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

July 2004

SOUTHERN TOPICS

Working Together To Save Lives

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Last month saw some of the heaviest rains in 100 years over much of the Southern Region, and notably, organized tropical systems played no role. The primary culprit was long-lasting moist flow from the Gulf, supported by persistent upper-level moisture and dynamics. More details are included in CWWD's section of this month's *Topics*.

Despite historic rainfall totals which exceeded 400% of normal in places, no fatalities in Texas, Louisiana or Mississippi were directly attributable to flash flooding or flooding. That was due in large part to the 745 Flash Flood Warnings and Flood Warnings that SR offices issued during the month, and the close working relationships between our WFOs, RFCs and emergency managers at state and local levels. This is also proof positive that our outreach and education efforts such as "Turn Around, Don't Drown" are effective. Congratulations to everyone in the region who played a role in this remarkable success.

KUDOS TO WFO MIDLAND. In April, WFO Midland provided critical forecasts during a two-day outbreak of severe thunderstorms and subsequent flash flooding across southeastern New Mexico and much of the Permian Basin of West Texas. Record flash flooding was observed, which resulted in the collapse of a bridge on Interstate 20. Thanks to timely weather warnings and direct phone calls to the appropriate officials, the bridge was closed prior to its failure and no deaths or injuries were reported. SOO Jeffrey Cupo provided this recap of the event:

> The severe weather and flash flooding lasted for five days, with flooding mainly occurring on April 3-4, 2004. All staff members maintained an around-the-clock vigil of weather events and systems maintenance, and one forecaster was dispatched to the Regional Operations Center at SRH during this event. Follow-up phone calls to the SPC provided further data-sharing. These staff actions resulted in high situational awareness during the severe weather events that unfolded throughout the weekend.
>
> The potential for severe weather and flooding was included in forecast products up to 36 hr prior to the outbreak. This long lead forecast was significant as the area was in the midst of a severe, long-term drought. A flash flood watch was issued nearly 12 hr prior to the first report of flooding. The office issued a total of 21 flash flood warnings with an average lead time of 48 min, including 13 warnings and statements for Reeves County alone, where the I-20 bridge collapsed and forty of Toyah's 100 residents were evacuated when waist-deep water entered their homes. Meanwhile, residents of Fort Stockton were evacuated from their homes and several persons isolated by flood waters in Carlsbad were airlifted to safety by Army helicopters. Numerous follow-up statements were issued highlighting public reports of ongoing flooding, enabling our TV and radio station partners to rapidly communicate these dangers to the public. Personal phone calls to county officials gave forecasters direct interaction with the individuals directly responsible for the bridge closure. Those calls resulted in the bridge being closed BEFORE it failed, which no doubt saved lives. Thousands of Interstate travelers utilize that bridge daily.

Congratulations on a great job of coordination and forecasting, Midland!

LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS – A QUARTERLY LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER. A team of individuals from the 2004 BLAST class has produced the first BLAST newsletter, available on-line at: *http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/blast/blast.htm*. The latest newsletter can be accessed by clicking on the date under "Blast Newsletter" on the left-hand side of the page. The team's goals for this quarterly publication are to focus on important leadership topics, highlight current ideas circulating in the management/leadership arena, and give the reader a fresh perspective on the relevance and importance of good leadership.

Typical newsletter topics will include interview excerpts from some of today's top leaders, book reviews, successful regional and local BLAST initiatives, and other articles pertaining to leadership.

IFPS

NWS Digital Services Initial Operating Capability Date Set. The NWS has decided to make an initial set of forecast grid elements from the National Digital Forecast Database official on December 1, 2004. By September 15, the NWS will formally announce which of the current eleven experimental forecast grid elements will be made official and constitute the Digital Services Initial Operating Capability. Details on this decision were made available on June 29 via the *NWS Focus* electronic newsletter viewable at *http://www.weather.gov/com/nwsfocus/fs062904.htm*.

Preliminary NDFD Verification Statistics to Be Shared Externally. In preparation for the Digital Services IOC date, preliminary verification statistics derived from the NDFD forecast data will be shared with the external NWS customers and partners to allow them to assess our ability to provide accurate forecast information in this new digital format. This first look at the digital service era verification will be announced to our customers and partners via a Public Information Statement which will contain the active link to the statistics. If the link remains the same as initially announced, it's *http://www.weather.gov/ndfd/verification/*

The verification will be monthly statistics over the CONUS for the past 9+ months, summarizing max/min temperature, 12-hr PoP, and temperature, dew point, and wind speed at 3-hr intervals out to forecast projections of 7 days (168 hours). Users should be careful to read the FAQ section provided with the verification to understand how the digital forecast information was harvested from the NDFD for comparison to nearby observation sites.

