improve forecasts of cloud bases. Aviation meteorologists are now more sensitive to weather impacts on flight through continuous monitoring of PIREPs from the area.