



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

January 2007

SOUTHERN TOPICS

Working Together To Save Lives

[Southern Region Home page](#)

[Previous Topics](#)

RECOGNITION

SMG Meteorologist Receives Honors

NWS / Spaceflight Meteorology Group Lead Forecaster Karl Silverman was honored by NASA in two separate events on Monday January 22, 2007.

Mr. Silverman was given the honor of “Hanging the Plaque” in the Mission Control Center in a post-mission ceremony following the December 2006 Space Shuttle mission on Discovery, STS-116. After each Shuttle flight, NASA’s Flight Directors choose which support group provided the most outstanding service to Mission Control during the flight. For STS-116, SMG was chosen as having provided the most critical support to the mission. Mr. Silverman, SMG Lead Forecaster for STS-116, was given the honor of climbing a ladder and hanging the plaque in Mission Control.

Mr. Silverman, SMG Meteorologist, and Mr. Steve Stich, NASA Entry Flight Director, were honored with a JSC Team Award for work on the STS-116 mission. The award stated: *“In recognition of outstanding real time coordination of weather assets for all three Continental United States (CONUS) landing sites leading to a safe landing at the Kennedy Space Center.”* This award was presented Monday, January 22, 2007 at the post-mission STS-116 Awards Ceremony and Astronaut mission video presentation.

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

NOAA ALL HAZARDS RADIO

Huntsville Partners with Local Media on Several NWR Outreach Events. WFO Huntsville WCM Tim Troutman, Forecaster Patrick Gatlin and SCEP student Daniel Lamb recently participated in six NOAA All Hazards Weather Radio programming events with the local NBC TV affiliate, WAFF-TV. Since WAFF-TV began an NWR programming campaign with Midland Radio Corporation in July, around 10,000 weather radios have been sold in the north Alabama area. Members of WAFF-TV and WFO HUN programmed around 5,000 of these weather radios at the events that were recently



scheduled in Southern Family Supermarket locations across north Alabama. Congratulations, WFO Huntsville, on the success of this NWR Campaign!

Amarillo and Local Officials Hold Dedication Ceremony For Perryton NWR Transmitter. More than 30 local and county officials, local media, and members of WFO Amarillo were present during a dedication ceremony for the new NWR transmitter in Perryton, Texas. The ceremony was held at the Ochiltree County courthouse on Dec 5th. The new NWR transmitter (KJY-88) was recently installed on the North Plains Electric Cooperative tower. The coverage area reaches all of Ochiltree County and portions of Lipscomb, Hansford, and Roberts Counties in the Texas Panhandle, along with Texas and Beaver Counties of the Oklahoma Panhandle. WCM Steve Drillette and MIC Jose Garcia spoke on the many benefits of weather radio and thanked local officials for their attendance and persistence in obtaining a NWR transmitter. Ochiltree County Judge Ken Donahue praised the NWS and was especially grateful to North Plains Electric Cooperative for the use of their tower space.

FIRE WEATHER

Brownsville Helps Fire Dispatchers Learn Weather. WFO Brownsville SOO Kurt Van Speybrock and Forecaster Jason Straub visited the Fire Dispatch office at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge. Jason delivered a briefing/training session regarding radar precipitation estimates over Deep South Texas. The dispatch officers and station managers were impressed and thankful to have the new data at their disposal. Additional discussion topics included observations and quality control, and the possibility of NWS meteorologists and staff observing one of the USFWS prescribed burns.

STORM READY®

StormReady Trifecta in Middle Tennessee. In just a one-week period, WFO Nashville's StormReady Advisory Board recently recognized three new StormReady counties. These included Bedford, Rutherford, and Cheatham Counties in middle Tennessee. MIC Larry Vannozzi made brief award presentations to the County Mayors and Emergency Management Agency Directors during each county's monthly county commissioners meeting.

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

SERFC Develops FEMA Flood Course. Several folks at the Southeast River Forecast Center (SERFC), including Mark Fuchs, Jeff Dobur, Joshua Palmer, and John Feldt, have completed work on an inland-flood training course for FEMA. John Feldt and Mark Fuchs recently conducted a one-hour trial session for over 30 emergency managers at the TPC. Two additional training sessions are scheduled at TPC in late January and early February. These three sessions are being conducted remotely via "GoToMeeting" software. A full scale training session is set to be conducted at the Georgia Law Enforcement Academy during the last week of January.

In the promotional flyer that was produced for the National Hurricane Conference, the course is described as follows:

"The Hurricane Readiness for Inland Communities course is a one-day course based on the recently developed field course G-363 Hurricane Readiness for Coastal Communities. This course differs from the latter by specifically discussing the inland hazards from tropical systems, highlighting the inland flood threat. This course also covers the tools that help analyze these threats, the planning decisions pre-season, pre-landfall, and post storm, with the concept of using a Hurricane Readiness Checklist.



Instructors involved in this would be from the NWS and experienced emergency managers. This course is aimed at the local inland emergency manager to build his capacity to prepare and respond to tropical systems.”

