



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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

NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR. It is my pleasure to report that Steven Cooper has been appointed Deputy Director of the NWS Southern Region, behind Gary Grice who retired recently. During his 24 years with the National Weather Service, Steven has consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership skills. As Chief of the Meteorological Services Division and then Chief of the Climate, Water and Weather Division, he played a critical role in the modernization and restructuring of the Southern Region and led the way on numerous, innovative programs. Along with former DRD Gary Grice, Steven co-developed the popular BLAST (Building Leaders for A Solid Tomorrow) program, and he played a pivotal role in nurturing many of the SR innovations including the recent and highly successful Turn Around, Don't Drown^(TM) program. While his experience, expertise and leadership skills have been instrumental for many past successes, Steven's skills will be even more important as we face the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Please join me in congratulating and welcoming Steven to his new position.



NEW MICs. **Justin Weaver** has been appointed Meteorologist-in-Charge of WFO Lubbock. Justin obtained a BS degree in meteorology from Central Michigan and began his NWS career as an intern at WSFO Lubbock in 1990. He earned an MS degree from Texas Tech and served as the service hydrologist and later a senior forecaster at the WSFO before moving to WFO Detroit. He returned to Lubbock in 2001 as the ITO. His duties have given him broad experience with all types of severe weather, and in addition he has the somewhat unique experience of coordinating with our partners in both the Mexican (International Boundary and Water Commission) and Canadian (Lake Huron) meteorological services.

I am also very pleased to announce the appointment of **Shawn Bennett** as the new Meteorologist-in-Charge of the Tampa Bay Area NWS Forecast Office. Shawn will assume the position in mid-April, behind Ira Brenner who retired this month. Shawn brings a wealth of experience to the new position and will be a strong asset to citizens in all of west-central Florida and its marine community. A 17-year veteran of NOAA and the NWS, Shawn's background includes work at NOAA's Office of Atmospheric Research headquarters and NSSL. He joined the NWS in 1994 as the Science and Operations Officer at WFO San Juan, then transferred to WFO Brownsville (1999) where he served as the SOO until his promotion to MIC in January 2003. Please join me in congratulating Shawn and wishing him well in his new position.

IFPS

EXCHANGE OF ISC GRIDS. It's important to share your ISC grids with your neighbors. When you make changes, send your ISC grids. The grids play a vital role in collaboration and should not be held until the last minute. There is an optimal balance that can be struck between sending ISC as soon as they have been edited versus not sending them at all until all grid editing is complete. Also, there is no great need to ship derived grids via ISC, so those can be eliminated for efficiency gains. Note that in coming builds of IFPS there will be a helpful GUI to assist in configuring sites and grids for ISC traffic.

PINPOINT FORECASTS A HIT! SRH has been inundated with positive emails about the service our WFOs have provided via the Pinpoint Forecasts. To view the customer comments see the IFPS customer Web page: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/cwwd/msd/customer.html>

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

UNIFIED DEFENSE 2004 EXERCISE. National Weather Service Southern Region recently completed support to the Unified Defense '04 Exercise. This exercise involved over 50 federal, state and local agencies, and over a two-week period tested the government's ability to deal with multiple radiological events coincident with the simulated landfall of a Category 4 hurricane in Texas.

Southern Region provided technical expertise in determining the simulated hurricane track and intensity. WFOs Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Houston/Galveston, Austin/San Antonio, and the West Gulf River Forecast Center constructed over 300 simulated weather products for use during the exercise. SRH staff created the dissemination tools and utilized the SRH Web farm to provide all participating agencies with the simulated weather information during the exercise.

During the height of the exercise, SRH staff were deployed to both FEMA Region VI and the Texas Division of Emergency Management, as is done during real hurricane threats, to provide weather briefings and support the operations of the various participating agencies. The SRH Regional Operations Center provided briefings on a daily basis to keep parties informed of real weather dangers. This proved to be especially useful, as an “unplanned” high fire danger in the Texas Panhandle produced a grass fire that came within two miles of the Pantex Weapons Plant, a nuclear weapons assembly and disassembly facility. The ROC acted quickly to connect the Texas DEM, FEMA Region VI, and Texas Forest Service to WFO Amarillo so they could provide the latest fire weather information to the front lines. The work of the NWS helped firefighters contain the fire quickly and minimize the danger to the public.