QPF Clip Tool and Automation Scripts. Clay Anderson and Mark Oliver from WFO Austin/San Antonio have created some great tools for WFO operations. Their script automates the routine issuances and updates to the AFM/PFM, SFT, CCF and graphical forecasts (Web images). It will also send your official database to the NDFD and SRH server. The QPF Clip tool clips QPF where no weather is forecast. The URL is: *http://lucretia.srh.noaa.gov/srh/ifps/formatter_support.html*

Collaboration Reminders. WFO Little Rock IFPS focal point Brian D. Smith, the SR representative on the National Smart Tool Team, has prepared good information and reminders about collaboration. You can view his write up at:
http://lucretia.srh.noaa.gov/srh/ndfd/collaborationtools/briancollaboration.txt

IFPS SERVICE BACKUP. Don't forget the link to instructions for IFPS Service Backup. Additionally, please note Step 6, which is a reminder that offices need to share (and consequently use) smart tools or procedures to create any derived elements not received from the central server. To reduce the size of the svcbu grids, the derived products should be created by the office backing up the inoperative office. Link: *http://www.nwstc.noaa.gov/nwstrn/swsbackup/Backup.html*

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

MORRISTOWN PARTICIPATES IN STATE MEETING. The semi-annual State Fire Weather/Forestry meeting was held June 16 in Knoxville at the State Division II office on the University of Tennessee campus. Forecaster David Hotz and MIC Jerry McDuffie attended and presented information concerning the Fire Weather Forecast, Annual Operating Plan, National Fire Danger Rating System, upcoming Lightning Awareness Week, long-range forecasts, drought, and support to the U.S. Forest Service, Great Smoky Mountain National Park, Big South Fork National Park, and state forestry people. The forestry folks gave Jerry a royal send- off as this was his last meeting with them before his retirement. The different agencies praised the support and high quality of service received from WFO Morristown.

ALBUQUERQUE IMET RECEIVES PRAISE. WFO Albuquerque received the following incident performance report from Pat Velasco, Fire Behavior Analyst on the recently extinguished Sedgwick Fire, near Grants, New Mexico:

> Brent [Wachter] did an excellent job, the Sedgwick fire was located in a remote location, and was unable to access the NWS information network due to the fact that there was no AC power, telephone service nor a place to set up for two days. Then the laptop issue. Brent worked hard until he resolved the problem even to the point of traveling to the Albuquerque Office. He was a very professional IMET throughout the life of the fire, providing the incident with accurate information. I observed him as Seth Nagle's trainer and feel that he did an excellent job, and feel too that Seth received a high-quality training assignment.
>
> As a long-time FBAN (27 years), I feel that Brent is one of the most professional IMETs in the system. He is highly accurate with his forecasts and works to ensure that both his oral and written forecasts are understood, he will always take the time to explain whenever I or my co-workers don't understand a weather situation.

It is always gratifying to receive praise from our valued partners. Congratulations, Brent.

WFO MIDLAND HOSTS VERIFICATION WORKSHOP. WFO Midland WCM Pat Vesper and SOO Jeffrey Cupo coordinated and hosted a one-day workshop on the national verification scheme and the STORMDAT software on July 1. Brent Macaloney was invited from NWSHQ to give a seminar on the intricacies of the verification scheme and assisted both those curious and tasked with the project of storm data entries and office verification. Part of the workshop included an interactive quiz which tested participants' knowledge of how different events get verified. In attendance included those from WFOs Amarillo, Lubbock and San Angelo. This workshop is part of a continued effort to share knowledge and experiences between forecast offices in order to foster good working relationships and increase camaraderie.

MARINE

New Format for Tropical Weather Discussion. Effective July 6, 2004 the Tropical Analysis and Forecast Branch of the Tropical Prediction Center changed the format of the Atlantic and East Pacific Tropical Weather Discussion (TWD). The WMO (AWIPS) headers for the Atlantic discussion are AXNT20 KNHC (MIATWDAT), and for the Pacific discussion AXPZ20 KNHC (MIATWDEP). The new layout for the TWD will include four sections:

- Special Features (as needed for tropical cyclones and other significant events)
- Tropical Waves (available mainly during the hurricane season)
- Intertropical Convergence Zone
- Discussion (surface and features aloft and stratified into different geographical areas based on the weather pattern)

Get to Know Your PMO. For those WFOs with marine areas, we encourage managers to arrange visits with the closest Port Meteorological Officer (PMO). Staff members should spend a day or two on the docks and ships learning about PMO duties, ship equipment maintenance, and the recruitment of new ships for the VOS program. When the subject is appropriate, don't forget to invite a local PMO to participate in office seminars. Without the PMOs, most ship observations would be lost. We should all thank our SR PMOs for their tireless, essential work:

Houston PMO:	Chris Fakes
Jacksonville PMO:	Jack Warrelmann
New Orleans PMO:	Paula Campbell
Miami/Fort Lauderdale PMO:	Peggy Alander (arrives in August)