Congratulations to the staff at the SERFC for developing this training for our partners!
WFO Miami Hosts Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers. On Wednesday, December 13, 2006, WFO Miami MIC Rusty Pfof led a tour of the WFO and TPC in Miami for Andrew Geller, Luis Alejandro and Trent Ferguson of the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Jacksonville District is responsible for the management of water resources of Lake Okeechobee as well as the aging Herbert Hoover Dike that surrounds the lake. In 2004 and 2005, WFO Miami worked closely with the Jacksonville District to provide deterministic SLOSH model run interpretations and detail for tropical cyclones that affected the lake, including hurricanes Charley, Frances, Jeanne, Katrina, and Wilma. As reinforcements efforts with the Hoover Dike move forward in the next several years, more coordination and data exchange will be needed, not only with tropical cyclones, but with heavy rain events and extended dry periods as well.

ABRFC GFE QPF/Contingency Forecasts Implementation. ABRFC recently began operational use of WFO GFE gridded QPF to generate RFC contingency forecasts. ABRFC is currently one of two RFCs in the NWS with an ATAN to use GFE in AWIPS.

These contingency QPF forecasts are provided by individual WFOs when they require ABRFC to produce “what-if” river forecast scenarios. The need for contingency forecasts may occur for situations when the official QPF has a high degree of uncertainty; when rivers are up and WFOs wish to know the sensitivity of forecast river levels to various amounts of forecast rainfall; or for other situations that may arise. The contingency QPF grid will not overwrite or otherwise interfere with the official WFO QPF grid. Use of the contingency QPF field has allowed ABRFC to automate the QPF ingest process from the GFE grid to the NWSRFS river forecast model, and will allow better coordination of QPF between WFOs and RFCs. Southern Region WFOs Norman, Tulsa, Little Rock, and Amarillo are participating in this method of producing contingency forecasts.

WGRFC-Area Lake Levels Rising. The upper level pattern this fall and early winter has provided for much needed rainfall across eastern Texas. Some locations have received 30 to 40 inches of rain since Oct 1st. While east Texas is the wetter side of the state, this amount is in excess of 200% of normal. One of the more obvious benefits to this excessive rain is the recovery of Toledo Bend Reservoir. On October 4th, 2006, the lake recorded a pool level of 161.7 feet. As of January 20th, the lake had risen to 171.5 feet - a 10 foot rise. This is good news for individuals with recreational and water supply interests at Toledo Bend. For more information about this drought to abundance in east Texas, check out the full article at: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/wgrfc/droughtupdate.php>

No Drought In Lake Charles Area! In the later half of October 2006, WFO LCH experienced a series of rainfall events which resulted in significant flooding. By the end of the month, most of their co-op observers reported totals that were 450% to nearly 700% above normal. Not surprisingly, a few rivers exceeded their flood of records with many reaching within the top 10 highest floods stages on record during this period. For more information about this historic October in the LCH area, check the following link: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lch//2006OCT/2006OCT-Rainfall.php>.



SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

SMG Leads Weather Training Class. The NWS Spaceflight Meteorology Group conducted weather training for seven NASA personnel from the Training Division of Mission Operations Directorate on November 29, 2006. The half-day training session focused on the role of SMG in space shuttle mission operations emphasizing the Ascent and Entry phases of shuttle missions.

The seven attendees all had aerospace engineering degrees and will be responsible for planning and managing mission simulations to train astronauts and members of the shuttle flight control team. The SMG staff provided briefings and interactive demonstrations on weather support operations and flight rules, as well as radar, satellite, and wind data. The class was very well received as indicated by the written evaluations. Retiring SMG forecaster Wayne Baggett served as class coordinator and the following SMG personnel served as instructors: Frank Brody, Tim Oram, Doris Hood, Richard Lafosse, Tim Garner, and Brian Hoeth. ASA Tammi Barreras furnished logistic support and helped put the course materials together.

GIS Day in San Antonio. WFO Austin/San Antonio and Southern Region Headquarters Science and Technology Services Division Meteorologist Keith Stellman teamed up for San Antonio GIS Day outreach November 14th and 15th. Keith visited the WFO to demonstrate some of the latest capabilities with the RIDGE radar data and Google Earth on the 14th. He then met with other GIS partners at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) for the professionals' portion of GIS Day. Keith gave a presentation on the 15th at the students' portion of GIS Day. In addition, Keith, Senior Forecaster David Schumacher, and General Forecaster Marianne Sutton staffed a booth with further demonstrations of NWS GIS and Digital Services capabilities. GIS Day is held each year on the Wednesday of the National Geographic Society's Geography Awareness Week. Approximately 300 GIS professionals and students visited the NWS Booth.

WFO Shreveport's AWOC Achievement. On November 1st, Ed Mahoney and Brad Grant of the Warning Decision Training Branch (WDTB) visited WFO Shreveport to present an award to the WFO for being the first office in the United States to have 100% completion by the staff of the AWOC Winter Weather Track. Armando Garza (MIC) and Ken Falk (SOO) were interviewed on the techniques used to attain rapid completion of the course. In addition, the WDTB is exploring concepts to incorporate into a possible future module on training best practices.



