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NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
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SOUTHERN TOPICS

Working Together To Save Lives

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR

In CWWD's section of this month's *Topics* is a description of effective actions WFO Albuquerque took during a recent wildfire episode. Timely interaction between forecasters and the Albuquerque fire department was crucial in saving property, certainly, and perhaps lives as well. On this page in recent months I've called attention to many such examples of how National Weather Service Southern Region offices have worked with partners to better serve our customers. Day-after-day, NWS employees do many things that seem routine, but which have a pronounced impact on those who pay our salaries - the American public.

NWS field offices are on the front-line providing products and services the public can depend upon when they're needed most. People I talk with - emergency managers, media, air route traffic controllers, river authorities, state, local and other federal government officials, briefers at flight service stations, and others - all tell us the same thing ... that they value what we do because they know the local office understands the weather and water resource needs of customers. We demonstrate every day that we know the impact of local conditions on evolving weather and hydrologic processes, and we convey our products and services in a professional and friendly manner. This message echoes as I travel all parts of the region.

The respect enjoyed by the National Weather Service throughout the nation is testimony to hard work on the part of all offices, and that includes the outstanding teamwork among offices and with national centers. The daily contacts with our partners and customers have created bonds of trust and appreciation that are fundamental to supporting our mission and our future. It can be trying during busy times to address the needs of partners and customers on the phone or face-to-face, but that professional and scientific expert response is appreciated greatly and valued highly. Moreover, it can save lives and property.

We have emerged from a very busy spring with record breaking tornado outbreaks and rainstorms, and now we enter the hurricane season. At the same time, parts of the region continue to struggle with drought conditions. The weather never rests in the Southern Region. We live and work in the most weather-active part of the nation, if not the world. It's not coincidental that the public we serve is weather savvy and expects much from us. Based on feedback we receive our partners and customers are telling us we're performing admirably in meeting their standards. On their behalf I want to extend thanks and congratulations to each of you for your hard work and dedication.

IFPS

IFPS OPERATIONAL READINESS DEMONSTRATION UNDERWAY. As this is written we're half-way through the Operational Readiness Demonstration (ORD), which ends July 15. The ORD is a nationwide assessment of our ability to conduct routine forecast operations using IFPS. All SR offices are participating, but ten have been identified as ORD control sites, and are being monitored more closely to assess their efficiency during the demonstration.

Significantly, coinciding with ORD, and as part of the National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD), a link to experimental forecast images (http://weather.gov/forecasts/graphical/) has now been added to the homepage of the NWS Internet Web site. The images are mosaics of the local office forecast databases, collected on a central server. The site also provides information about the format and content of the databases, as well as links to both the formal product description document (PDD) and a user feedback form. The latter is important to guide both future database content and any products derived from the database. The quality of the NDFD mosaic reflects many months of work on the part of forecasters and IFPS leaders at all offices, as well as their skill in coordination among offices. It's obvious that all the hard work is paying off, and we congratulate all who have been involved in reaching this significant milestone.

NEW IFPS TELETRAINING. As an outgrowth of this year's Interactive Forecast Preparation System (IFPS) Methodology Workshops, the Tropical Prediction Center SOO, Rick Knabb, has developed a teletraining session describing how to utilize the TPC's gridded TCM product in IFPS. The gridded TCM product is a graphical representation of the forecast wind radii the TPC issues in their Tropical Cyclone Forecast/Advisory products available as AWIPS headers MIATCMAT[1-5]. The intent of Rick's teletraining, entitled: "*Populating WFO Wind Grids Using Forecast Guidance from the Tropical Prediction Center*" is to provide forecasters with guidelines for populating their IFPS/NDFD (National Digitized Forecast Database) wind grids whenever tropical cyclones affect their areas of responsibility. Specific training objectives for the one-hour teletraining sessions are:

- Understand the uncertainties in TCM forecasts and limitations of four-quadrant wind radii;
- Understand the current methodology for populating IFPS/GFE wind grids containing a tropical cyclone;
- Learn from examples using gridded TCM as guidance; and
- Understand the effects of temporal interpolation on gridded TCM in the Graphical Forecast Editor.

Planned dates and times (EDT) for the training sessions are:

Friday	July 11	10 a.m
Wednesday	July 16	3 p.m
Friday	July 18	9 a.m.
Monday	July 21	11 a.m
Tuesday	July 22	10 a.m.
Wednesday	July 23	1 p.m
Thursday	July 24	9 a.m
Tuesday	July 29	10 a.m.
Wednesday	July 30	11 a.m

Offices can register for these sessions by sending an e-mail to brian.motta@noaa.gov. Note that WFOs and RFCs with responsibility away from the immediate coast are encouraged to participate in this training since the track, intensity and wind radii information may also affect their forecasts.

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

NEW SUPPORT ROLE FOR THE SMG. The Spaceflight Meteorology Group recently provided a new type of support to NASA for Columbia accident investigation. The SMG was asked to provide weather support for outdoor tests done as part of the foam impact investigation. Within minutes of being briefed on what was needed, the SMG was relaying to investigators information on a severe thunderstorm watch issued for south central Texas. The outdoor testing operations were suspended for that day. Close coordination continued until the initial test was concluded on June 6. The SMG will continue to be involved until tests are concluded the middle of this month.

KUDOS TO WFO ALBUQUERQUE. It has been an active spring and summer so far for WFO Albuquerque. Forecasters have been challenged by many days with severe storms in the Plains, concurrent with numerous fire weather spot requests. For two consecutive days in late June they dealt with fires near the Rio Grande while also handling a half dozen other wildfires in their warning area. At the same time forecasters were dealing with severe weather over the eastern plains for a five- to six-hour period. MIC Charlie Liles provided this recap of the second day of fires in the Albuquerque area.

> For the second consecutive day, fire erupted along the Rio Grande in Albuquerque, adjacent to a half dozen neighborhoods and a new shopping center. Unlike the fire the day before, this one was set [arson] at 8:30 p.m. and was out of control within minutes. It was too late in the day to bring in air support. The fire department began gathering resources and ordered evacuations of neighborhoods. Over 100 houses were within a half-mile of the blaze. The WFO was called for a briefing. Even though the winds were only 5-10 mph at the time, our forecasters let them know a cold front would be surging through the canyons from the east shortly after midnight, producing strong gusts and a wind shift. The City of Albuquerque put abundant resources into place to be ready for the weather change. During the night there were additional contacts between the fire department and WFO to confirm the forecast was on track.
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> The experienced Albuquerque forecasters used all available data, including those from the wind profiler at Tucumcari on the east side of the mountains, to provide successful forecasts. Shortly after midnight, east winds broke through the canyons and hit the fire. The fire blew up quickly, as expected, but the fire fighters were well prepared and were able to contain it. The next morning mop-up operations were in place, and there were a lot of relieved faces as no homes were lost.

Congratulations on a great job of coordination and forecasting, Albuquerque.

CWSU PARTICIPATES IN MIDDLE SCHOOL WEATHER EXPO. On May 28 CWSU Miami MIC Stan Holland participated in Weather Expo 2003 at Richmond Heights Middle High School. This exposition was co-sponsored by the Weather Channel and the American Red Cross. Approximately 500 students attended the event which included a competition to see which team could build the most "hurricane resistant" house using cans and straws. The model houses were then subjected to wind from a leaf blower to simulate hurricane winds. Miami CWSU had a free-standing exhibit and so did Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, The American Red Cross and The Weather Channel. All the exhibitors gave out brochures and information on hurricane preparedness and awareness.

