



# Central Illinois Lincoln Logs

National Weather Service, Lincoln, IL

Summer 2005

Volume 8, Number 1

## In This Issue

- Lightning Safety Awareness
- Plan – Practice – Monitor - Act
- Thomas Jefferson Award Winner is Dalias Price
- John Campanius Holm Award Winner is Edna Hale
- IV-ROCS
- New Staff at ILX
- Central Illinois Drought
- Long-Range Outlooks
- Tornado Season Quiet
- Forecasts on the Road
- SARSAT

## Lightning Safety Awareness



**In the United States, there are an estimated 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes each year.** Lightning can be fascinating to watch, but it is also extremely dangerous. During the past 30 years, lightning killed an average of 67 people per year in the United States based on documented cases. This is more than the average of 65 deaths per year caused by tornadoes and the average of 16 deaths per year caused by hurricanes. However, because lightning usually claims only one or two victims at a time, and because lightning does not cause the mass destruction left in the wake of tornadoes or hurricanes, lightning generally receives much less attention than the more destructive weather-related killers. While documented lightning injuries in the United States average about 300 per year, undocumented injuries caused by lightning are likely much higher.

Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain area in a thunder-storm. That's about the distance you can hear thunder. When a storm is 10 miles away, it may even be difficult to tell a storm is coming.

**IF YOU CAN HEAR THUNDER, YOU ARE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE. SEEK SAFE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!**

The first stroke of lightning is just as deadly as the last. If the sky looks threatening, take shelter before hearing thunder.

### The 30-30 Rule

Use the 30-30 rule where visibility is good and there is nothing obstructing your view of the thunderstorm. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is within 6 miles of you and is dangerous. Seek shelter immediately. The threat of lightning continues for much longer period than most people realize. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter. Don't be fooled by sunshine or blue sky!

If it is cloudy, or objects are obscuring your vision, get inside immediately. It is always safer to take precautions.



Bob Parsons (center), owner of the Parsons Manufacturing Plant, was presented with a Mark Trail Award on May 26, 2005. Presenting the award are NWS Director D.L. Johnson (left), NOAA Administrator Conrad Lautenbacher (2<sup>nd</sup> from right), and Jack Elrod, creator of the "Mark Trail" comic strip. The Mark Trail Award is presented to individuals or organizations that support and promote the NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards (NWR) program. Bob's efforts of having an NWR receiver in the plant, a severe weather evacuation plan, and reinforced storm shelters allowed approximately 140 people in the plant to survive the July 13, 2004 tornado.

## Plan - Practice - Monitor - Act

On July 13, 2004, a violent F4 tornado tore across the countryside west of Roanoke, in Woodford County. This tornado demolished the Parsons Manufacturing Plant at the intersection of Illinois routes 116 and 117, about 4 miles west of Roanoke. Despite having upwards of 140 people in the plant at the time, there were no fatalities or injuries at the plant! A severe weather operations plan was critical to the survival of plant personnel.

There are 4 pieces of the severe weather warning "puzzle":

- NWS radar and warnings
- Observers and storm spotters
- Commercial TV/radio, NOAA Weather Radio, and outdoor sirens
- Public actions

Reception of the warning by the public is a big variable in the equation. In order for the warning process to be completed successfully, the people getting the information must do four things: **PLAN** (by pre-selecting a designated shelter), **PRACTICE** (by conducting frequent drills), **MONITOR** – the most important (by having a designated weather watcher), and **ACT** (by seeking safe shelter at the right time).



*At left, the remains of the Parsons Manufacturing Plant west of Roanoke on July 13, 2004. On the right, the rebuilt Parsons Manufacturing Plant. (Photo on left courtesy of the Woodford County ESDA; photo on right by Chris Miller, of the NWS.)*



Joe Sommer of Chenoa –  
35 year Length of Service Award  
presented June 22, 2005.



Carl Collins of Newman --  
30 year Length of Service Award  
presented April 28, 2005.



Mr. And Mrs Bob Harrison of  
Virginia -- 25-year Length of  
Service Award presented on March  
22, 2005.



Ben Kocher of Ste Marie –  
20 year Length of Service Award  
presented June 21, 2005.



Rein Schmidt of Newton –  
10 year Length of Service Award  
presented June 21, 2005.