Disk Image for Weather Event Simulator. The Warning Decision Training Branch expects to ship the disk image and installation instructions for the new WES machines by January 5th. Build 7.2 of the



WES will subsequently be released on January 12th. Note the office training manager should complete the short overview of WES7.1 entitled "WES 7.1 Overview Training" that is posted in the Learning Management System prior to the installation of the disk image on your new WES machine. After loading the disk image and installing the test case, please follow the directions in the WES 7.1 instructions to ensure that all parts of the test case work as expected before loading any AWOC or local cases for training.

The WDTB recommends those completing the Winter Weather AWOC Track should use the old WES machine, if possible. Remember AWIPS requires you to build a new localization for every build, so you will have to create a new localization each WES build, too. (Sounds like a good reason to wait for the WES 7.2 release prior to installing any cases on the new machine!)

Disk Image for Local Modeling Machine. Bernard Meisner will be shipping the disk image for the local modeling machine the week of January 22nd to the 19 offices that received one of the HP xw6200 machines for that purpose. You should load the initial version of the SOO/STRC WRF Environmental Modeling System ("Workstation WRF") from the DVD-ROM Bob Rozumalski distributed to all offices last fall, then upgrade to the latest version (currently 2.1.2.2d) following his instructions.

After distributing the disk images Bernard intends to convene the Local Modeling Regional Resource Team so they can develop Best Practices, recommended configurations for the Workstation WRF, and also a process for potential collaboration among offices to generate a high resolution, subregional ensemble prediction system.

Annual Review of NCEP Operational Forecast Systems. Rusty Billingsley and Bernard Meisner attended the NCEP Annual Review. Copies of all the presentations made at the review are available through the NCEP Environmental Modeling Center's Web site <<http://wwwt.emc.ncep.noaa.gov/>>.

One highlight of the review included the announcement of some critical changes made to the North American Mesoscale (NAM) model in mid-December to correct the observed overdevelopment of mid-latitude cyclones, the exaggerated "digging" of storms too far south, and some convection (deep & shallow) triggering issues. The changes and their impacts are described in Geoff DiMego's presentation available through the Web site mentioned above.

Another highlight of the meeting was an in-depth discussion of the future configuration of the NCEP Production Suite. In response to the new Service Enhancement Program and the transition towards the new Concept of Operations, the NCEP Environmental Modeling Center has proposed substantially changing the forecast model suite. These include the transition of the Rapid Update Cycle model towards a Situational Awareness Model, the concurrent running of the global and regional models, and a greater emphasis on ensemble-based guidance products. The Real-Time Mesoscale Analysis and the eventual Analysis of Record will also be important parts of the revised production suite. More details can be found in Steve Lord's presentation available through the Web site mentioned above.

Crisis Change for the WRF-NMM. The NCEP Environmental Modeling Center implemented a crisis change to the WRF-NMM on December 19th. Details from the Technical Implementation Note (http://www.weather.gov/os/notification/tin06-92nam_crisis_chg.txt) follow:

EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 19 2006...BEGINNING WITH THE 1200 COORDINATED
UNIVERSAL TIME /UTC/ RUN...SEVERAL CRISIS CHANGES WILL BE MADE TO
THE WEATHER RESEARCH FORECAST NON-HYDROSTATIC MESOSCALE



MODEL /WRF-NMM/ RUNNING IN THE NORTH AMERICAN MESOSCALE MODEL /NAM/...THE NAM DATA ASSIMILATION SYSTEM /NDAS/...AND THE DGEX.

THESE CHANGES ARE BEING MADE TO IMPROVE MODEL PERFORMANCE.

THE CRISIS CHANGES INCLUDE:

1. THE DIVERGENCE DAMPING ROUTINE... WHICH DAMPS ALL GRAVITY-INERTIA AND EXTERNAL MODES IS CHANGED TO INCREASE DAMPING OF THE EXTERNAL MODE.
2. DURING THE NDAS... DIVERGENCE DAMPING IS INCREASED TO 5 TIMES THAT USED DURING THE 84 HR NAM FREE FORECAST.
3. NUMEROUS CHANGES ARE MADE TO CONVECTIVE PARAMETERIZATION.
4. THREE CHANGES ARE MADE TO THE CLOUD MICROPHYSICS.
5. HORIZONTAL DIFFUSION BETWEEN NEIGHBORING GRID POINTS WITH A SLOPE OF LESS THAN OR EQUAL TO 54 M / 12 KM / 9 TIMES THAT IN OPERATIONAL NAM/ IS ALLOWED.

THE COMBINED IMPACT OF THESE CHANGES HAS LED TO:

1. SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN NAM QPF SCORES.
2. A 5-10 PERCENT REDUCTION IN NAM HEIGHT... TEMPERATURE AND VECTOR WIND ROOT-MEAN-SQUARE ERRORS COMPARED TO RADIOSONDES /POSITIVE IMPACTS INCREASE WITH FORECAST RANGE/.
3. A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN THE FALSE ALARM RATE FOR TROPICAL STORMS.
4. THE NUMERICAL INSTABILITY OBSERVED OFF NEWFOUNDLAND IN OPS NAM RUNS FROM 1-4 DECEMBER WAS ELIMINATED BY THESE CHANGES.

WSR-88D in 3D. The Technology Infusion Branch (former DET) has released the GR2Analyst Software for Southern Region field offices in order to enhance situational awareness. This software provides 3-D animations of the NWS WSR-88D data. The required input is Level 2 radar data and the current source is Iowa State University. At some point, the source will change to Southern Region Headquarters once all Level 2 data is ingested and distributable from the region.