MEMPHIS OFFICES TEAM UP FOR OUTREACH. On June 18, WFO Memphis WCM Scott Cordero and CWSU MIC Doug Boyette traveled to the University of Memphis to provide a presentation for the Aviation Studies course. A group of mid- south area teachers, ranging in grade levels from elementary through high school are students in the course. The Aviation Studies group is a continuing education course that allows teachers to receive credits towards advanced degrees. The talk went well as the participants were quite interested in the subject matter and asked many questions. The course instructor was happy to have the National Weather Service visit and talk about the NWS and specifically our aviation program. The class field trip to the local FAA Air Route Traffic Control Center was canceled this year due to security concerns.

AVIATION WEATHER SAFETY SEMINAR IN TULSA. On May 27, WFO Tulsa DAPM Mike Teague and SOO Steve Amburn participated in the two-hour safety seminar for pilots, sponsored by the Tulsa Riverside Tower and the Tulsa Airport Authority. The safety seminar is biannual and stresses safety issues and concerns such as runway incursions, airport plans and policies, and weather. Mike presented information on thunderstorms and aviation safety, explaining observational systems such as the WSR-88D network, NWS and FAA ALDARS/NLDN lightning detection systems, and the ASOS surface observing network. Mike also discussed convective low level windshear detection and safety. Steve presented information on the changes in TAF coding policies over the last year, and how those policies will affect thunderstorm forecasts (or lack thereof) in TAFs. The safety seminar was attended by nearly 100 pilots, instructors and FAA personnel.

WFO ATLANTA RECEIVES FIRST QUARTER SR AVIATION SERVICES AWARD. WFO Atlanta earned the 2003 First Quarter Southern Region Aviation Services Excellence Award for their TAF accuracy, aviation discussion products, outreach efforts, and strong program leadership. The office will have its name inscribed on the SR Aviation Services Excellence Award trophy. SR has four aviation trophies, one for each quarter. The trophy for each respective quarter remains at the receiving office for at least one year. In this case WFO Atlanta will hold the First Quarter trophy until the 2004 first quarter recipient is announced.

WFO Atlanta was a top SR performer in TAF accuracy, exceeding the national performance goals for IFR POD and FAR. In addition to forecaster skill, the use of the aviation forecast verification software, Aviation Verify, has provided insight on improving aviation forecasts by identifying forecast biases. Led by aviation program leader Von Woods, the WFO began issuing a daily aviation area forecast discussion at 6:00 a.m. This aviation section, appended to the AFD product, has provided important information to the staff at CWSU Atlanta as they open their station each morning. It has improved the quality of CWSU Atlanta's early morning briefings.

The office also held a "Meet the Customers" workshop in which aviation community members discussed their weather information needs with WFO staff. Participants said this was one of the most enlightening workshops the WFO has ever conducted. Forecast practices have improved as a result. Congratulations to Von, MIC Lans Rothfusz, and the entire WFO Atlanta aviation team.

WFO BIRMINGHAM AVIATION OUTREACH CONTINUES. Last month WFO Birmingham aviation program leader Jason Wright met with Billy Hattaway, safety program manager at the Birmingham Flight Standards District office(FSDO). They discussed several ways in which the WFO's local aviation outreach program can interact successfully with current flight safety programs being offered by the FSDO. Both agreed to work toward a successful working relationship between each individual's office.

WFO MORRISTOWN CONTINUES EXCELLENT FIRE WEATHER SERVICES. Last month Jerry McDuffie and David Hotz attended the biannual interagency forestry meeting at the Shelbyville, Tennessee Department of Agriculture and Forestry training facility. John Cohen and Mike Murphy from WFO Nashville also attended. The Tennessee Department of Forestry, the Cherokee National Forecast and the Great Smoky Mountain National Park participated as well. Discussion topics included outlooks of temperature and rainfall for the next several months, fire weather verification, state RAWS deployment, NFDRS and the red flag criteria. The next biannual interagency forestry meeting is set for November at WFO Morristown.

WFO MIAMI HURRICANE PRESENTATION. Rusty Pfost, MIC WFO Miami, spoke to over 40 attendees at the June meeting of the South Florida Federal Executive Board on June 19. Rusty provided an overview of last year's hurricane season, an historical perspective on the upcoming 75th anniversary of the 1928 Okeechobee/San Felipe Hurricane (which killed more than 300 persons in Puerto Rico and more than 2,500 persons in South Florida), and an outlook for the 2003 hurricane season. He also discussed the outlook for the rest of the rainy season in South Florida.

NOAA WEATHER RADIO

Weather Radio Blazes a "Trail." Each year public outreach for NOAA Weather Radio and the All Hazards Radio is commemorated with the presentation of Mark Trail Awards in Washington, D.C. This past month the following Southern Region partners were recognized as Mark Trail Award winners:

Calcasieu Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness working with WFO Lake Charles, has developed and coordinated a means of quickly disseminating critical emergency information to the public and media in the case of a hazardous release of toxic gases or other life threatening events. Lake Charles and surrounding communities have a high concentration of petro chemical plants with dense population in close proximity. While each plant has an in-place compound warning and response system, a reliable means was needed to quickly alert the public and media of such a threat and efficiently provide updates as conditions warrant. In its Civil Emergency Message capacity, NOAA Weather Radio was ideally suited for that role.

Georgia Pacific Resins and Steve Sanders in working with WFO Jackson, took the leadership role to bring a NOAA Weather Radio transmitter to Crossett, Arkansas. For close to three years of volunteer work, Steve brought together such diverse groups as the USGS, city and county government, local industries and civic organizations to fund the transmitter at Fountain Hill, Arkansas, which was dedicated in August 2002.

Ray Resendez was nominated by WFO El Paso for placing NOAA Weather Radio receivers in almost every school and day care center in El Paso County. Ray was resourceful in securing grants and funding from a number of sources. At the present time, he continues to help the NWS with preparations to broadcast a dedicated Spanish language NOAA Weather Radio transmitter to be installed at El Paso this summer.

Medina Electric Cooperative in partnership with WFO Austin/San Antonio took advantage of the USDA Rural Utilities Service grants to correct the lack of coverage in parts of south Texas. Four new NOAA Weather Radio stations were installed in south Texas at Uvalde, Dilley, D'Hanis, and Rio Grande City. Obtaining the transmitters was a combined effort that included working with city and county leaders in a 17 county service area to raise matching grant funding and in kind donations as well as newspaper and publication campaign to develop awareness for NOAA Weather Radio. A feature article in the Texas Co-op Power magazine helped get membership support. Now that the transmitters have been installed and are running, Medina Electric is selling NWR All Hazards receivers to their membership at cost and are donating receivers to all schools in their service area.

NWS and National Marine Fisheries Services Jointly Sponsor NWR. A special NWR station that will provide broadcast audio dedicated to the marine interest of the Tampa Bay/St. Petersburg area was established at Largo, Florida this month. This weather radio station was made possible through the joint partnership between NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and the National Weather Service. Each agency will provide the necessary funds for the equipment, operation, or maintenance of this special NWR station.