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## Cooperative Observer Awards

Several cooperative observers have recently received Length of Service Awards. These are listed at left. Congratulations for all your years of dedicated service!

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## Charleston Observer to Receive Thomas Jefferson Award

Long time Charleston cooperative observer Dr. Dalias Price has been named as a recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Award. The Jefferson Award, the most prestigious bestowed by the NWS on a cooperative observer, is given to no more than 5 observers nationwide each year. It is named after former President Thomas Jefferson, who kept a nearly unbroken series of weather records from 1776 to 1816.

Dalias has been the observer in Charleston for 45 years, since April 1, 1960. A professor at Eastern Illinois University, he enlists the assistance of students and his wife, when travel or illness prevent him from taking the observations. He has provided nearly half of the 99 years' worth of continuous observations in Charleston, which is a Historical Climate Network station. He frequently provides assistance to regional TV, radio and print media on the local climatology of the Charleston area. He is well-known in the community, and some of his data-collection efforts during extreme weather conditions are impressive.

Dalias will be presented the Jefferson Award in a ceremony in Charleston later this summer. He will also be honored with the Dick Hagermeyer Award, presented to observers who have served 45 years.

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## Flora Observer Named John Campanius Holm Award Winner

Edna Hale, observer for station Flora 5NW, has been named a recipient of the John Campanius Holm Award. The Holm Award is presented to a maximum of 25 observers nationwide each year, to honor them for outstanding accomplishments in the field of cooperative observations. The award was named for a Lutheran minister, who was the first person known to have taken systematic observations in the American Colonies, in 1644 and 1645.

Edna and her late husband Allen began observing in 1963. Besides relaying her observations daily to the NWS, Edna also passes along her data to several area newspapers. Her extra efforts in making sure the observations are taken have been shown on many occasions, whether it be due to extreme weather, illness or death in the family, or other unexpected situations.

Edna will be presented the Holm Award in a ceremony later this summer.

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## IV-ROCS System Implemented for COOP Observers

The Interactive Voice Recorder Observation Collection System (IV-ROCS) has been implemented for NWS Lincoln cooperative observers. IV-ROCS allows observers to submit their observations over the phone, through a menu-driven system.

Observers who previously had been using the ROSA system have been converted to IV-ROCS over the past several months, as ROSA was discontinued on July 5. In addition, observers who have been phoning in their observations to the Lincoln office each morning are also being converted to IV-ROCS. This is because of the workload of answering and coding up to 50 COOP calls each morning, and also because IV-ROCS can handle many callers at one time (should be no busy signals).

Observers can also submit their observations over the Internet, using the Weather Coder (WXCODER) homepage. WXCODER allows observers to file their daily reports online, and also retrieve the data in spreadsheet or observing form for their own use. Eventually, this system may also allow for electronic submission of the observer's monthly B-91 form, but problems remain to be worked out on this issue.

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## New Staff Members at ILX

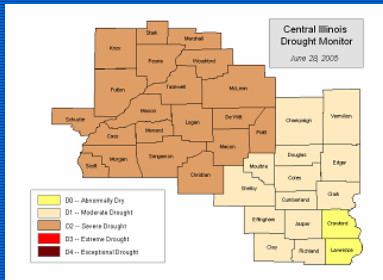
Several new staff members have recently joined the staff of the Lincoln National Weather Service office.

- **Ed Shimon** is our new lead forecaster. He transferred here in April, after serving as the Science and Operations Officer at the Duluth, MN office.
- **Heather Stanley** is one of our new journey forecasters. Heather was here in the summer of 2003 as a meteorological technician. She returned in March after working as an intern at the Hastings, NE office.
- **Mike Hardiman** is another new journey forecaster. He arrived in March after working as an intern at the El Paso, TX office.
- **Chuck Schaffer** joined the staff in early June, as a meteorologist intern. He recently obtained his Masters degree in meteorology from Northern Illinois University, and had been serving as a student employee at the Quad Cities office.
- **Matt Barnes**, while not a new face here, has been promoted from intern to journey forecaster.

These new staff members have replaced Melissa Byrd, Tony Hall, and Ed Holicky, who have moved on to other assignments in the NWS.

## Central Illinois Drought

Portions of central Illinois have advanced to “severe” drought status as summer began. Moderate drought conditions were noted across much of the remainder of central and eastern Illinois.