IT Web Consolidation Progress. With the deadline of June 1st for implementation of the consolidated NWS Web approaching quickly, Southern Region's Technology Infusion Branch (part of the Science and Technology Services Division) is working closely with the CIO's office and Central Region Headquarters to procure, install, and test the new configuration. Southern Region's role is to take the lead in procuring the hardware for the web farms, help prioritize the most important web pages to be load balanced, and to document the system configuration to ease the transition. Webmasters should be hearing more in the coming months about potential changes to future web page development.

PNGmaker Replaced. After one month of testing, working out bugs, and writing instructions, on Dec 20, 2006 the Southern Region made a change in the software used to generate the WFO graphical forecasts from the PNGmaker program written and supported by Scott Plischke to the NDFD version written and supported by MDL. Many months of discussions and cooperation with MDL led up to the change following the announcement that the PNGmaker software would not be compatible with AWIPS build OB7.1. The new MDL version runs at the region on one of the new backend servers and



utilizes the point-click forecast grids to produce the images. Thanks to Scott Plischke for leading the way and his years of work on PNGmaker!

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

PARTNER COORDINATION AND OUTREACH

Partner Workshops, Texas Style. WFO Austin/San Antonio hosted three Partner's workshops during the fall: October 23 in San Antonio (co-sponsored by the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG)), October 24 in Austin (co-sponsored by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)), and October 26 in Uvalde (co-sponsored by the Middle Rio Grande Development Council (MRGDC)). The theme of the workshops was "Hazardous Weather Happens", highlighting various types of severe weather the region experiences, and how various offices within the NWS collaborate to provide weather and water information for decision makers. Speakers for the workshops held in San Antonio and Austin included: William (Bill) Read, MIC, WFO Houston/Galveston; Jared Guyer, Mesoscale Forecaster, Storm Prediction Center; and Greg Shelton, Senior HAS Forecaster, West Gulf RFC. Speakers for the Uvalde workshop included WCM Larry Eblen, SOO Jon Zeitler, and Senior SH Mark Lenz. MIC Joe Arellano was the emcee for all three workshops. Senior Forecaster Mark Brundrett organized the workshops, and Senior Forecaster Clay Anderson and ASA Norma Jones provided valuable support. A special part of each workshop was a presentation on building partnerships by Roy Sedwick of the LCRA, who is also the Executive Director of the Texas Floodplain Managers' Association. Roy was recently honored as a NOAA Environmental Hero for his efforts in promoting flood safety, and he received the NWRAH Mark Trail Award as part of LCRA's effort to promote NWRAH.

The Magic School Bus Kicks up a Storm in North Alabama! The "Magic School Bus Kicks up a Storm" weather exhibit moved to the Sci-Quest Science Museum in Huntsville, Alabama in late September. WFO Huntsville partnered with Sci-Quest to provide weather education and weather safety outreach to teachers and students who will be visiting the exhibit through mid-January '07. It is expected that around 30,000 kindergarten through middle school grade students will visit the exhibit. The WFO Huntsville outreach team is expected to provide around 15,000 Owlie Skywarn booklets and thousands of cloud charts to school tours of the exhibit.

The kickoff for the exhibit occurred on September 28th with a teacher's night event. Members of the WFO Huntsville outreach team staffed the NWS exhibit and provided teachers with large and small cloud charts, Owlie Skywarn weather books, and a JetStream weather lesson plan CD locally developed by Lead Forecaster David Nadler and Journeyman Forecaster Patrick Gatlin. Sci-Quest was further designated as a StormReady Supporter at the Magic School Bus exhibit kick-off, which was touted extensively by local Huntsville media. The other big event related to the Magic School bus exhibit was a members-only night that was scheduled on September 29th. Around 750 people visited the exhibit and NWS booth at this event, with many compliments provided regarding the partnership.

WFO Little Rock Visits Arkansas Nuclear One. Eight employees from WFO Little Rock traveled to Russellville, Arkansas, on November 9th for a tour of the Arkansas Nuclear One power plant. The group learned the effects that weather can have on the plant, even in the absence of emergencies. Foremost are strong winds associated with thunderstorms and the level of the Arkansas River at Lake Dardanelle. Water from the lake is used for cooling purposes. Earlier in the year, plant personnel heard that thunderstorm winds might be strong enough to require plant shut down. Entergy Operations, Nuclear One's owner, called the WFO for advice and were told that winds would not reach the plant's



shutdown threshold. The NWS forecast proved correct. Shutting down the plant and restarting it would have cost Entergy close to \$3 million, so the WFO's forecast proved extremely valuable.

WFO Little Rock programs the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards transmitter near Russellville, and would broadcast emergency messages in the event of an accident at Nuclear One. Entergy purchased the transmitter and provides all utilities and maintenance. Earlier this year, Entergy Operations received a Mark Trail NOAA Weather Radio Award for their efforts in promoting NWR. The award is hung in the entryway of the building that all employees must pass through to get into the plant. NWS employees on the tour were MIC Renee Fair, WCM John Robinson, ITO Dan Koch, Forecasters Lance Pyle and Salvador Gutierrez, Meteorologist Intern Tabitha Bray, and Electronics Technician Gary Heifner.