Weather Radio Expansion in Alabama and Arkansas. A new 300 watt Armstrong transmitter was installed at Arab, Alabama on June 24. This NWR was established through the cooperative partnership between FUN Media, Inc. 92.7 FM radio station in Arab, Alabama and Marshall County emergency management through the USDA - RUS grant process. This site will broadcast to an area between Huntsville and Birmingham. A second 1000 watt Crown transmitter was sponsored by the city of Brewton and will use a tower provided by the Alabama Power Company. This USDA - RUS grant funded site will serve extreme south central Alabama including western parts of the Florida panhandle. Another 300 watt Armstrong transmitter went on-air at Cherokee Village, Arkansas and will serve northeast Arkansas and parts of southern Missouri. This weather radio station was privately funded by the city of Cherokee Village whose mayor Ray Maynard was instrumental in making NWR available to the citizens of Sharp and Fulton counties.

Medina Electric Cooperative Celebrates NWR Dedication. On June 2, WFO Austin/San Antonio attended a NWR dedication ceremony for Dilly in south Texas. Medina Electric Cooperative, who provided the use of their own facilities and utilized grant funds from the USDA - Rural Utilities Service grant program, was represented by general manager and CEO Larry Oefinger, marketing director Bill Moffett, and public information officer Jennifer Schiffers. Frio County emergency manager Billy Woodward presided over the ceremony. Representing the NWS office at Austin/San Antonio was MIC Joe Arellano and WCM Larry Eblen. Less than 24 hours after the dedication ceremony, the area served by the Dilley NWR transmitter was inundated with tone alerts for several Severe Thunderstorm Warnings.

SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS & OUTREACH

Team Hurricane Preparedness. The staff at WFO Corpus Christi made it a team effort to actively prepare the communities along the middle Texas coast for possible hurricanes this season. Last month, several staff members actively participated in outreach and preparedness activities that included the following:

- Active WFO participation in the Mid-Coast Hurricane Conference in Victoria, and the Coastal Bend Hurricane Conference in Corpus Christi.
- Development of a collage of informative hurricane related posters for the office outreach booth display.
- Partnered with the Red Cross and Walmart in the distribution of over 8,000 hurricane related preparedness brochures during Hurricane Awareness Day.
- Hurricane preparedness speaking engagements to the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary stations in Rockport and Corpus Christi.
- Developed a hurricane brochure in collaboration with the Corpus Christi emergency management and partnered with the local electric utility for distribution to nearly 300,000 residents along the Texas coast.
- Several hurricane preparedness town hall meetings were provided to the public and private industry such as Dow Chemical, Inteplast, and First Data Corp in coastal Texas.

The WFO Corpus Christi tropical cyclone outreach efforts provide forecasters an opportunity to speak with NWS customers in emergency management, the private industry and public to help ensure their weather related disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts are met.

WFO Huntsville Night With the Stars. Several Huntsville staff members set up a booth at a Huntsville Stars minor league baseball game last month to educate the public about lightning safety during Lightning Safety Awareness Week. WFO Huntsville forecasters Priscilla Bridenstine and Brian Carcione, intern Beth Carroll and SCEP student Alys Blair, spoke with many interested little-leaguers about lightning safety and also answered questions about tornadoes, thunderstorms and flooding.

WFO Little Rock Promotes Lightning Safety and Awareness. WFO Little Rock, was one of several NWS Southern Region offices to actively and effectively promote lightning safety and awareness during this year's annual and national Lightning Safety and Awareness Week (LSAW). Through active partnering efforts of WFO Little Rock with the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee proclaimed Lightning Safety Awareness Week in Arkansas. The official proclamation took place in the governor's conference room at the State Capitol on June 10.

Information dissemination was key to the success of this year's LSAW in Arkansas. WFO Little Rock took the lead in coordinating media outreach efforts by forwarding daily Public Information Statements, which featured lightning information and safety tips, specifically prepared for NOAA Weather Wire and NOAA Weather Radio dissemination, each day of LSAW. Also, extensive LSAW materials were provided on the WFO Little Rock Web page for media and public consumption. Also, numerous proactive live and taped interviews were conducted regarding lightning safety and awareness at WFO Little Rock by a number of Arkansas television, radio, cable and newsprint outlets.

WCM Program Manager Represents Southern Region at National Workshop. NWS Southern Region WCM program manager Walt Zaleski represented our region and WFOs at the recent annual Public Program Manager's meeting in Minneapolis. The purpose of the three-day workshop, attended by regional representatives and public program managers from NWSH, was to review, consolidate and improve, through consensus agreement, several NWS policy and procedural directives that govern the Public Forecast and Winter Weather programs. Walt lead the Southern Region team, which also included by teleconference CWWD branch chief Jud Ladd, public program manager Melinda Bailey and climate/ASOS program manager Victor Murphy, in working with the other regions and NWSH to improve directive policies and procedures for our WFOs.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATION

StormReady

There was one additional StormReady recognition in Southern Region last month. WFO Corpus Christi recognized the community of Goliad, Texas as StormReady. The number of new StormReady sites in Southern Region has increased to a total of 32 for FY03.

NWS Participates in Hurricane Conference in Tampa. Southern Region Headquarters, TPC/NHC and Florida WFOs attended, participated and taught at what has been billed as the nation's largest annual hurricane conference in Tampa, Florida with over 2,000 attendees. Leading the Southern Region at the Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference was Regional Director Bill Proenza and SR WCM program manager Walt Zaleski. Also, Florida WFO MICs Steve Letro, Rusty Pfost, Ira Brenner, Paul Duval and Bart Hagemeyer were guest speakers at several tropical related workshops and training sessions at the conference. The new NWS outreach booth at the conference, methodically constructed by WFO Tampa's ESA Bud Fislar and ITO Tony Harper, was a tremendous hit with the conference attendees. The NWS outreach display was staffed throughout the entire five day conference by SR WCM program manager Walt Zaleski, WFO Miami MIC Rusty Pfost, WFO Tampa MIC Ira Brenner, WFO Tampa WCM Dan Noah, WFO Tallahassee WCM Bob Goree, and TPC/NHC hurricane specialist Stacey Stewart.

Timely Louisiana Hurricane Conference Prior to Tropical Storm Bill. WFO Lake Charles held its annual day long hurricane conference in Lake Charles which was attended by nearly 200 first responders. The location of this proactive outreach event alternates annually between the cities of Lake Charles and Beaumont on the northern Gulf of Mexico coast. The NWS sponsored hurricane conference topics were directed toward the emergency response community, elected officials and individuals who make critical protection of life and property decisions in their community during a threat from a hurricane or tropical storm.

WFO Huntsville Participates in Annual Alabama Emergency Management Conference. WFO Huntsville WCM Tim Troutman attended the north Alabama, 13 county, quarterly meeting at the annual Alabama Emergency Management conference in Gulf Shores, Alabama last month. Topics discussed included WFO Huntsville's future plans to further improve text and graphical products and communications with the EMAs and media.

WFO Huntsville at Heart of County HAM and Freedom Festival. WFO Huntsville WCM Tim Troutman participated in the Marshall County HAM and Freedom Festival during the latter part of the June. Tim answered many proactive questions that related to SKYWARN, NOAA Weather Radio and NWS warning and preparedness procedures. Over 3,000 people attended this event.

MEDIA/PUBLIC EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Middle Tennessee Electric Coop Gets the Scoop on Summer Weather. WFO Nashville forecaster Mark Rose was a guest speaker at a three-day energy forecast luncheon, sponsored by the Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation in the cities of Franklin, Murfreesboro and Lebanon. Mark provided the audience of 40 plus the summer temperature and precipitation outlook for Middle Tennessee.