PUBLIC

CID Transition Update. The First Phase of transition for our products to modernized PILs occurred last month. Instead of several other phases, the NWS is now going to convert the rest of the products over on one date, to avoid confusion. This date is November 9 (the backup date in case of bad weather is November 16). The CID Website is: *http://www.nws.noaa.gov/datamgmt/cid.html* And the PNS is: *http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notification/scn04-41cid_plan.txt*

HOUSTON CWSU CONDUCTS AVIATION WEATHER TRAINING. CWSU Houston MIC Vince Carreras partnered with CWSU Salt Lake City MIC Larry Burch, and John Jarboe of the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, to present an aviation weather training and outreach workshop at the Gulf Coast Wings aviation safety event in Galveston last month.

Larry gave four different 50-minute presentations. One was entitled "VFR Flight in IFR Weather," while the three other talks were entitled "Weather for Certified Flight Instructors," which demonstrated a systematic approach for pilots to assemble weather data to assist them in making a "go/no go" decision. All four of Larry's presentations were well received, and generated many questions and discussions from pilots and flight instructors.

John made several 50-minute presentations on using the Aviation Weather Center's Aviation Digital Data Service, the FAA-funded Direct User Access Terminal, and FAA pilot weather briefers to obtain comprehensive preflight and inflight weather briefings.

Vince did an excellent job of organizing and coordinating the weather seminars and the NWS presentations for the conference. Vince personally conducted several impromptu outreach efforts for NWS aviation programs at the seminars he attended.

CLIMATE SERVICES BRANCH

MAXIMIZING THE INTEGRATION OF SURFACE OBSERVATIONS. WFO Amarillo was successful in meeting with local officials ranging from county judges to county sheriffs in Moore County and Ochiltree County, and making them see the value of including the National Data Information Network (NADIN) interface onto their state- owned Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS). The NADIN interface is how state and locally owned AWOS communicates data into the NWS gateway. At each location, WCM Steve Drillette requested an opportunity to make a presentation to the county commissioners on the benefits of the NADIN interface. Information provided included the costs, but more importantly how making this data available in real-time to all users nationally would directly benefit their communities.

The benefits discussed focused on how it would make their community/airport more visible, not only to FAA facilities, but also how it would promote commerce and how local residents could see or hear their current conditions on local cable TV, NOAA Weather Radio, Internet sites, local radio stations, and elsewhere. The benefits to improving local short-term forecasts were also highlighted. In the long run, this assists the NWS in our ability to provide accurate high-resolution gridded forecasts.

NOAA SNOW AND NOAA DATA USERS CONFERENCE. Victor Murphy of SRH CWWD attended the NOAA SNOW and NOAA Data Users Conference at Kansas City last month. It was an opportunity for NOAA/NWS customers to voice their needs and concerns with regard to accessing this data from NOAA and the NWS. In general, NWS WFOs received high marks for their diligence and responsiveness on providing high quality data. Troy Kimmel of Austin was the featured media speaker at the conference. The title of his presentation was "Media Use of Surface Weather and Climate Observations and Data."

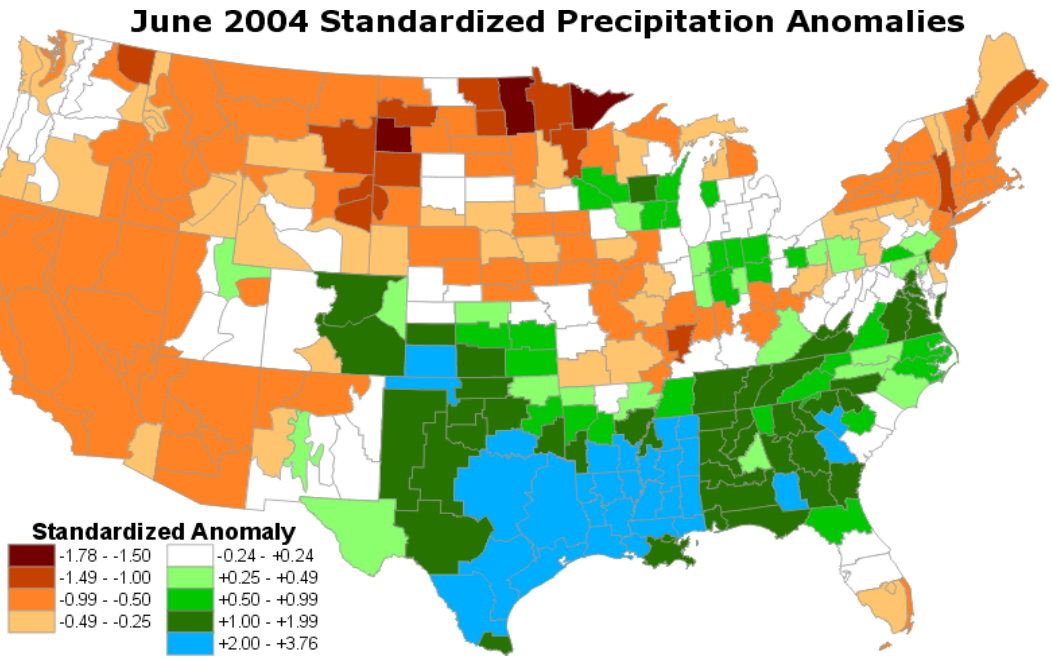
WET JUNE. Last month was one of the wettest on record in the past 100 years for Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. The Southern Region Climate Center compiled the following facts based on data from first order reporting stations as well as co-op sites:

- Mississippi had its wettest June ever ... the average rainfall for the entire state was 9.83 in, eclipsing the previous record of 9.81 in set in 1981. Elliott was wettest with a June total of 18.68 in. Of note, Meridian had its wettest June ever, based on data since 1948, recording 10.91 in.

- Louisiana had its 3rd wettest June ever with an average state rainfall of 11.34 in, exceeded only 13.64 inches in 1989 (the year of the first T.S. Allison) and 12.44 inches in 2001 (the year of the second T.S. Allison). Bogalusa had 19.51 in.

- Texas also had its 3rd wettest June ever... the average rainfall for the state was 6.23in. That was just less than the second wettest year (6.26 in) in 1921, and half an inch less than the 6.72in which fell in 1899. Austin had over 400% of its normal monthly rainfall, and the wettest location was Houston George Bush Intercontinental Airport with 18.33 in.

Notably, all this occurred without any organized tropical systems, making day-to-day forecasts challenging. However, forecasters in this area received high marks as evidenced by the following note from a customer in Alexandria, Louisiana. "...Our weather pattern over the last few weeks has been that of summer on-and-off rain pattern and the daily and long-term rain predictions have been remarkably and consistently accurate. Even when there have been no obvious surface features on the national or regional maps that would indicate rain, your forecasters have been accurately pinning the rain chances nearly to within a few hours."



WFOs COMPLETE TEMPLATE FOR CLIMATE DATA. NWSH Climate Service Division has reached agreement with the various Regional Climate Centers (RCC) around the country to have the RCCs host a Web site and maintain the database which will interactively enable WFOs to conduct climate data searches in real-time. WFOs will have access to historical climate data from the period of record to the current date for all ASOS sites within their county warning area, as well as up to 20 cooperative observation sites within their county warning area, by accessing the Web site xm-ACIS. Historical data searches and climate queries can then be done at the WFO in real-time in support of the WFO climate service program. There is also a potential for improving forecasts through access to this climate database. Almost all WFOs in the region have completed a template to indicate to the RCCs which sites they need to access for data.

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

AHPS EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH WORKSHOPS. Last month HSB chief Ben Weiger, LMRFC HIC Dave Reed and senior hydrologic forecaster Eric Jones participated in AHPS educational outreach workshops that were held for staff at WFO Morristown and staff at the TVA River Scheduling Operations Unit in Knoxville. Jayant Deo, a contractor for the AHPS program, participated in the outreach workshop at WFO Morristown. Dave and Eric provided presentations about the AHPS program to the TVA staff with a focus on the long-term probabilistic hydrologic forecasts available on the AHPS Web page. Several presentations were also provided to the staff at WFO Morristown. The workshop began with Jayant talking about the paradigm shift associated with hydrologic information delivery via the AHPS Web pages. Ben provided an overview of the NWS AHPS program. Eric gave presentations on the Ensemble Streamflow Model that is used to generate probabilistic hydrologic forecasts and information on how to interpret the probabilistic hydrologic forecasts. The workshop ended with discussions on details associated with the probabilistic hydrologic forecast information graphics. Jerry, thanks to you and your staff for hosting this workshop.

HYDROLOGIST HLT MEETING. In collaboration with FEMA and the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC), TPC hosted a Hurricane Liaison Team (HLT) meeting for River Forecast Center hydrologists who are members of the HLT or have been trained for HLT operations. The meeting focused on (1) sharing experiences/best practices among the HLT hydrologists that have been deployed; and (2) identifying ways to enhance the inland flood briefings for FEMA Headquarters. Southeast RFC HIC John Feldt organized the meeting and led the discussions. Ben Weiger and Walt Zaleski represented SRH at the meeting. HLT hydrologists in attendance included Bill Lawrence and John Schmidt, DOH and senior hydrologic forecaster respectively from ABRFC, LMRFC senior HAS forecaster Jeff Graschel, WGRFC HAS forecaster Greg Shelton, Jack Bushong and Todd Hamill, HAS forecaster and senior hydrologic forecaster respectively from SERFC, and Middle Atlantic RFC hydrologic forecaster Scott Krocynski.