Weather Day in Deep South Texas. WFO Brownsville WCM Jesus Haro, Lead Forecaster Tim Speece, and HMT Alfredo Vega traveled to Hesiquio Rodriguez Elementary School in Harlingen, Texas to participate in their "Weather Day" activities. The approximately 300 students that attended were "gifted and talented" 4th and 5th graders from 8 schools within the Harlingen school district. Jesus Haro provided a presentation to the students about the NWS mission, weather hazards in south Texas, and careers in the NWS.

WFO Shreveport participates in the 2006 Louisiana Science and Math Teacher's Association (LSTA/LMTA) Convention. WCM Mark Frazier and forecaster Bill Parker had the opportunity to meet the science teachers of Louisiana at the annual convention in Shreveport. There were approximately 1,000 science teachers present at the event during October 19-20 convention. Mark and Bill had the opportunity to promote the science of weather through educational curriculum and the Jetstream website.

The Shreveport staff presented recently developed educational curriculum at a formal training session to a capacity filled room of over 60 teachers. Several hundred more teachers signed up to receive the curriculum at the booth sponsored by the office. The topics included The Atmosphere, Thunderstorms, and Weather Forecasting. The important key to the curriculum according to the teachers was the correlation between the lesson material and the Grade Level Expectations of the State Comprehensive Curriculum. The response from all of the teachers was overwhelmingly positive. The estimated total attendance at the two day event was over 2,000 teachers.



Bill Parker, Forecaster, WFO Shreveport, LA



Mark Frazier, WCM, WFO Shreveport, LA



WFO Brownsville, TX offered lots of tours. Several office tours were provided during the month by many of the office staff. Many topics were covered with each tour and group. The NWS mission was covered and the importance of the computers in helping with the job. Some students were provided with a real-time weather briefing and explanation of computer systems in the operations area, and insight was given into the role of the ITO in NWS operations. Students were provided presentations about the NWS mission, weather hazards in south Texas, and careers in the NWS

WFO Brownsville MIC Andy Patrick gave a presentation on Numerical Weather Prediction and Modeling to the Environmental Engineering Dept. at Texas A&M University in Kingsville. Andy explained the equations and variables involved in NWP. He also discussed the principles on model initialization and the forecast process. He concluded by discussing the various global and mesoscale models, including the WRF. Approximately 40 students and faculty attended this lecture.

WFO Brownsville SOO Kurt Van Speybroeck and Forecaster Jason Straub visited the Fire Dispatch office at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge. Jason delivered a briefing/training session regarding radar precipitation estimates over Deep South Texas. The dispatch officers and station managers were impressed and thankful to have the new data at their disposal. Additional discussion topics included observations and quality control, and the possibility of NWS meteorologists and staff observing one of the USFWS prescribed burns.

SMG Helps with NWA Teachers Workshop. The NWS SMG in Houston, TX participated in the National Weather Association's (NWA) Northern Ohio Teachers' Weather Summit at Kent State University on October 15, 2006. MIC Frank Brody and TDU Meteorologist Brian Hoeth led an instructional session entitled "*Air Masses, Fronts, and Clouds : The "nuts and bolts" of day-to-day weather analysis and forecasting*". This was one of eight weather topics covered by NWA meteorologists. About 30 science teachers from all grade levels attended the workshop. The Weather Summit website: http://www.nwas.org/committees/ed_comm/summit

Upward Bound Students Visit WFO San Juan. WFO San Juan was visited by a group of 50 high school students attached to the Inter American University, Interior Puerto Rico campus of Barranquitas town. These high school students, mostly from low-income families toured WFO San Juan during a two hour period. Forecasters Orlando Bermudez and Ernesto Morales led the tour and described career opportunities within NOAA and NWS.

University of Puerto Rico Group visits WFO San Juan. Dr. Eva Edwards, director of the Special Academic Services Program at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, visited the WFO with 21 students of her English class "Computer - Assisted Academic English Writing". The students, mostly from low income families and some with special needs, participated in the tour led by Senior Forecaster Walter Snell. The class is focused in learning through a subject matter, usually science related, and Walter discussed tidal bores, red tide, low water crossing, global warming and tsunamis.

WFO San Juan visits the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez Campus AMS Local Chapter. On October 13, WFO SJU WCM Rafael Mojica witnessed the first initiation ceremony of the AMS Local Student Chapter at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus. Sixty five atmospheric science program students, from freshmen to seniors participated of this initiation. In attendance were various faculty members which were instrumental along with WFO SJU team leaders in the establishment of the first Atmospheric Science Program at a local university.



University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez Professor Briefs WFO on Rainfall Induced Landslides. On September August 29, Dr. Miguel Pando, Assistant Professor at UPR Mayaguez Department of Civil Engineering, visited the WFO to brief the staff on his research on Rainfall Induced landslides in Puerto Rico Real-time warning system feasibility study. The Project funded by NASA GSFC utilizes satellite based information and the application focus is Central America and Caribbean area. The project presents an opportunity for WFO forecasters to become involved in research activities with operational application.