WFO Huntsville to Start Instant Messaging with Local Media. WFO Huntsville MIC John Gordon, WCM Tim Troutman and SOO Tom Bradshaw visited with each of the three media outlets in the Huntsville area last month to discuss providing instant messaging. The current plan is for WFO Huntsville to begin an instant messaging project with the local Huntsville media starting this month. This media project will coincide with the Baron Services software evaluation project that WFO Huntsville will begin at the same time period.

WFO San Juan Outreach and EEO Activities Spotlighted in June

WFO San Juan MIC Israel Matos participated in the kick off ceremony of the Safe Home and Hurricane Expo, sponsored by Univision local TV Channel 11. Israel discussed hurricane preparedness, answered questions from public, and participated in short live interviews with Ada Monzon, Univision's chief meteorologist. In addition, hurricane outreach extended to the Ports Authority Safety Committee, the Puerto Rico Army National Guard, the Fort Buchanan army garrison, the Puerto Rico Federal Executives Committee, and the San Juan Community Hospital. The office also participated in over 20 live radio and TV programs discussing hurricane awareness and outlooks.

Other groups benefitted from introductory meteorology training. Data acquisition program manager Pancho Balleste conducted a three hour basic weather training session for 40 students of the Puerto Rico Natural History Society Summer Camp. Ernesto Morales conducted the weather section of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Boating Course for a 100 students of the Cangrejos Yacht Club. Israel Matos visited the Inter American University in Barranquitas to conduct a general weather presentation for twenty graduate students of an environmental pollution course. Pancho Balleste also conducted a two hour office tour for 40 high school students of the Universidad del Este in Carolina Upward Bound Program. This program targets low income high school students who may also be among the first in their family to consider attending college. The project provides academic and personal support designed to motivate and prepare the students for college.

Meteorologist In Charge Israel Matos presented the NOAA Environmental Hero Award to Ismael Figueroa during a press conference held at the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico People with Disabilities Office. Ismael, blind since birth, developed a tactile hurricane tracking chart for blind and visually impaired people. The press conference was attended by all major media outlets in Puerto Rico and served a dual purpose, to present the award, and promote hurricane preparedness during this season.

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

SOUTHEAST RFC OPERATIONAL COVERAGE. The Southeast RFC has been in the midst of the most prolonged flooding in the past six years. Portions of the SERFC service area have had almost constant flooding since February 15 – in some cases the widespread flooding has affected almost all states in their service area. Since February, the SERFC has worked 24x7 operations nearly 70 times. Although the SERFC has had some major/record floods at times -- most of this flooding to date has been minor and moderate flooding. As a result, the SERFC has had to double or triple routine staffing for almost all shifts. The dedication of the SERFC staff is commendable and truly reinforces the concept of "One National Weather Service."

NWS/USIBWC MEETING. The 2003 National Weather Service/U.S. International Boundary Water Commission Coordination Meeting took place at WFO Brownsville in May. Twenty-one individuals attended the meeting including 11 from the NWS, five from the USIBWC, three attended from CILA (the Mexican Section of the IBWC), and two from CNA (the Mexican hydrologic services organization). NWS representatives including West Gulf RFC HIC Jerry Nunn and hydrologic forecaster Greg Waller, WFO Austin/San Antonio MIC Joe Arellano and senior service hydrologist Nezette Rydell, WFO Corpus Christi hydrology focal point Greg Wilk, and WFO Brownsville MIC Shawn Bennett, WCM Jesus Haro, SOO Kurt Van Speybroeck, HMT Alfredo Vega, forecaster Michael Castillo, and DAPM Jim Campbell. The meeting discussions included an update on drought conditions along the Rio Grande from southern Colorado downstream to the U.S./Mexican border, deployment of high data rate satellite DCPs in the lower Rio Grande Basin drainage, a status of data collection stations in Mexico, and plans to establish a new river forecast service at El Paso on the Rio Grande. Nezette Rydell gave a presentation about efforts underway to implement the WFO AHPS Web page.

WFO ALBUQUERQUE BRIEFS TASK FORCE. New Mexico's Drought Task Force, formed in 1996, recently underwent many changes in personnel with the new administration. Last month WFO Albuquerque MIC Charlie Liles briefed Governor Johnson's new Drought Task Force on the status of the drought, how the drought developed since 1998, and prospects for the next 12 months. While summer thunderstorm season will diminish fire danger and provide some benefit to the range and pasture conditions beginning by mid-July; prospects for a good snow pack next winter are poor. The most likely scenario is that reservoir conditions, already very poor, could be even worse a year from now.

OASIS SOAKS UP DROUGHT PRESENTATION. OASIS is a national not-for-profit educational organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for mature adults. OASIS issues quarterly catalogues and features presentations on a wide range of topics. According to Dennis Norlander, the Albuquerque OASIS director, most presentations attract an audience of 20-25 people. On June 10, it was obvious the drought is high on the list of discussion items in Albuquerque. Charlie Liles, MIC, made a presentation on drought in New Mexico, the history of drought in New Mexico, development of the state contingency plan, and what we can expect in the future. By May 1, the class had already reached the maximum of 62 people, and 40 were left on a waiting list. The presentation was well-received and there will likely be a repeat program in the near future.

USGS STREAM GAUGING NETWORK STATUS. The USGS recently informed their district offices that there is a possibility for a significant number of stream gauge station closures starting in FY04. This is based on reprogrammed National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) funds to support other water programs in the USGS and bulging state and federal budget deficits that will impact the COE and other state cooperators. The USGS plans to try and maintain funding support for those stream gauging stations that are defined in the NSIP as supporting NWS hydrologic operations. We will keep you posted on this subject matter. If you become aware of any potential stream gauge closures in your service area , please contact Ben Weiger CWWD/HSB.

DISTRIBUTED HYDROLOGIC MODEL COLLABORATION. SRH is collaborating with Vieux and Associates (V&A) on a project to set up, calibrate, and run a distributed hydrologic model in three basins within our region. The goal of this public/private collaboration is to demonstrate new technologies with potential for public benefit in flood modeling applications. V&A received a grant from the state of Oklahoma to support funding for this project. Three NWS offices will be involved in this public/private collaborative project. This includes West Gulf RFC, WFO San Juan, and WFO Houston. All three offices have submitted prioritized candidate basins for the collaborative project. Vieux and Associates is in the process of evaluating the data required and available to set up the model for the prioritized basins and will shortly provide us with their analyses. Once the model is calibrated for the basins, V&A will run the model in real time for a period of time that will be negotiated with SRH. The project will also allow the three NWS offices an opportunity to compare the model output to other NWS hydrologic models such as the WFO site-specific hydrologic model and a future distributed hydrologic model that is scheduled to be available for the RFCs in FY04.

LINUX PC RFC BACKUP SYSTEM. Representatives from the SR RFCs plan to visit Arkansas-Red Basin RFC this month to configure and checkout their LINUX PC RFC backup system and to obtain training on the system. Upon successful configuration and checkout, the RFC representatives will take the system back to their offices for implementation. The RFC backup systems will be tested on a routine basis by the RFCs to ensure the system functions work.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

A LITTLE TRAINING CAN GO A LONG WAY. Recently WFO Jackson SOO Jeff Craven, a former SPC forecaster, scheduled a seminar on summer convection for his office staff. Jeff invited participation from surrounding offices, but the shortage of funds would not allow for travel. Even so, Jeff responded to a request from WFO Huntsville SOO Tom Bradshaw and the two offices set up a meet-me conference call so forecasters at Huntsville could listen in on and participate in Jeff's presentation. They followed along by paging through Jeff's slides which had been previously sent to Huntsville and loaded into their computer. With a little more effort conventional VISITview teletraining methods could accomplish the same thing and more, but this example shows how even with an austere budget we can still take advantage of opportunities to share science among offices.