TADD/TXDOT/AARP COLLABORATION. Kandis Boyd, in collaboration with the Texas Department of Transportation (TDOT), has begun working with the AARP to include the "Turn Around Don't Drown™" safety message in the AARP driver safety education program. This student workbook includes driving precautions in adverse weather conditions including rain, fog, ice and snow. The program has graduated over 9 million individuals. The updated workbook will be issued in the upcoming months.

RESERVOIR MODELING WORKSHOP. The Arkansas-Red Basin RFC in Tulsa hosted an Office of Hydrologic Development-sponsored Reservoir Modeling Workshop last month. Representatives from ten RFCs made the trip to Tulsa in addition to three from OHD. The group gained valuable experience working hands-on with examples of two reservoir models within NWSRFS, the RES-SNGL and the RES-J models. The capabilities of both models were presented and attendees were given a clear comparison between the two. A group meal was held on Wednesday evening and all enjoyed some Oklahoma barbeque.

DAM FAILURE/LEAKS IN WFO JACKSON HSA. WFO Jackson has had a busy year dealing with imminent and potential dam failures in their Hydrologic Service Area. The first incident occurred when a rain swelled lake in Adams County in Southwest Mississippi over topped the dam. Emergency Management officials were able to successfully drain the lake. The second incident occurred on a sunny day in March when Big Bay Dam broke in Lamar County in South Mississippi. If this dam failure had not occurred during the day, many lives would have been lost. Damage below the dam was substantial. The third incident occurred in the first part of June in Southeast Hinds County when a leak was discovered in the Lake Dockery Dam. A flood watch was issued as a precaution until emergency management officials were able to successfully drain the lake. On June 16, less than a mile from Lake Dockery, a leak was discovered in a small dam bringing the HSA its fourth incident relating to a problem dam.

WFO Jackson senior service hydrologist Marty Pope and Jackson State University student Lyvon Kennard visited the dam. The lake was fairly small, but the 10-12 foot dam height and a densely populated subdivision less than a quarter mile downstream prompted concern. After consulting with emergency management officials about the hazards below and the possibility of heavy rain in the area, a flood watch was issued until the dam could be drained. Actions were taken by emergency management and Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality to drain the dam. The flood watches issued for both leaking dams in June prompted much local media attention and helped the public below these structures to be prepared in case of a failure. As our dams continue to age, incidents relating to unsafe dams will become a more common occurrence in our region and throughout the nation.

WFO ATLANTA/PEACHTREE CITY REMEMBERS T.S. ALBERTO. July 2004 marks the 10-year anniversary of T.S. Alberto. Over a four day period, T.S. Alberto produced heavy rain (12-24 in) across Georgia, and with record and near-record flooding along the Flint, Ocmulgee and Chattahoochee Rivers. The WFO Atlanta/Peachtree City office has created a Web page to commemorate the event. See *www.srh.noaa.gov/ffc* for more information.

ABRFC CREATES AN INTERACTIVE PRECIPITATION DATA VIEWER TOOL. ABRFC is proud to announce a new interactive precipitation Web tool for customers: *http://www.srh.noaa.gov/abrfc/precip/zoom.php* This Web site will enable users to read and display netCDF files, toggle overlays (RFC, states, towns, and counties), and zoom to specific areas.

WFO NEW ORLEANS/BATON ROUGE PRESENTS HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS TALK. On May 27, WFO New Orleans/Baton Rouge MIC Paul Trotter presented a Hurricane Preparedness talk to more than one hundred St. Bernard Parish participants. Additional attendees included SCEP student Danielle Manning and, native of Metarie, Louisiana, HMT Jacob Herty. The talk focused on history, past storms, related impacts and hazards, and NOAA's seasonal outlook. Additional information was passed on about "Turn Around, Don't Drown" and NOAA's elevation studies. Other participating agencies included the Louisiana State Office of Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security, Louisiana State Police, St. Bernard Sheriff and Fire departments, American Red Cross, Louisiana National Guard, area hospitals, parish officials and workers, Lake Borgne Basin Levee District, the Council on Aging, and refinery officials.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

PROFICIENCY CHECKLISTS. The Warning Decision Training Branch has distributed (via email to SOOs) updated on-the-job "proficiency checklists" for RPG Build 5 and AWIPS OB3. These are intended as a SOO training resource only, and are available for use as need be at each office. Questions or comments should be directed to John Ferree (John.T.Ferree@noaa.gov) at the WDTB.

AN OVERVIEW OF NHC PREDICTION MODELS. Bernard Meisner has updated again this year his on-line tech attachment on the NHC guidance models. It's at:
http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/ssd/nwpmodel/html/nhcmodel.htm
Included in the update are performance statistics for the track models for 2003 and an expanded section on the various ensembles used for track forecasts.