The exercise provided Southern Region with the opportunity to fine-tune weather operations while supporting our vital partners and customers. Our efforts drew widespread commendations from the participating agencies, as well as direct praise from the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Texas. Each of the offices that participated in the exercise (and in the real world incident) should be proud of their work supporting our partners. This entire exercise was a success due to your hard work and dedication.

MARINE

New Orleans Boat Show. WFO New Orleans, the Tropical Prediction Center, and the National Data Buoy Center provided staffing for the 2004 New Orleans Boat Show for a total of 33 hours of operation. The WFO supplied the display, and the WFO and NDBC supplied handout material. NDBC also assisted with posters for the display backdrop.

The booth was staffed by one to two persons throughout the boat show’s hours of operations and was located visibly on the “main floor” which resulted in a large number of visitors to the NWS booth. Approximately 1000 boat show attendees visited the booth. There was significant interest in finding different means to access buoy data and marine forecasts. The NDBC maps of buoy and C-man locations in the Gulf as well as data buoy reference cards listing means to access buoy information via Web sites and phone were very popular. A wide variety of mariners stopped off at the booth, with the primary group being small boat operators mainly used for recreational fishing in the coastal waters. The rapid expansion of the Internet was quite evident. Many booth visitors were aware of the marine forecast and observation data on the Internet, and others were desiring ways to retrieve a variety of data via the Internet. We had many compliments on the marine services provided by the National Weather Service.

This event offers the best opportunity for WFO New Orleans/Baton Rouge to interact with a great number of the local marine community in a relatively short period of time.

Miami International Boat Show. A booth at the annual Miami International Boat Show, one of the largest in the United States with an estimated attendance of 138,000, was staffed by NWS meteorologists from WFO Miami and the Tropical Prediction Center last month. The NWS exhibit was a combined effort of NWS and four other NOAA agencies.

PUBLIC

Update to Modernized PILS Transition. The Communication Identifier End State Transition (CID Transition), i.e., the "Transition to Modernized PILs," is starting to move forward. The first set of products is scheduled to be changed-over May 25. All PILs will be changed to end-state by the end of the year. We will be sending out product lists for your review and we appreciate your help in correcting errors before NWS Headquarters notifies our customers. If you have any questions, please contact Melinda Bailey or Eric Howieson. The CID Web site is not completely up-to-date, but the schedule has been updated which is Appendix B and located at http://www.nws.noaa.gov/datamgmt/NWS_CID_Transition_Plan.html

FIRE WEATHER

Fire Weather Training Provided by WFO Morristown. WFO Morristown fire weather program manager David Hotz gave the "Atmospheric Stability and Clouds" and "General and Local Winds" sections of the S-290 course at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, Black Mountain, North Carolina in January. The course was held at the home base of the Asheville, North Carolina Hotshots. Many of the 30 students were from the Asheville and Augusta, Georgia, Hotshots, but some were also from the North Carolina State Forestry and U.S. Department of Defense.

WFO Tampa Bay Develops and Initiates FAM Fire Visits. Fire weather program manager Rick Davis, WCM Dan Noah and meteorologist Jennifer Colson completed the first in a series of fire FAMiliarization visits in late January and early February with fire officials who are responsible for prescribed burns in the WFO Tampa Bay forecast area. The goals of these visits include firsthand forecast verification, relationship building with fire officials, and personally seeing the importance fire weather and spot forecasts have on fire planning, control and safety. This program is a partnership with the Florida Division of Forestry, the Florida State Park Service, and local county government officials.

WFO Miami Participates in Collier County Wildland Fire Round up. The Collier County EOC, Naples Florida hosted a wildfire suppression workshop in February. Workshop participants included people from federal, state, county and municipal agencies that operate in Collier County. Presenters discussed what could be supplied and what special operations could be performed to suppress fire for a long duration wildfire event. WFO fire weather program leaders Joel Rothfuss and Eric Christensen spoke about the WFO Miami Fire Weather Program.

The discussion focused on how the WFO would handle the long-term fire event. Additional time was spent on the day-to-day fire weather operations, spot forecasts for HAZMAT incidents, and the accessing NWS products via the Web.

FAA ACADEMY BEGINS FLIGHT SERVICE STATION PROFICIENCY CHECKS. In early February the NWS instructors/evaluators at the FAA Academy resumed proficiency checks for FSS controllers. Each day one or two FSS locations are selected (out of a box) for a proficiency check. Once a facility is selected, the instructor will notify the facility manager that, sometime during that day, the NWS will conduct a proficiency check. The instructor will then select a route (not an easy one) and request a standard briefing from the FSS controller. Upon completion of the briefing, the instructor will provide a grade and comments to the controller on the briefing. The instructors at the FAA Academy are planning to conduct at least one proficiency check at each FSS nationwide before summer.