COMET PARTNERS VISIT AT WFO SHREVEPORT. On June 16 Dr. Paul Croft and student Patrick Pyle from the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) visited WFO Shreveport to coordinate on a COMET Partners project. Their work through the Atmospheric Science Program at ULM, in conjunction with several NWS offices including WFOs Jackson, Mobile, Little Rock, Birmingham and Memphis, in addition to the NCEP/SPC and WFO Shreveport, will focus on creating a bibliographic and event data base for wet microbursts. Paul Croft, the project director, and WFO Jackson MIC Alan Gerard will provide primary oversight for the work. Two ULM meteorology majors will also be participating in the year's work. During the Shreveport visit Dr. Croft and Patrick viewed several wet microburst radar cases were viewed on the Weather Event Simulator. The cases included a variety of microburst scenarios including those that occurred with north and northwesterly steering winds, and others that occurred with southerly flow. The cases are part of a data base of microburst producing storms, the radar data for which were archived by the Shreveport office over a period of several years. The recent conversion of Archive IV radar data to WES-viewable cases "saved" the radar data from these important events for future research use, exactly of the type underway now with this COMET Partners project.

TELETRAINING FOR ASAs SAVES TIME AND MONEY. Gena Morrison (SR Administrative Services Division) with some technical support from SSD and CWWD, has begun delivering teletraining to administrative assistants throughout the region. Using a standard telephone call and the program sharing functionality of Microsoft Netmeeting (which comes bundled with Microsoft Windows) Gena and the ASAs can remotely "look over each others' shoulders" as they jointly operate programs such as the Travel Manager. Gena conceived the idea says she's excited about getting to use it. It has already saved the region money. One of our ASAs cancelled a trip to MASC where she was to receive the training, and we provided it instead by this distance-learning approach.

DISTANCE LEARNING AVIATION COURSE. COMET has announced the first Distance Learning Aviation Course (DLAC1), dealing with low clouds and fog forecasting, is now available. The course consists of seven self-paced modules, six quizzes and, for NWS students only, three teletraining sessions. Initially, we're encouraging WFO aviation focal points to take advantage of this training, but eventually all aviation forecasters will be targeted. Relevant Web sites are:

http://meted.ucar.edu/dlac/website/index.htm	for pertinent information, and
http://meted.ucar.edu/dlac/website/form2.htm	for registration.

On-line study modules accompany each of several teletraining sessions, which should last about an hour each. The teletraining sessions are currently scheduled for the following dates and times:

Tuesday, July 15	1 p.m.
Wednesday, July 23	10 a.m.
Monday, July 28	1 p.m.
Wednesday, August 20	10 a.m.

Questions about DLAC1 or the process for distributing the course information can be directed to Paul Witsaman, SR regional aviation meteorologist, at (817) 978-1100 x116, or *Paul.Witsaman@noaa.gov*.

WATCH-BY-COUNTY TRAINING. The Warning Decision Training Branch plans to support the national implementation of the Watch-By-County process (WBC). Each WFO will have an opportunity to participate in one of several teletraining sessions that are being scheduled for next September. A recorded version of the training will be available for those who cannot participate in the live teletraining sessions. This will be followed by preparation and posting of job sheets on the WBC Web site. A demonstration of WBC operational readiness is planned for next October. All this aims at WBC national implementation, which is currently planned for early January, 2004.

IMS PROTOTYPE PROGRESS REPORT. Late in June, SR took the next step toward contributing to the planned September debut of the NWS' Internet Mapping Service (IMS) site which will serve emergency managers (EMs) tropical cyclone related NWS data in GIS formats. For details on the IMS prototyping effort, please refer to the April issue of SR Topics viewable here: *http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/topics/html/apr03.pdf*

Walt Zaleski, SR WCM, provided all SR WCMs with an information packet and survey that they are asked to share with EMs in their county warning areas interested in GIS-encoded NWS data. By gathering the input and feedback from this cadre of interested EMs, we can help ensure that this prototype IMS site meets the needs of our valued customer--EMs.

FIRE WEATHER METHODOLOGY TRAINING. Acknowledging that fire weather and its associated forecast methodologies can vary quite dramatically from one NWS or geographic region to another, we wanted to share a site that the Eastern Region's SSD have put together for their forecast offices (*http://www.werh.noaa.gov/ssd/smarttools/fire/fire.htm*). At that Web site you will be able to peruse a review of fire weather forecasting methodology which may help you in your fire weather forecast preparation.

LIGHTNING STATISTICS. Having just completed National Lightning Safety Week at the end of June, the following statistics regarding cloud-to-ground lightning strikes will probably come as no surprise. The Southern Region has more than its share of strikes and, of course, the associated risks. Here are the top ten states, ranked by average annual lightning frequency in the state, and by flash density. Statistics are based on lightning data provide by Vaisala, for the years 1997-2001. Rankings of other SR states, if not in the top ten, are shown at the bottom. Data are unavailable for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, which lie outside the national detection network.

Avg. Annual Number of CG Flashes		Avg. Flash Density (per sq. mile)	
1. TX	1,684,234	1. FL	23.1
2. FL	1,322,177	2. LA	17.1
3. NM	847,661	3. MS	15.5
4. LA	790,043	4. AL	14.5
5. GA	779,298	5. SC	13.9
6. AL	748,304	6. GA	13.2
7. OK	743,835	7. TN	12.6
8. MS	737,102	8. IN	11.9
9. MO	703,582	9. IL	11.5
10. KS	656,492	10. KY	11.2
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13. TN	552,975	11. OK	10.6
14. AR	536,659	13. AR	10.1
		22. NM	7.0
		24. TX	6.4

GULF HURRICANE TRACKING CHART. WFO Lake Charles forecaster Donovan Landreneau has created a tracking chart for the Gulf of Mexico which the office distributes at hurricane conferences, schools, and other outreach activities. The chart is available at: (**http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lch/tropical/tracking_chart.pdf**). Other offices might find it useful, too. The chart was made by compiling and overlaying many SLOSH maps, and it carries the NWS logo and local WFO identification. Donovan can personalize the map for other offices if requested. Good work Donovan.

PICTURE OF THE MONTH. In last month's *Topics* we called attention to an historic meeting that was held 50 years ago at then-named Texas A&M College. That meeting laid the foundation for what became the U.S. Weather Bureau/NWS warning program - including implementation of the nation's first integrated weather radar network, in the form of the Texas Radar Project. Region 2 of the USWB, later renamed the Southern Region, was a leader in establishing and operating the radar project. More about that important meeting can be found in the NOAA news release (http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories/s1163.htm) which called attention to it's 50th anniversary. To a very large extent, the historic meeting and what followed from it, was triggered by the deadly Waco tornado (F5) which had occurred just a few weeks prior. With that in mind we offer the image below showing some of the damage in Waco as this month's Picture of the Month.