NAME IN THE NEWS. On June 14 the *Albuquerque Journal* newspaper published an informative article by staff writer John Fleck on NAME - the North American Monsoon Experiment - in which a number of NWS meteorologists will be participating this summer. Fleck summarized the project in a nutshell:

> With a better understanding of how ocean temperatures drive winter climate, forecasters have a good handle on the cool season half of the region's precipitation. But the summer cycle remains an enigma. [NAME] has been four years in the making. Its goal, according to [Wayne] Higgins of the federal government's Climate Prediction Center in Maryland, is "to improve our ability to predict drought seasons in advance."

A number of Southern Region WFOs will be taking special upper air soundings in support of the project, and forecasters from several WFOs will serve short tours actively involved in operations at the NAME forecast operations center in Tucson. In addition, Jesus Haro (WCM WFO Brownsville), Shawn Bennett (MIC WFO Tampa Bay), and Victor Murphy (SOD SRH), all fluent in Spanish, will be assisting the Servicio de Meteorologia Nacional (the republic of Mexico's equivalent to the NWS) as a liaison between the SMN and the NAME forecasters.

SCHOOL NET SITES UNAVAILABLE. Two years ago it was announced that AWS Convergence Technologies, Inc., which operates the WeatherBug network, otherwise known as AWS school-net data, had joined NOAA/NWS in a memorandum of understanding which would make the AWS network of surface observations available to the NWS without charge. NOAA's Forecast Systems Lab partnered by accessing the data, providing quality control to the observations, and making the data available via their Meteorological Assimilation Data Ingest System (MADIS). Of the 13,000 or so sites across the country in MADIS, about 5000 have been AWS sites. Many offices have found the MADIS data base to be a valuable source of supplemental information. Unfortunately, the two-year MOU has expired, and pending resolution of new agreements or contracts the data are no longer available via MADIS.

CLIMATE WEBCAST. COMET has released a new Webcast titled, *The Science of Global Climate Change and Human Influences*, by Dr. Kevin Trenberth, head of NCAR's Climate Analysis Section. The presentation is part of the series of climate variability workshops that are conducted at COMET. This 40-minute version has enhanced graphics and links to additional resources and can be found at *http://meted.ucar.edu/climate/climchange/*. The Webcast requires the Macromedia Flash 6.0 player to provide the audio and accompanying animation sequences. The most recent versions of both Internet Explorer and Netscape will have the Flash 6.0 player plug-in installed, however, if you do need to install the player, follow directions in the tech notes.

"The Climate Change presentation by Kevin Trenberth was fascinating ... ," and "... it will be directly applicable to MANY phone calls we get at the office from newspapers and media," are typical responses by forecasters who participated in the climate workshop. We encourage everyone to take advantage of this on-line version. For more information on these Webcasts contact Pat Parrish, COMET's Managing Instructional Designer, at *pparrish@comet.ucar.edu*

NO SMOKING! A hundred years ago smoking was bad for your health, and it might also have shortened your career with the U.S. Weather Bureau! Retired deputy director Gary Grice shared with us this item he found while researching old USWB records:

So many instances wherein the excessive use of cigarettes has caused a material deterioration in the mental and physical condition of employees have come to the attention of the Chief of the Weather Bureau that he feels constrained to warn the members of the service against indulgence in this injurious habit. The smoking of cigarettes in the offices of the Weather Bureau is hereby prohibited. *Officials in charge of stations will rigidly enforce this order, and will also include in their semiannual confidential reports information as to those of their assistants who smoke cigarettes outside of office hours*.

Chief, U.S. Weather Bureau
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Weather Bureau, Washington, D.C.
March 21, 1900
Instructions No. 51

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION BRANCH

COMPUTING SYSTEMS. We have received the initial LAN server shipment from Gateway. The implementation team was here last month to set up the root server and the SRH LAN server. The active directory system will be tested and the first five office installations will begin.

A "check off" list for installing a new machine on the local LAN is being created. It will give step-by-step instructions on how to place the server on property, install base programs, tighten the security, scan for vulnerabilities, and put it in production. We hope this will make paperwork and licensing much easier to maintain.

The ROC in Norman presented a one-day seminar, hosted by Southern Region, on the e-Policy Orchestrator product from McAfee. Attendees were SR, WR, ER and the ROC. We hope to deploy this service to the field to maintain anti-virus and personal firewall updates in real-time. It will be deployed along with the new LAN servers.

OBSERVATIONS AND FACILITIES BRANCH

FUEL SPILL AT MORRISTOWN. A leak in a fuel filter at the RDA generator in Morristown caused the spilling of approximately 35 gallons of diesel fuel onto the floor of the shelter. Most of the fuel was retained inside the RDA shelter and recovered by the environmental contractor Safety-Kleen, but a small amount leaked from a seam in the wall of the shelter. Safety-Kleen will return and perform a final cleanup and excavate the soil near the shelter wall to determine if any soil needs to be removed. It is believed that only a small amount of fuel leaked based on the amount recovered compared to the previous quantity measured in the tanks. An uncontained spill of 25 gallons or more is reportable to the National Response Center, as is a spill into a body of water, neither of which occurred in this case.