WFO San Juan reports the office had an awesome CFC campaign this year. The local 2007 CFC campaign closed with an outstanding participation. Over the last 11 years the office has been awarded Gold, Silver, and Bronze awards for their participation.

WFO San Juan and AMS Local Chapter conduct Open House. On November 3, WFO San Juan staff and members of the AMS Local Chapter conducted an open house activity at the WFO to attract new members to the local chapter. Prospective members and visitors had a chance to see the evening upper air balloon release and join Ms. Ada Monzon, Chief Meteorologist for Univision on her presentation “Hurricane Season of 2006, What Happened?” Approximately 25 attendees were present for the event including WFO and AMS chapter members.

WFO San Juan Visits Fort Buchanan Antilles Middle School. On November 7, WFO San Juan Senior Forecaster Brian Seeley visited the Antilles Middle School and spoke to 160 sixth graders on factors that influence local climate and compared the Puerto Rico climate with Egypt since they were studying Egyptian civilization in social studies and how they survived floods and natural disasters.

WFO San Juan Participates of Second Environmental Congress in Barranquitas City. On November 8, WFO San Juan MIC participated as guest speaker of the Second Environmental Congress sponsored by the Inter American University and the Barranquitas City local government. The activity was held at the Performing Arts Center, where Israel addressed 200 elementary and middle school students on NOAA’s NWS mission, operations, tropical cyclones and tsunamis, followed by a career opportunities questions and answer period.

Boys Scouts visit WFO San Juan. On November 18, a group of Boys Scouts visited the WFO. Senior Forecaster Hector Rivera led the tour for 10 scouts during the morning as part of their Weather Merit Badge requirements.

WFO San Juan Briefs Secretary of Education and Puerto Rico Emergency Management Area Directors on NWR Distribution. On November 9, MIC Israel Matos met with Puerto Rico’s Secretary of Education to discuss the initiative of the NOAA "All Hazards" Radio for public schools and the strategy to distribute them. On November 30, WCM Rafael Mojica briefed the Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency Area Directors on the NWR distribution strategy for Puerto Rico, and provided them with a “train the trainer” power point guide in Spanish on how to setup the radios. The Emergency Management Agency will be distributing the NWR units during the third week of January 2007 to all local schools.

WFO Amarillo Hosts 6th Annual Spotter and Cooperative Observer Appreciation Day. The Amarillo National Weather Service held its 6th annual Spotter & Cooperative Observer Appreciation Day on Saturday, August 12th from 11 AM to 2 PM at the NWS Office. Approximately 130 people attended the event which included spotters, observers, emergency managers, various NWS partners, and Amarillo NWS staff. The appreciation day is just one way WFO Amarillo thanks all of their volunteers,



partners, and valued customers for their role in meeting the NWS mission of protecting life and property.



MIC Jose Garcia visits with the cooks



Amarillo MIC Jose Garcia serves drinks

WFO Tallahassee WCM Bob Goree attended the Emergency Management Association of Georgia annual conference and discussed HazCollect during the general session in November. During November MIC Paul Duval attended Georgia Area 2 Emergency Managers Meeting at the Grady County Agricultural Center. There were 24 in attendance was 24. Paul provided an update on the hurricane season and the severe weather season, with some background regarding El Nino and expected threats this winter as a result.

WFO Little Rock had a successful year with CFC contributions. Renée R. Fair, MIC, named forecaster Nelson de Villiers as campaign coordinator, along with ASA, Kelly Meeks as a key worker. This is the first year for Kelly to be involved with the CFC as a key worker; while Nelson has been the coordinator for several years already. The office achieved a 43½ percent increase from last year's collection. Great job WFO Little Rock.

WFO Little Rock SOO Chris Buonanno made a presentation to over twenty pilots of the Little Rock squadron of the Arkansas Civil Air Patrol on November 6, 2006. Chris gave a presentation concerning thunderstorms, and answered many other questions pertaining to aviation weather. Chris Buonanno and Steve Bays, Service Hydrologist were invited speakers at a conference titled "Arkansas Water: Preparing Local Leaders for Water Challenges", which was held on November 17, 2006 in Ferndale Arkansas. Chris and Steve provided detailed descriptions of the forecasts that are produced by a local National Weather Service Office, and also presented an outlook for the winter weather season in Arkansas. Over 150 people from local governments, universities, and other organizations attended the conference.

WFO Midland staff joined forces with members of the CBS 7 news team to help Habitat for Humanity build houses for people in need on November 11, 2006. This project was designed as a way to build ties with our partners, as well as the community. The office developed a partnership with CBS 7's Chief Meteorologist, Greg Morgan, and then invited other partners, including the local amateur radio club, local law enforcement agencies, and other news agencies, to join us.

Despite a chilly start to the morning and a flu outbreak amongst the CBS crew, we had a reasonably good turnout with nine volunteers from the NWS/CBS 7 team. Temperatures warmed throughout the



day to a very pleasant high in the mid 60s with sun and only light winds. A majority of the NWS volunteers painted the exteriors of two houses, getting the majority of the painting done. The executive director of the Midland chapter of Habitat for Humanity, Alynda Best, stopped by the building site that afternoon and “couldn’t believe the houses had paint on them.” Another group of NWS/CBS 7 volunteers worked in a third house installing supports for cabinetry.