TECHNICAL ATTACHMENTS. This month's technical attachments include:

Progress in Implementing Near Real Time Collection, Distribution and Archive of WSR-88D Level II Data, by Tim Crum, et al. Soon "jukeboxes" which have been the means of archiving Level II radar data for years, will be gone. All NWS WSR-88D sites (not just some, as now) will be transmitting the data automatically to a central archive. This will involve much less effort on the part of individuals and also increase data availability. A summary of how the procedure will work is included in the attachment.

An IMET's Experience with the Space Shuttle Columbia Recovery, by Seth Nagle (WFO Midland). Seth was assigned, along with several other IMET's, to provide weather support in the field to the NASA Columbia recovery efforts. The fact that training and equipment which comprise the IMET program were ideally suited for the meteorological requirements of the recovery efforts meant that the NWS could respond immediately - and effectively - when called upon following the shuttle tragedy.

A Guide to Organizing a Local Aviation Weather Workshop, by Robert Van Hoven (WFO Houston). Robert provides suggestions for important topics - and participants - to include in a local forecaster workshop.

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION BRANCH

NOAA WEATHER RADIO. The NOAA Weather Radio program continues to move forward with the completion of five new installations last month. The new NWR sites which recently went on the air and are currently in the test and acceptance stage are Brewton and Arab, Alabama; Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Cherokee Village, Arkansas; and Largo, Florida. We would like to mention that the Largo, Florida installation is very unique in the sense that it allowed the National Weather Service and the National Marine Fisheries to collectively partner together to bring NWR products from WFO Tampa Bay Area to mariners who frequently navigate the waterways of the nearby Intracoastal Waterway in the eastern Gulf of Mexico and points beyond. June installations bring the number of NWR installs in the Southern Region to 23 for FY03.

In the Console Replacement System arena, the new CRS Build 9.0 and the Voice Improvement Processor Build 3.0 were delivered to all of the region's WFOs in June. Nearly all sites in the region have installed the new program software.

IT. Representatives from the Office of the Chief Information Officer, along with Gary Petroski, the regional ITSO, visited two locations in Southern Region this month, WFOs Norman and Austin/San Antonio. They conducted an IT security review . Both offices were in very good shape and only a few minor issues were discussed mainly dealing with LDAD and its proper configuration.

Both our primary and backup e-mail administrator completed their training on the new e-mail system and are looking forward to beginning implementation later this summer.

WSR-88D. ORPG Build 3.0 Software Modification Note 21 has been released and delivered to all sites in the region. Southern Region sites with completed software modification installations responded back with positive feedback stating that the installation went fairly smooth noting a few minor or no discrepancies.

Beta testing will begin in mid-July for ORPG Build 4.0 with WFOs Atlanta and Morristown participating in the beta installation process. ROC site support teams will travel to the sites to assist in the installation of the new build.

Highlights/Changes for ORPG Build 4.0:

- New Mesocyclone Rapid Update product.

- New Enhanced Echo Tops product.

- The following products were removed from the RPG: Weak Echo Region, Echo Tops Contour, Composite Reflectivity Contours, Combined Shear Contour, Combined Moment, and Spectrum Width Cross Section.

- Additional corrections to the Precipitation Preprocessing Subsystem to handle truncation and size rate and accumulation arrays for new VCPs.

- Improvements in memory utilization in the high resolution Vertically Integrated Liquid algorithm.

- Adaptation Data Merge capability.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS. We continue to make progress with the successful ordering, tracking, and acceptance of NWR circuits and ROAMS lines. Recently, lines for Brewton, Alabama; Cisco, Texas; Cherokee Village, Arkansas; and Princeton, Florida were tested and accepted as operational. Other circuits are being readied for final testing by telco before being released to the NWS for testing and acceptance. We will be ordering circuits for two new transmitters for Culebra, Puerto Rico and St. Croix, Virgin Islands very soon.

The Spectrum XXI frequency management training recently attended by SRH telecommunications manager Cecil Tevis shows promise in that the new process of submitting frequency proposals will be streamlined. The data exchange process allows us to submit frequency proposals online instead of e-mailing file attachments to NWS Headquarters for review. Access to the frequency database will be made available and coordination and review efforts should be enhanced using the new procedures. The Department of Commerce is scheduled to implement the updates in late July/early August, with the NWS coming on board shortly afterward.

We will be re-submitting SR requirements to NOAA for the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) managed by the National Communications System. The GETS is a system designed to override congestion in the public switched network during emergency situations and provides enhanced routing and priority access by using a special access number and PIN. These requirements will include access for each field office in the event of emergency situations where priority communications is necessary. More information concerning the GETS is available at: *http://www.ncs.gov*.

AWIPS. Operational Build 1 (OB1) installs are complete across the Southern Region. Maintenance Releases (MR) OB1.1, OB1.2, and OB1.3 should also be complete at all sites.

Operational Build 2 (OB2) has been installed at three Southern Region sites (SRH, WFO Tampa Bay and WFO Corpus Christi) with WFO Atlanta being the last OB2 beta site on July 17 before national deployment begins in August.

Several new features will be added to the Watch, Warning, Advisory (WWA) application in OB2. Additional information on these new features can be found at the following links:

- What's new in OB2 (general summary of new functionality):
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/wwa/docs/WWA-OB2-000-NEW.pdf

- Release notes (detailed description of every change made in WWA):
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/wwa/new_OB2.htm

COREL WORDPERFECT OFFICE 11. The new Corel WordPerfect Office 11 suite has just been released and will be made available to all field offices. The version received from headquarters is the Standard Version which includes WordPerfect, Quattro Pro, Corel Presentations, and Address Book. This suite offers a host of new features and enhancements over previous versions. In the past, the older versions of WordPerfect Office seemed to be bloated with applications and utilities that few people would ever use. Corel has streamlined its Office suite with version 11. This is noticeable in the loading time as version 11 loads faster than previous versions.

While we have had experience with this version for only a few days, we've noticed that WordPerfect Office 11 is more stable than previous versions (especially WordPerfect Office 10). We recommend WordPerfect Office 11 be installed on PCs of anyone who requests it. Not only does this new suite fix a lot of problems of older versions but it also has a wider range of compatibility. In the past few weeks, several employees have received documents created with Microsoft Office XP, and these documents have been unreadable due to lack of compatibility with Corel WordPerfect Office 9 and earlier. After installing version 11, these documents could be opened without problem.

One word of advice when installing Office 11 - we recommend that you **Do Not** Uninstall previous versions of WordPerfect Office. Uninstalling previous versions sometimes has a negative impact on other applications such as Microsoft Access (*i.e.*, Access no longer works correctly). Version 11 will install into its own directory so there should not be any conflicts with older versions.

IT INCIDENT REPORTING. There have been a rash of incidents this past month in which people did not follow proper procedures when dealing with IT security issues. Please take the time to review the IT security policies, in particular for virus/hoaxes and IT incident reporting. If you have any questions in these or other IT areas, please contact Gary Petroski, at SRH.

OBSERVATIONS AND FACILITIES BRANCH

Interactive Voice-Remote Observation Collection System. At 1:00 pm on June 2, 2003 Southern Region's Interactive Voice-Remote Observation Collection System (IV-ROCS) came on line. Staff of the Observations and Facilities Branch, and others from the System Operations Division, gathered in the Regional Director's office to call the first observation into the system. The RD dialed 1-888-COOP-OBS and input the daily maximum, minimum, and at-observation time temperatures and the precipitation observation collected from WFO Fort Worth.