WFO AUSTIN/SAN ANTONIO PARTNER'S WORKSHOP. The WFO presented a Partner's Workshop in San Antonio on February 19 and again in Austin on February 24. The workshop focus was to increase awareness of the many new and improved forecast services provided by the WFO to the media and emergency coordination officials on federal, state and local levels. Each meeting consisted of five presentations. MIC Joe Arellano highlighted the importance of partnerships and gave an overview of the most costly weather events of 2003 for South-Central Texas. Forecaster Monte Oaks then presented an overview of fire weather services. Forecaster Clay Anderson and SOO Jon Zeitler introduced the new graphical, tabular and pinpoint forecast products. Service hydrologist Mark Lenz gave an overview of the new AHPS flood products available on the Web. WCM Larry Eblen finished the meeting with a detailed severe weather and tornado history tailored to each metropolitan area. The workshop lured several members of the media as well as emergency coordinators and members of the Lower Colorado River Authority, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Homeland Security, Texas Parks and Wildlife, National Park Service, Austin Water Department, and the Texas Flood Plain Managers Association.

WFO TALLAHASSEE INTERACTS WITH STUDENT TV BROADCASTERS. Student director Johnathon Conant and WFO Tallahassee senior forecaster T.J. Turnage manned the discussion desk during the 30-min FSU student current weather TV show February 25, 2004, seen daily on WFSU-TV. During four spots Johnathon asked T.J. about the Tallahassee flooding during the recent rainy spell. Other topics discussed included the Tallahassee tornado, hail and severe wind climatologies, the NWS StormReady Program, and Tallahassee's winter weather.

NEW KEY WEST CLIMATE MESSAGE. WFO Key West has initiated a twice-daily climate message product for Marathon, Florida. The product is being appended to the existing climate message for Key West and can be viewed under the MIACLIEYW product. This now makes daily climate data available for customers in the upper Keys, and it is being prominently aired on NOAA Weather Radio.

WFO TULSA ISSUES NEW SEASONAL OUTLOOK. WFO Tulsa has begun issuing a new long-range Site Specific Seasonal Outlook (SSSO) product. The WFO has compared the correlation of temperature for certain specific forecast points within their CWA with those of the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) Mega Climate Divisions. If the correlation is significant, a regression equation can be developed for each site for each three-month forecast period. Using the monthly CPC forecast, a Probability of Exceedence (POE) table is then generated for the forecast point. The values are then plotted on a graph to form a POE curve. At present, WFO Tulsa is issuing this experimental product for Tulsa and Fort Smith. A sample of the product, along with the product description document can be viewed at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tulsa/climate/downscale/climfcst.php>.

Southern Region is hopeful this product, or something similar, will be embraced nationally to help fulfill the *NWS Regional and Local Climate Services Plan* which calls for the development of local climate products downscaled from CPC forecast products by the end of FY05.

This is the second long-range climatological product being issued by WFOs within SR. WFO Melbourne has been issuing an experimental long-range dry season precipitation forecast for central Florida for over two years. A sample of this product, along with the product description document can be viewed at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mlb/enso/mlbnino.html>

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

FFMP TELETRAINING. Hydrologic Services Branch hydrologic services program manager Kandis Boyd in collaboration with WFO Morristown senior service hydrologist Brian Boyd conducted four teletraining sessions on the AWIPS Flash Flood Monitoring and Prediction (FFMP) application last month. Brian also served as the instructor for the teletraining sessions. FFMP software developers Tom Filiaggi and Michael Churma from MDL, and Mike Mercer from OCWWS HSD also participated in the teletraining sessions as technical consultants. Bernard Meisner (SRH SSD) provided technical support with integrating the FFMP presentation material into the Visitview teletraining software package. The NWS Training Center provided online registration support for the teletraining sessions. The FFMP presentation material will be posted on the Southern Region Intranet. We will notify you when it is available.

Thanks to everyone involved for a job well done. A special thanks to Brian Boyd for serving as the instructor.

NEW MEMBER OF SR HYDROLOGY PROGRAM FAMILY. Peter Corrigan is the new senior service hydrologist at WFO San Juan. Peter reported to work in Puerto Rico the week of March 8. He holds a B.A. degree from the University of Rhode Island and an M.S. degree from the University of Delaware. Peter began his NWS career in 1988 as a research meteorologist at NWSH in the Office of Hydrology. He worked on Probable Maximum Precipitation and precipitation frequency studies and also generated National Hydrologic Outlooks from WFO Spring Flood Outlook issuances. He spent two years at WGRFC as a hydrologic forecaster before assuming the senior service hydrologist position at Des Moines in 1998.