Though the houses the NWS/CBS 7 team worked on were a long way from being finished, on December 4, 2006, another Habitat for Humanity house in the same area was blessed and dedicated.



From left to right: Greg Morgan (CBS 7), Wayne Patterson (NWS MAF), Rebecca Gould (MAF), Eddie Brite (MAF), Beverly Martin (MAF), Greg Jackson (MAF), Dustin Jackson (Son of Greg Jackson), David Shuck (Rebecca Gould’s grandfather)

SMG in Houston Gives Tour of JSC. SMG hosted a tour of the Johnson Space Center Mission Control and the SMG Weather Office on November 8, 2006 for the Youth Advisory Committee Mentoring Program from Pasadena, TX for over thirty mentors and students. They were greeted in the Apollo-era Mission Control Center by astronaut Alvin Drew, who spoke about the importance of having mentors even at the height of your career. SMG meteorologists Frank Brody and Doris Hood then led the group on tours of the SMG weather office, the Space Shuttle Control Center, and the Space Station Control Center. ASA Tammi Barreras made up a NASA and NWS souvenir bag for each attendee.

WFO Birmingham and Huntsville Run Simultaneous CFC Campaigns. This year WFOs Birmingham and Huntsville combined forces to help those less fortunate. During this year’s Combined Federal Campaign the Birmingham office led by lead Forecaster Faith Borden; and the Huntsville office, led by ASA Paula Bolline, had a competition to see which office could raise the most money. Together, both offices raised over \$9000.00 with Huntsville narrowly beating out Birmingham with \$4629 to Birmingham’s \$4484. Both offices worked very hard and had a high percent of office participation. For Huntsville’s hard work they received a chicken tender lunch provided by the local Zaxby’s franchise. For Birmingham’s efforts Borden provided a pancake breakfast with the help from DAPM David Wilfing and Forecaster Krissy Scotten.

Ms. Bolline also used her first hand knowledge about CFC to help kickoff the Tennessee Valley Campaign by being honored as one of the keynote speakers. Transferring in June from the New Orleans NWS Weather Forecast Office, she was asked to speak to the 500 employees from 30 different federal agencies and 80 local CFC Charities that attended the kickoff held on 28 September 2006, at the



NASA MSFC in Huntsville. She talked about her first hand knowledge of the many CFC charities that volunteered assistance to her and her fellow NWS coworkers following Hurricane Katrina, and what still continues there today. Congratulations to both offices for a very successful campaign!

WFO Tallahassee Reaches Top 10 in the Combine Federal Campaign

WFO TAE staff pledged a total of over \$5100.00 to the 2006-2007 Combined Federal Campaign of the Florida Big Bend. This placed the WFO in the Top Ten of all (68) federal agencies in the Big Bend in terms of per capita giving for the third year in a row.

Iraq Combat Weather Team. For the second year in a row, WFO TAE sent boxes of Christmas gifts to our troops in Iraq. This year, a contributions were sent to the 332nd Combat Weather Team (Balad) consisting of Christmas and other items to the team, as well as, another box of toys and school supplies for "Operation Kindness Explosion", a program for local children sponsored by the Team.

Tallahassee Christmas Connection. For the third year in a row, the WFO staff supported a local family for Christmas, as part of a local program known as "The Christmas Connection". The WFO staff sponsored a single mother and 3 year old daughter, and contributed items for a Christmas dinner, other non-perishable food items, and toys for the young girl. Forecaster Mike Jamski took the initiative to locate an agency that provided a complete refurbished computer, monitor and printer system for the young mother, which will enable her to work some at home and mitigate the costs of child care. WFO IT Doug Gaer found licensing to upgrade the computer's software and checked out the system to ensure it was working at peak efficiency.

High School/High Tech Student Sponsorship. This past fall, WFO TAE participated in a NOAA-sponsored program known as "High School/High Tech, in which a bright, motivated high school student with a disability has an opportunity to "shadow" and observe the functions of an office or agency involved in an activity in which the student has expressed an interest as a possible career choice. The student spent 4 hours one day a week in the evenings after school observing the activities of the WFO staff, and completing a training plan developed by the SOO, which acquainted the individual with the job and responsibilities of an operational forecast office.

WFO Amarillo and Local Officials Hold Dedication Ceremony For the Perryton NWR

Transmitter. More than 30 local and county officials, local media, and the NWS were present during a dedication ceremony for the new NWR transmitter in Perryton. The Ceremony was held at the Ochiltree County courthouse on Dec 5th. The new NWR transmitter (KJY-88) was recently installed on the North Plains Electric Cooperative tower. The coverage area reaches all of Ochiltree County and portions of Lipscomb, Hansford, and Roberts Counties in the Texas Panhandle, along with Texas and Beaver Counties of the Oklahoma Panhandle. WCM Steve Drillette and MIC Jose Garcia spoke on the many benefits of weather radio and thanked local officials for their attendance and persistence in obtaining a NWR transmitter. Ochiltree County Judge Ken Donahue praised the NWS and was especially grateful to North Plains Electric Cooperative for the use of their tower space.