One impact of a fuel leak inside the shelter is the potential degradation of the shelter seam caulking, which retains spills and allows the fuel to be collected and disposed of. A previous spill at another site resulted in the shelter being recaulked at a cost of about $8K. The high cost was due to labor and materials for a crew from the shelter manufacturer Fibrebond to travel to the site and elevate the generator and remove the fuel tanks, then clean under both before recaulking. While this work was being done, a replacement portable generator also had to be rented in case of possible power outages.

Fibrebond recommends the shelters be recaulked every five years to maintain integrity for fuel spills. If this was done throughout Southern Region, the cost would approach $250K, and the cost to perform this nationally could exceed $1M.

OSHA TRAINING INSTITUTE. Southern Region environmental and safety coordinator Terry Brisbin attended an introductory week-long course in industrial hygiene at the OSHA Training Institute in Chicago. The course material included toxicology, air contaminants, permissible exposure limits, asbestos, biological hazards, ergonomics, respiratory protection, noise monitoring, indoor air quality, confined spaces, and hazard communication. More detailed studies in these topics at the OSHA Training Institute can lead to a certification as an OSHA safety and health official.

IV-ROCS. The enhanced software version of IV-ROCS is currently being evaluated at SRH and at field offices across the nation. If this test continues to be successful the enhanced IV-ROCS system will be deployed nationally and used to collect coop reports from across the NWS network. National deployment and implementation of the system is scheduled for July 2004.

INTERAGENCY MEETING. A meeting between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Vicksburg District and the NWS was held last month in Vicksburg, Mississippi. This meeting was to coordinate the collection and distribution of precipitation data used by the COE in conjunction with the flood control agreements between the two agencies. Data acquisition representatives from the NWS forecast offices in Little Rock, Shreveport, Memphis, Jackson,and New Orleans participated in the meeting.

UPPER-AIR. May was an excellent month for most Southern Region upper-air sites with 19 of 23 sites earning scores well above the national average of 285.63. Two SR sites continued to have more than the average problems with their tracking equipment and/or not receiving working replacement parts in a timely manner. These two sites caused the monthly overall score to fall just below the national average by 0.09 points.

For May, WFO Albuquerque's upper-air staff earned the highest ranking score in the region and third in the nation with a near perfect score of 299.63. Not far behind WFO Albuquerque were several other SR offices with scores in the upper 290s during the month. These sites include: San Juan (298.16), Key West (297.93), Tampa Bay (297.63), Corpus Christi (297.26), Jacksonville (297.17), Amarillo (296.99), El Paso (296.31), Fort Worth (296.19), Atlanta (295.38), Little Rock (294.88), Del Rio (294.27), Jackson (293.96), Brownsville (291.68), and New Orleans with a score of 290.81.

WFO Little Rock's upper-air staff regained the top spot in the region with a 12-month average score of 295.42. This score is only .51 points short of holding the top spot in the nation. Other offices in SR with excellent averages include: Del Rio (294.81), El Paso (294.60), Key West (294.37), Corpus Christi (293.64), Lake Charles (293.52), Jackson (292.83), San Juan (292.66), Nashville (290.81), and Atlanta with a score of 299.01.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Several WFO Brownsville staff members have completed a specially arranged course in Spanish, offered by arrangements with Access Consulting, a local training and consulting firm. The training was voluntary, with eight of the staff enthusiastically signing up. The ten-week course consisted of classes twice a week for two hours per session, for a total of 40 hours of study. An initial assessment of language skills was provided by Mrs. Sandra Garza, the primary instructor, and she assigned students to either a basic or intermediate level class. A specially tailored syllabus targeted meteorological language instruction. Graduates of the basic class were

Andy Patrick (MIC)	Kurt Van Speybroeck (SOO)
D. Tony Abbott (HMT)	Matthew Lorentson (senior forecaster)
Jason Straub (meteorologist)	M. Buddy Martin (meteorologist)

Intermediate class graduates were senior forecasters Timothy Speece and Jeff Philo.

In addition to the final exam, practical oral quizzes were also given and Mrs. Garza periodically calls the office to request weather information … in Spanish, of course. The training was quickly put to use as several of the students have already provided interviews and responded to requests for forecasts and tropical discussions – in Spanish - to customers, including local Spanish radio stations. Meteorologists have begun to participate in Spanish only shift, where nearly all operations communication takes place in Spanish. Twice weekly, office daily briefings are being scheduled for additional opportunities to continue training and to remain ready to serve all the citizens of Deep South Texas. This program has opened additional possibilities to serve the entire local population, including residents in the northern Mexican state of Tamaulipas.