Peter co-authored the PMP reports for the Pacific Northwest and California. He worked on the transition and implementation of AWIPS/WHFS at WFO Des Moines. As the supporting service hydrologist for the WFO at Lacrosse, Wisconsin, he conducted field work and coordination to help update the WFO's hydrologic database information for all river forecast points. He provided training to the staff at WFOs Des Moines and WFO Lacrosse on all modernized hydrologic support systems. Welcome to the Southern Region hydrology program family, Peter.

CAREER DAY PRESENTATION. WFO New Orleans senior service hydrologist Patricia Brown visited the St. Tammany Junior High School in Slidell last month to participate in the Annual Career Day activities in conjunction with Black History Month.

Patricia spoke to a challenging classroom of about 25 eighth graders. She led the discussion with information about NOAA, the National Weather Service, the weather service forecast office at Slidell, and the river forecast centers. The first part of the visit covered basic meteorology and hydrology, as well as other careers within NOAA. Patricia covered the educational requirements necessary to become a NOAA scientist and the other opportunities that arise with a good mathematics and/or science education.

The second part of the discussion revolved around the personal skills and habits necessary for success in life. Patricia shared some of her own experiences as a student and as a worker. The discussion covered setting goals, integrity, accountability, dealing with failure, positive thinking and actions, and the methods for making good life decisions. The conversation stressed avoidance of success "blockers," such as drugs, alcohol, unsafe health practices and negative influences.

The children asked many questions and freely shared their weather experiences, as well as their career goals. Most intend to go to college. Nice job, Pat.

MODELING LAKE OKEECHOBEE DATA. On February 26, SERFC HIC John Feldt and WFO Miami MIC Rusty Pfof visited the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) in West Palm Beach in order to share information concerning NWS, SFWMD, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers efforts to model Lake Okeechobee. The big lake is a vital water resource for almost 6 million people in South Florida for water supply, agriculture, recreation, and flood control. An important by-product of the meeting was an agreement between SFWMD and the NWS to share real-time mesoscale meteorological and hydrological data, including observations from Lake Okeechobee data platforms. This information will be available to WFO Miami (and hence to all Florida WFOs through AWIPS) in 15-minute increments, which should benefit real-time mesoscale analysis routines. Future liaison between SFWMD and the NWS, especially SFWMD modelers and SERFC, is planned for the near future.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

FLORIDA WFOs COLLABORATE ON ROAD WEATHER INFORMATION SYSTEMS. WFO Jacksonville MIC Steve Letro and SOO Pat Welsh were invited guests recently for the dedication of a new building for the College of Computer Sciences and Engineering at the University of North Florida. Their participation reflects the extensive collaboration of the WFO staff with UNF and its Applied Global Systems Laboratory. Of particular note is that one of the systems engineering laboratories is the Advanced Weather Information Systems Laboratory, so named because of UNF's involvement in mesoscale weather data and communications research in Florida. For the same reason, UNF was given a leadership role in the Florida Department of Transportation's new Road Weather Information System (RWIS), which is part of the national Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) initiative. Florida NWS offices are also heavily involved.

This important role for both the NWS and UNF did not just happen, but is the direct result of a series of research projects centered on wireless mesoscale weather data communication, beginning with a COMET Partners project with UNF professor J. David Lambert which funded the original research. That project led to the RWIS "research facility" (<http://www.floridaroadweather.org>), and an initial network of sensors at microwave towers located along the north Florida interstate system that was built by UNF and Florida State University with collaboration from the Jacksonville and Tallahassee WFOs. Sites nearest Tallahassee have sensors at multiple levels to support additional research at FSU being led by Drs. Henry Fuelberg and Jim Elsner, both of whom have been involved in the NOAA/NWS Cooperative Institute for Tropical Meteorology.

The next phase of the project will be to reformat the RWIS data and include them in the MADIS (Meteorological Assimilation Data Ingest System) at NOAA/FSL, which will allow sharing the data via the Southern Region servers. Installation of the first "operational" section of the Florida RWIS in central Florida, in WFO Melbourne's CWA, will begin this summer. Future goals include providing short-term gridded forecasts on the Web and at kiosks in selected rest areas along the interstate highways. More about the project and how it developed is at http://www.floridaroadweather.com/rwis/report1_reports.xml.