Currently around 250 of the 1200 cooperative observers across Southern Region are using the IV-ROCS system daily. The plan is to convert all observers from the old PC-ROSA system over the next three to six months. Some observers may elect to use Central Region's new Web-based collection system named WxCODER. This system is currently being tested at three WFOs in Southern Region and will be available to everyone in the near future.

At the SOD Chiefs' Conference early last month, Tom Grayson successfully demonstrated IV-ROCS in his presentation to NWS Headquarters and other regional SOD Chiefs. This demonstration created actions for Southern and Central regions to continue development of both IV-ROCS and WxCODER, respectively, and to begin work on using a common database for both systems. John McNulty took the action to investigate national support for deployment of both systems.

INTERAGENCY MEETING. An interagency meeting between the National Weather Service, the Galveston, Texas office of the U. S. Geological Survey, and the Galveston District, Corps of Engineers was held the end of May. The meeting focused on NWS data acquisition procedures and methods used to disseminate the data within NWS and to our partners. Additional meetings with other COE district offices are being scheduled for mid- to late July.

OBSERVER CERTIFICATES. Southern Region received 99 requests in the past month from the aviation community for new certificates, certificate cancellations, and changes in the types of certificates. Requests for new certificates received from both SR WFOs and the aviation community have resulted in many changes to the list of observers at sites across the region.

AWOS. In early May, it was determined the Texas Department of Transportation had recently installed several new AWOS sites across Texas. Most of the new systems were installed at stand-alone sites, but a few were installed and commissioned at sites with current non-federal observer programs in place. A meeting between FAA and NWS representatives was held May 14 to resolve questions on the role of the non-federal observers at these locations. Participants at this meeting included Cecilia Shilling, FAA System Requirements Branch; Kathryn Oestricher, FAA Non-Federal Observer Programs; Billy Tennison, FAA ASOS technician; James Maxwell, WFO Fort Worth DAPM; and Alton Abernathy, SR Surface Observations program manager.

UPPER-AIR OBSERVATION PROGRAM. Southern Region's April upper air rankings were excellent with 19 of the 23 offices receiving scores above the national average. The national average for April was 288.83 with a perfect score being 300.00. WFO Miami was had the best upper air rating in the Southern Region for April, which was only 0.12 points from the highest nationwide. An excellent job was done by Miami personnel in improving from a March score of 277.25 to their excellent second place score in April.

Other offices showing a marked improvement over the past few months include: Albuquerque with a score of 297.38; Jackson, 297.03; Jacksonville, 296.96; Midland, 296.22; Atlanta, 294.48; Tallahassee, 293.02; and Shreveport, 291.34.

WFO Little Rock continues to hold the top 12-month average in SR with a score of 294.02 followed by Fort Worth, 293.31; Brownsville, 292.97; and Miami, 292.71. Little Rock's 12- month average score put them in fifth place overall in the nation. (Excellent job Little Rock!) Other offices having excellent 12-month averages in April were Del Rio, Texas, 292.33; Nashville, 291.02; New Orleans, 291.92; and Corpus Christi, 290.87.

RADIOSONDE SURFACE OBSERVING INSTRUMENTATION SYSTEM. Phase II Implementation of the Radiosonde Surface Observing Instrumentation System (RSOIS) continues to move toward completion across the Southern Region. All but a few sites in SR have their RSOIS installed and are using it operationally. WFOs Little Rock and Tampa Bay having their towers erected, and each office will have their RSOIS units installed as weather permits. Currently, 16 out of a possible 20 RSOIS sites are in operation across SR. Three sites will continue to use ASOS for their surface observations.

RADIOSONDE REPLACEMENT SYSTEM (RRS). Recent events, both international and program related, have delayed the RRS planning meeting scheduled for late spring. Problems with the GPS radiosonde have primarily led to this delay. The RRS program manager will reschedule this meeting later this summer.

GALVESTON COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FACILITY. Site preparation and construction for the Galveston County Emergency Management facility is tentatively scheduled to begin in October 2003 and finish in December 2004. Move in and operations should commence in January 2005.

UPPER AIR PCB TRANSFORMER DISPOSAL. The disposal of the ART-I and ART-II electronic components containing PCBs is being coordinated nationally by MASC environmental engineer Mark George. Bids have been received from hazardous waste disposal contractors licensed to transport PCBs, and EPA identification numbers will be requested for each site affected, unless a single identification number is granted by EPA. This process has been somewhat complicated by the fact that EPA required all PCB owners to identify their products no later than December 1998, which NWS did not do due to a lack of knowledge of the transformer contents at that time. Southern Region has 17 sites identified with PCB upper air components. The site visits and transformer replacements should begin later this summer.

KEY WEST TANKER TRUCK UNLOADING RACK. The Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan written in 2000 for the NWS Key West WSR-88D site on Boca Chica Key requires a tanker truck unloading rack to prevent potential fuel spills from reaching sensitive wetland areas near the WSR-88D site. However, this land is owned by the Navy, and the Naval Air Station Key West Facilities group must approve the installation of the unloading rack, a concrete pad with curbing to contain the volume of fuel in the largest tank of the delivery vehicle (4000 gallons). We are pursuing this issue with MASC Real Property since it is required by EPA regulation 40 CFR 112.7.4 and noted by the environmental consultants TetraTech who developed the spill plans for the NWS. The Navy has now asked for a drawing of the proposed location of the unloading rack adjacent to the Boca Chica site outside the WSR-88D fenced area.

NWS NOISE SURVEY. The U.S. Public Health Service in Dallas has now completed the physical surveys of five NWS facilities for employee noise exposures. The areas surveyed included the WFO, generator buildings, the RDA shelter, and associated ASOS sites. None of the facilities surveyed in the Southern Region, including Fort Worth, Dallas, and Albuquerque have noise exposures requiring a hearing conservation program. The other NWS sites visited were Reno, Chicago, and Pittsburgh.

SHREVEPORT WASTEWATER PH LEVEL. The state of Louisiana imposes a requirement for wastewater pH to be between 6.0 and 9.0., but samples from Shreveport have been testing acidic, below the 6.0 level. A very acidic janitorial cleaning agent was identified as a possible source, and another product that tested basic was substituted with only temporary results. The maker of the waste treatment plant recommended replacing all ammonia-based cleaning agents and pumping out the solids, which could possibly be storing residual acid. This was done and the last pH test was within the allowable range at 7.0. Another pH test will be done in two weeks to verify that the problem has been eliminated before reporting back to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

ELECTRIC HOISTS IN WSR-88D DOME. While many sites have retrofitted the manual hoists provided as standard equipment in the WSR-88D dome with electric models for greater efficiency and safety, this has never been approved or authorized by the ROC. Subsequently, ER recently submitted a design change request to the ROC to permit using the electric hoists. After review by ROC, this should result in a standard nationwide hoist selection and mounting configuration. At present, there are several different models of hoists and winches in operation, all with possibly different braking characteristics and mounting hardware configurations that should be standardized to assure employee safety.

HAWKINSVILLE, GEORGIA WIRE WEIGHT GUARDRAIL. Georgia DOT has approved the use of a guardrail extension mounted to their highway bridge in Hawkinsville which would allow NWS employees access to this site again, which is considered a primary wire weight location for stream flow measurements. However, two obstacles remain: the addition of safety enhancements to an existing CR guardrail design or the installation of a new one, and the identification of a source of funds required to fabricate and install the final guardrail design. Another alternative is to relocate or replace the wire weight river gauges with another configuration that does not require NWS employees and volunteer observers to be at risk from a fall, or perhaps more importantly, to avoid exposure to the high speed vehicle traffic on the bridge.