SRH was pleased to assist with this project, and we appreciate the *gracias para su apoyo* we received from SOO Kurt VanSpeybroeck who provided this report.

DIVERSITY/EEO AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

WEATHER AND MARS. Spaceflight Meteorology Group (SMG) lead forecaster Karl Silverman gave a telephone interview to high school students participating in a Mars exploration team. The discussion on how to measure basic weather parameters on Mars included types of sensors, location/height of sensors, spacing, data storage and transmission, long-term studies - climatology, and upper-wind soundings. Several SMG staff were involved in other talks including hurricane preparedness talks in conjunction with WFO Houston; a presentation at the Gulf Coast Wings Weekend in Galveston and a summer day camp at Alvin High School.

WFO SAN JUAN MIC SERVES AS GUEST SPEAKER. MIC Israel Matos was the guest speaker at Inter-American University in Barranquitas, as part of the Gear Up and Upward Bound Program. The program provides academic and personal support designed to motivate and prepare students for college who may be the first in their family to consider going to college. Israel presented careers and opportunities within the NWS to the group of 45 students.

CWSU AND WFO MEMPHIS REACHES OUT. CWSU Memphis MIC Doug Boyette and several WFO Memphis employees presented many aspects of weather with emphasis on aviation weather at the annual Basic and Advanced Aerospace Workshop held at the University of Memphis.

WFO MIAMI PARTICIPATES IN HURRICANE AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EXPOS. WFO Miami MIC Rusty Pfost and HMT Bob Ebaugh staffed booths on separate occasions which offered the public information regarding hurricanes and emergency preparedness.

CLOUD CHARTS USED IN MOBILE. WFO Mobile had the opportunity to staff a booth at a county workshop for 300 math and science teachers. The teachers remarked that the cloud charts were used extensively in the classroom and weather was being taught to children as young as kindergarten age.

WFO BROWNSVILLE OUTREACH. WFO Brownsville staff gave presentations at several Hurricane Town Hall meetings and presentations in June. Students from South Texas Community College in McAllen, Texas toured the facility. This community college will soon become the first higher education institution in the Rio Grande Valley to offer a meteorology course.

WFO SHREVEPORT USES STUDENTS TO REPRESENT A RADAR. Forecaster Mary Keiser gave a presentation to the summer program at Volunteers of America, Lighthouse in Bossier City, Louisiana. Mary used the students to represent the radar, choosing a few students as rain clouds, one as ground clutter, and two facing opposite directions and one little radar beam which would bump into the others and come back to the radar and report what she found. The children ranging from elementary to middle school age attend the Lighthouse which is an outreach organization designed to help disadvantaged students.

WFO TALLAHASSEE PARTICIPATES IN HURRICANE SEASON 2004 KICKOFF. WCM Bob Goree and MIC Paul Duval participated in a formal press conference hosted by the American Red Cross to kick off the start of hurricane season 2004. Bob Goree gave a formal presentation and interviews were given to several local TV and radio stations, including the Florida News Network, stressing the need for families to prepare at the beginning of hurricane season.

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS
JUNE 1 - 30, 2004

Southern Region Losses

Name	From (Office)	Action/Transfer	From Title/Grade
Alan Johnson	WFO LIX	Retirement	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Robert Drummond	WFO MFL	Retirement	PMO, GS-10
Ernest Duxbury	WFO TBW	Transfer to Western Region	Elec Tech, GS-11
Robert L. Owen	WFO FWD	Retirement	HMT, GS-11
Mark Bacon	WFO LCH	Transfer to Eastern Region	Intern, GS-5

Southern Region Gains

Name	To (Office)	Action/Transfer	To Title/Grade
Christopher Bannan	WFO JAN	Reassign from CR	Forecaster, GS-7
Steven L. Duaime	WFO LCH	New Hire	Elec Tech, GS-10
Stacie Hatcher	WFO FWD	New Hire from SCEP Program	Met Intern, GS-7

Within Region Transfers/Actions			
Name	To (Office)	Action/Transfer	To Title/Grade
John Lhotak	RFC ORN	Transfer from RFC Missoula, MT	Hydrologist, GS-7
Tom Bradshaw	SRH	Promotion from WFO HUN	Chief, MSB, GS-14
Dean Klimt	WFO MEG	Promotion from WFO LZK	ESA, GS-13
Ted M. Ryan	WFO FWD	Transfer to WFO FWD	Forecaster,
Daniel Shoemaker	WFO FWD	Reassignment at WFO FWD	Forecaster, GS-9
Steven W. Cromer	WFO MEG	Promotion on station	ITO, GS-13
Christopher Darden	WFO HUN	Promotion on station	SOO, GS-13
Jonathan Brazzell	WFO SJT	Promotion on Station	Lead Forecaster, GS-13
Dana Griffin	WFO LIX	Promotion on Station	Lead Forecaster, GS-13