MIC Jose Garcia addresses local officials on the benefits of NWR at a dedication ceremony on December 5, 2006.

WFO Amarillo Participates in Local “Night of Lights” Parade. Several WFO Amarillo staff and family members participated in the Amarillo Center City “Night of Lights” parade. The annual parade is held the first Friday in December. Hundreds of locals were on hand as more than 60 floats and other parade entries paraded down the streets of downtown Amarillo. Although HMT’s Tabatha Tripp and Steve Bilodeau organized the event, several staff members assisted in the decorating the float and participating in the parade itself.



Left to right: Met Intern Chris Kimble (left) and ITO Scott Plischke (right) ride the Amarillo NWS float during the annual Center City “Night of Lights” parade in downtown Amarillo.



WFO Albuquerque and Center Weather Service Unit Albuquerque teamed up to help local homeless people on October 28th for *USA WEEKEND Magazine's* 16th annual Make a Difference Day. To increase the impact of the community service effort, the two offices partnered with the Federal Aviation Administration's Air Route Traffic Control Center and Air Traffic Control Tower in Albuquerque, as well as Lockheed Martin's Automated Flight Service Station. The five offices held a group collection drive in October that netted about 24 cases of toiletries, towels, bed linens, and clothes for the Albuquerque Opportunity Center for the Homeless, which is New Mexico's largest year-round shelter. Donations were delivered to the shelter around October 28th, Make a Difference Day, which is touted as the biggest national day for helping others. The group project helped meet the material needs of homeless people striving to obtain stable housing, and exercised the teamwork of the National Aerospace System partners in a new and creative way.



Forecaster Intern, Jeff Michalski, prepares to load donations collected by WFO ABQ and the Automated Flight Service Station for the Albuquerque Opportunity Center for the Homeless. The Albuquerque CWSU and FAA offices delivered another 16 boxes of donations to the shelter around Make a Difference Day.

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS OCT/NOV/DEC-2006 and JAN 2007				
Southern Region Within Region Actions				
Name	To (Office)	Action	Leaving Position	Date
Matthew Moreland	Lead Forecaster	Promotion	Forecaster	December 2006
Joseph Camp	Lead Forecaster	Promotion	Forecaster	January 2007
Melissa Hurlbut	Forecaster	Promotion	Intern	January 2007
Michael Scotten	Lead Forecaster	Promotion	Forecaster	January 2007
Evelyn Rivera-Acevedo	WFO Miami	New Hire SCEP	Intern	January 2007
Steven Nelson	WFO Atlanta	Promotion	SOO	January 2007



**SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS
OCT/NOV/DEC – 2006 and JAN 2007**

Southern Region Gains

Name	To (Office)	Action	Position	Date
Douglas Rhue	SRH SOD	New Hire	IT Spec	October 2006
Terry Weaber	SRH SOD	New Hire	Reg Sys Spec	October 2006
Stephen Wilkinson	WFO Jackson	Reassign	WCM	November 2006
Benjamin Shoemake	WFO Albuquerque	Select from CR	Intern	November 2006
Jatasey A. Gibbs	WFO Tallahassee	Select from PR	Forecaster	November 2006
David A. Ramirez	RFC Slidell	New Hire	Hydrologist	November 2006
Joanne C. Culin	WFO Jackson	New Hire SCEP	Intern	November 2006
Kimberly Hoepfner	WFO San Angelo	New Hire	Intern	November 2006
Jorge A. Negrete	WFO New Braunfels	New Hire	Fac Eng Tech	November 2006
Jessica Schultz	WFO Fort Worth	Reassign	Forecaster	January 2007
Britt Westergard	RFC Tulsa	Select from CR	Hydrologist	January 2007
Gregory Harris	CWSU Albuquerque	New Hire	Meteorologist	January 2007
Karen L. Dungan	WFO Jackson	New Hire	ASA	January 2007
Stephen B. Konarik	WFO Atlanta	New Hire	Intern	January 2007

**SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS
OCT/NOV/DEC – 2006 and JAN 2007**

Southern Region Losses/Retirements

Name	From (Office)	Action	Leaving Position	Date
James Jackson	CWSU Houston	Resignation	Forecaster	October 2006
Suzanne Cawn	WFO Miami	Retirement	DAPM	October 2006
Patricia Schmidt	WFO Key West	Retirement	ITO	October 2006
Stephen Allen	WFO Houston	Retirement	SOO	November 2006
Dallas R. Lundy	WFO Tallahassee	Retirement	HMT	December 2006
Blaise Merchlewitz	WFO Memphis	Retirement	Svc Hydro	December 2006
Patricia Peden	WFO Jackson	Retirement	ASA	December 2006
Eddie G. Brite	WFO Midland	Retirement	OPL	December 2006
Michael Mitchell	WFO Birmingham	Retirement	Elec Tech	January 2007
Stephen K. Rinard	WFO Lake Charles	Retirement	MIC	January 2007
Jerry Nunn	RFC Fort Worth	Retirement	HIC	January 2007
Marion Kuykendall	WFO Shreveport	Retirement	DAPM	January 2007
George W. Baggett	SMG Houston	Retirement	Lead Forecaster	January 2007
Gary M. Beeley	WFO Atlanta	Retirement	SOO	January 2007