WFO BIRMINGHAM FLOOR TILE WARPAGE. Warped raised floor tiles continue to be a problem in Birmingham and across the region as the wood-core products age and absorb moisture from both the atmosphere and wet mopping practices by janitorial contractors. The problem can be minimized by educating the janitors, and it can be eliminated by using concrete or steel panels for the raised floors, which unfortunately have a significant cost premium over the wood-core products.

ECS TRAINING ACTIVITIES AT NWSTC. Training activities continue this summer with both new and existing ECS focal points attending the revised environmental course, while new focal points go to the safety class. At present, electronics technicians and facility engineering technicians are also attending the initial and recertification training for fall protection and rescue. Only 50 of the 100+ trained SR climbers were able to attend this year due to funding limitations.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

DIVERSITY/EEO AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

WFO BROWNSVILLE. DAPM Jim Campbell provided an office tour to 15 students enrolled in the St. Joseph High School summer Science Fair and to 45 students enrolled in the Pace High School summer Science Fair. The tours provided an explanation of the WFO operations area and a presentation about the mission of the National Weather Service. Lead forecaster Jeff Philo and forecaster Mike Castillo provided the students with real-time weather briefings.

SOO Kurt Van Speybroeck and forecasters Carl McElroy and Ramon Sierra provided support to the city of Brownsville during their annual Hurricane Expo. The Expo is held for the general public and usually draws several hundred people. Kurt provided a hurricane briefing to the attendees and put a heavy emphasis on preparedness and safety tips. Carl and Ramon distributed brochures and talked with people about hurricane awareness. The Expo is supported by a variety of public and private entities in order to get the hurricane preparedness message out to the general public.

WFO CORPUS CHRISTI contacted Dr. Ken Tobin, Director of the Center for Earth and Environmental Studies at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) at Laredo, and informed him about the American Meteorological Society's (AMS's) Online Weather Studies Diversity Program. The TAMIU is an Hispanic Serving Institution. According to Dr. Ira Geer, director of the AMS Education Program, Dr. Tobin is "making good progress toward the implementation of the Online Weather Studies Course."

Dr. Tobin plans to send TAMIU students to the WFO to "shadow" the forecasters and learn more about the operations of the National Weather Service. SOO Andy Patrick plans a trip later in the year to TAMIU to lecture on precipitation patterns in South Texas.

MIC Jim Purpura and WCM John Metz had previously visited TAMIU where they met some of the students in the atmospheric science program, and gave a Storm Spotter talk. During the same trip Dr. Tobin met with DAPM Jim Campbell and discussed remote sensing/data logger precipitation instrumentation projects.

WFO LAKE CHARLES. Sarah Allen, senior meteorology student at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and a SCEP at WFO Lake Charles, spent a week at Boulder attending the second annual NCAR Undergraduate Leadership Workshop. She was among 20 national and international geoscience and engineering undergraduate students who were introduced to leadership and postgraduate opportunities relating to atmospheric research, as well as education and outreach.

WFO TALLAHASSEE. During recent months, WFO Tallahassee remained active in a wide range of EEO/Outreach activities. They focused on educational opportunities for women and minorities.

Senior forecaster and EEO focal point Ron Block presented a paper at a NOAA sponsored conference at Florida A&M University, a historically black college, on WFO Tallahassee's role in promoting diversity in its outreach and recruiting efforts. He then participated in several round-table discussions on NWS-university coordination efforts. Ron also delivered several lectures at Tallahassee Community College on selected topics in meteorology and diversity efforts. He was a judge and examiner at the Big Bend Science Fair, and local science fairs at Raa and Griffin Middle Schools. He lectured at career day at four schools, and presented talks on the mathematics of meteorology at Rickards and Lincoln high schools. During Cinco de Mayo week, he staffed the weather booth at a Hispanic fair in Quincy, Florida, spoke in Spanish on relevant career opportunities at the International Baccalaureate program at Rickards HS, and at the International Student Center at Florida State University. At Emancipation Day festivities, he staffed a government booth focusing on NWS student employment and career opportunities for African-Americans. Ron also lectured at the Tallahassee Collins Library in their series on science education.

MIC Paul Duval served as a judge at the Chaires Elementary School Science Fair and in the ninth annual 4-H Ecology Day, both in Tallahassee. In the latter, he staffed a NWS booth highlighting agency products and functions.

WFO HUNTSVILLE PARTICIPATES IN AMSTI. WFO Huntsville forecaster Priscilla Bridenstine met with several sixth grade teachers participating in the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiatives workshop from northern Alabama. The AMSTI program was designed to increase teacher's knowledge in the fields of math and science, better train them for the use of instructional methods and strategies and how to better use the results to structure future lessons. The workshop also provided teachers the opportunity to learn about general meteorology, weather systems and global weather patterns. In addition to meteorological instruction, emphasis was also placed on simple experiments that can be demonstrated to students. Teachers also received hands-on experience analyzing surface maps to foster their knowledge of basic weather.

WFO SPENDS A DAY AT CAMP. WFO Huntsville forecaster Priscilla Bridenstine visited a day camp to help 45 Cub Scouts earn their Weather Belt Loop. The presentation included information about weather basics with an emphasis on severe weather safety. The scouts were able to put their knowledge to immediate use during the campouts and other outdoor activities that were planned for the week.

WFO NASHVILLE CAREER DAY. WFO Nashville sponsored a "Career Day" for Middle Tennessee which attracted nearly 20 high school and college aged students interested in pursuing a career in meteorology. The successful "Career Day" was promoted by Nashville's local television stations and on the local NWS Web site. Guest speakers included Air Force reservist and hurricane hunter Major John Gordon, television meteorologist Charlie Neese, and several staff members from WFO Nashville.

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS
June 1-30, 2003

Southern Region Losses

Name	From (Office)	Action/Transfer	From Title/Grade
James H. Coe	RFC ORN	Transfer to AR	Senior Hydrologist, GS-13
Anthony B. Schott	WFO MRX	Transfer to CR	Forecaster, GS-7
David Rittenberry	WFO TBW	Retirement	Forecaster, GS-12
William Gargan	WFO LUB	Transfer to CR	Forecaster, GS-12

Southern Region Gains

Name	To (Office)	Action/Transfer	To Title/Grade
Wendell D. Warren	WFO LIX	Transfer from WR	El Tech, GS-11
John F. Purdy	WFO MOB	Transfer from CR	Senior Forecaster, GS-13
Ernest T. Jillson, Jr.	WFO TBW	Transfer from PR	Forecaster, GS-12

Within Region Transfers/Actions

Name	To (Office)	Action/Transfer	To Title/Grade
John Holsenbeck	WFO LUB	Promotion from AMA	Senior Forecaster, GS-13
Robert Mitchell	WFO SJU	Promotion from SJU	Forecaster, GS-11
Steven Cobb	WFO LUB	Transfer from MAF	SOO, GS-13
Todd Hamill	RFC ALR	Promotion from ALR	Senior Hydrologist, GS-13
Emilie Nipper	WFO LZK	Promotion from LZK	Forecaster, GS-11
David Welch	RFC ORN	Promotion from ORN	Senior Hydrologist, GS-13