Despite the unusually wet January across the area, conditions have been drier than normal much of the year. Princeville, in Peoria County, had its driest spring on record, with only 3.85 inches of rain, 34% of normal. The spring rainfall of 4.75 inches at Mattoon was the 2<sup>nd</sup> driest spring on record there, and Peoria and Havana each had their 3<sup>rd</sup> driest spring (4.16 and 4.62 inches respectively).

The Lincoln NWS has set up a special section on its home page to provide updates to the drought situation. Various climate statistics, drought indices, and maps are available.

The address is <http://www.weather.gov/lincoln/climate/drought05.php>

## Long-Range Outlooks

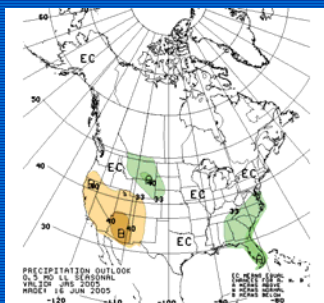
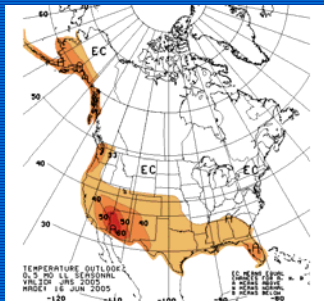
The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) updated its long-range outlooks on June 16. The maps at the left are the 90-day outlooks for July through September.

The top map is the temperature outlook. It shows warmer than normal temperatures across much of the southern part of the U.S., with the best chances in the southwest states. The rainfall outlook (lower right map) indicates above-normal rainfall in the green shaded areas, with below normal rain in the brown shaded areas.

In both cases, Illinois and nearby areas are listed as “equal chances” (EC). This means the chances of above normal, below normal, or near normal conditions are each at 33%. In this situation, it is best to look at climatological averages.

Additional long-range outlooks are available at the CPC’s website:

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/forecasts/>



## 2005 Tornado Season Quiet So Far

Through the end of May, only 4 tornadoes have been observed across the Lincoln county warning area of central and southeast Illinois. This compares to 19 through the same period in 2004. No tornadoes occurred during May this year.

Tornado numbers have been down nationwide as well. Despite 665 tornadoes reported nationwide the first half of the year, no deaths occurred during the March-June time frame, the first time this has been noted since record-keeping began in 1950.



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The Central Illinois Lincoln Logs is a quarterly review of NWS activities in Central Illinois and is available on our internet page at

<http://www.weather.gov/lincoln>

Your comments are welcomed and can be addressed to either editor at our office.

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## NWS Forecasts On the Road

Planning to travel this summer? National Weather Service offices around the country have recorded weather conditions available for many areas.

<http://www.weather.gov/pa/recordedforecasts.php> has a listing of phone numbers for recorded weather conditions nationwide.

Of course, you can also take a NOAA Weather Radio receiver with you. There are more than 900 transmitters across the country. For a specific listing, visit <http://www.weather.gov/nwr/nwrbro.htm> on the Internet.

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## Weather Satellites Detect More than Clouds

U.S. Coast Guard crews—in two incidents—rescued five people from choppy waters off the Florida coast on June 10, and pushed the total lives saved in the United States, from the international Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking System (COSPAS-SARSAT) beyond the 5,000 mark.

Since [SARSAT](#) was established in 1982, [NOAA satellites](#)—with their speedy detection and relay of distress signals from emergency beacons—have helped rescue 5,004 people in the United States and more than 18,000 worldwide. On average, there are 203 U.S. rescues each year. So far in 2005, the SARSAT system has rescued 87 people.

SARSAT uses NOAA's polar-orbiting and geostationary-orbiting satellites to detect and locate Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (used onboard boats and ships), Emergency Locator Transmitters (carried aboard aircrafts) and Personal Locator Beacons (designed for hikers and campers.)

Once the satellites pick up a distress signal, it is relayed to the [U.S. Mission Control Center](#), which NOAA operates in Suitland, Md. After pinpointing the location of the distress, the signal is routed to a Rescue Coordination Center operated by the U.S. Coast Guard or the Air Force. In the United States, the Coast Guard has responsibility for maritime distresses, and the Air Force handles inland search and rescue cases.