NCEP ETA MODEL CHANGE. On Tuesday, April 20, 2004, the configuration of the NCEP's Eta Model will be modified to allow 0-84 hour forecast to run in the current 0-60 hour time slot. This will be a permanent change. The expected new delivery times for Eta products are as follows:

24 hr products: 5-10 minutes earlier
36 hr products: 15-20 minutes earlier
48 hr products: 15-20 minutes earlier
60 hr products: 20-25 minutes earlier
84 hr products: 35-40 minutes earlier

More precise times will be provided when they become available. Details on the change can be found at: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notifications/tin04-07eta_compression.txt

TEST OF DOWNSCALED GFS OUTPUT TO DAY 8. In support of a request from the IFPS Science Steering Team (ISST), from March 15 through April 15 interested offices can participate in a risk reduction test of new extended high resolution numerical model guidance. The intent of this DGEX (Downscaled GFS with Eta Extension) project is to bring quick relief to forecasters by providing a physically consistent and seamless option for initializing high resolution medium range forecast grids.

Once each day the NCEP will run the Eta model starting at forecast hour 78 and provide output from 84 hours through 192 hours (Day 8) using boundary conditions provided by the Global Forecast System (GFS). This, in essence, will produce downscaled (12 km) GFS output every six hours. A SmartInit procedure will be distributed to participating offices to further downscale the output to 2.5 or 5 km, the same resolution as the grids the offices produce for the National Digitized Forecast Database. Should this test be successful, starting in June the NCEP will run the model twice each day and the downscaled model output will be added to the AWIPS Satellite Broadcast Network. Training and the requisite AWIPS configuration files will then be made available to all offices.

Two offices from each NWS CONUS region will formally participate in this test. Other SR offices may receive and use the guidance, but without national support. Contact our ISST member Andy Patrick (SOO, WFO Corpus Christi) or Bernard Meisner (SSD) for more details. The model output is also available at

<http://wwwt.emc.ncep.noaa.gov/mmb/mmbpll/etapll8day/index.html>

UPDATED PRISM CLIMATE WEB SITE. The Spatial Climate Analysis Service (SCAS) at Oregon State University announces a completely redesigned Web site: <http://www.ocs.oregonstate.edu/prism/>. This site provides an unprecedented wealth of timely spatial climate data sets for a variety of monitoring and research needs. You can use this site to access current and historical monthly maps of precipitation, air and dewpoint temperature analyses and anomalies for the conterminous United States. You may also download publication-quality map graphics for many years and months, explore the data online and create time series graphs and tables for any grid cell with their Internet Map Server. Also available are new maps of 1971-2000 mean monthly and annual precipitation and temperature. Complete 4-km grid coverage of every month and year from 1895 to the present can be accessed from this site, via free download in the popular ARC/Info ASCII GRID GIS format.

These data sets were created with the well-known PRISM climate mapping system. PRISM is unique in that it incorporates a spatial climate knowledge base that accounts for elevation, rain shadows, temperature inversions, coastal effects, and more in the climate mapping process. Data set documentation (including FGDC metadata), reports and papers on PRISM and other SCAS projects are available from the Web site.

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION BRANCH

IT SECURITY. IT security continues to be a major focus in the region and commands large resource commitments. We have formed a tiger team of regional headquarters and field experts to help local offices rework their LAN structures in-order to meet the requirements for the certification and accreditation process. While these offices were operating in a secure manner, the inability of the Harris software (IT security tool) to scan several, or in some case any of the PCs on the LAN, required us to take action. In some cases three or four people have helped out for a full week. The routine operational requirements placed on our IT staffs at the local level is such that it would take one to two months in order to accomplish this upgrading if not assisted by the tiger team.

AWIPS. All Southern Region sites have successfully installed OB2 and all OB2 related maintenance releases. OB3 was successfully installed at WFOs Mobile and Shreveport. A few bugs have been identified and several have already been addressed and fixes will be in place for national deployment. One issue is the change in the spell checker dictionary in OB3. This change causes the spell checker in XNOW to no longer function properly. A patch has already been developed for XNOW and can be obtained at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ama/xnow/front.html>

All Southern Region offices have successfully installed the Linux workstations this past month.

WSR-88D ORPG BUILD 5 STATUS. WFOs Fort Worth, Albuquerque and Norman will be participating in the beta test for ORPG Build 5. The test will start in February and early March with national deployment scheduled to begin March 29.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS. A number of new NWR site orders are in the queue and are being monitored and coordinated with the telcos to get them installed. We have been keeping a close watch on the effort to install the St. Croix, Virgin Islands circuit from the San Juan office. It has been challenging but progress is being made. The Sneads, Florida NWR telco concerns are being addressed through close coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation, who owns the facility where the transmitter will be housed. A few other circuits are following along with no problems anticipated, including in Texas the Beaumont move, the new Carrizo Springs start-up, and the Plainview circuit. The circuit for the El Paso Spanish language transmitter has also been installed and tested.

We continue to do modifications and updates to the frequency database to insure all our transmitters are in compliance with regulations. We have been working with the Hydrology Division concerning the narrowbanding effort for hydro transmitters and alert systems and gauges. As updates are approved and confirmed, the frequency database is looking better and will become more manageable.

We have sent a survey to each office asking about their current telephone system. We are looking to upgrade/replace these systems, as funding allows during FY05. Most of these telephone systems are reaching the end of life expectancy and are becoming more expensive to maintain at optimum level. As the information from the field is gathered, we will determine the best course of action for the region.

IV-ROCS STATUS. The Interactive Voice Remote Observation Collection System (IV-ROCS) collected and distributed 13,868 observations from Southern Region volunteer observers last month. This is an average of just over 478 observations per day. This, coupled with the approximately 175 observations per day that are transmitted through WxCoder II, represents a large quantity of high quality data for the WFOs to support the office mission.

COOP METADATA SUBMISSIONS. In February 85 metadata updates were submitted, approved and archived using the Cooperative Service Station Automation. Another 21 submittals are currently in the approval process. In addition to the coop program metadata updates, 66 identifier records were updated using the NWS Location Identifier system.

POSSIBLE MOLD ABATEMENT AT WFO MIAMI/NHC. A recommendation to remove mold-stained wallboard in the WFO Miami ready room was given by a certified industrial hygienist who toured the facility recently looking at areas of past water damage caused by roof and window leaks. The Public Health Service indoor air quality investigator from Dallas who previously visited three SR offices was asked to review the Miami report for concurrence and said removal of the affected wallboard may alleviate employee health concerns, but the EPA does not require removal of areas less than 10 square feet if it can be treated in place. Estimates for the wallboard removal are being sought by Miami/NHC personnel.

EPA SPILL PLANS VS. BEST MANAGEMENT PLANS. Nine offices in SR have Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) plans originally done by Fluor-Daniel when the offices were new, but have now expired and are in need of revision. Due to new regulations related to total on-site diesel fuel capacity and some radars being at remote locations, two of the nine new spill plans can be done in the less expensive Best Management Plan (BMP) format. The other seven SPCCs will require a site visit by personnel from an environmental contractor such as TetraTech, Inc. which has provided surveys in previous years. The BMPs can be done by SRH.

RADIOSONDE BATTERY WATER ACCEPTANCE BY POTWs. NWS is required to contact publically-owned waste treatment plants (POTWs) and receive approval prior to disposing of radiosonde battery water in the municipal sewage systems. A draft letter to the POTWs has been prepared for regions to modify and provide to the POTWs with references to the chemical analyses of the Sippican and Vaisala battery activation water, which contain elevated concentrations of copper. For upper air sites where the office is not connected to a municipal sewage system, this water must be collected for evaporation or commercial disposal. Each office with a POTW will be contacted regarding communications for approval to dispose of the activation water.

OBSERVATIONS AND FACILITIES BRANCH

WFO KEY WEST CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS. An order for WFO Key West construction was signed at WSH and forwarded, along with new drawings and specifications, to the Navy Facilities Command for presentation to bidders. The construction contract award could be made in April with groundbreaking in early May.

NATIONAL WEATHER CENTER IN NORMAN. Last month Southern Region's System Operations Division (SOD) participated in a NOAA/NWS meeting via video conferencing to discuss relocation activities to the new National Weather Center in Norman. The meeting focused on designing NOAA/NWS' IT infrastructure. Having such a large NOAA/NWS presence on the University of Oklahoma campus and meeting DOC IT security requirements presents a major challenge to the program. Representatives from SOD traveled to WFO Norman to work with the local WFO staff to finalize Southern Region's requirements. The NWC facility is expected to be complete in February 2006.

NEW OSHA RULINGS ON CONFINED SPACES. At the request of NWS, OSHA has ruled that the NEXRAD dome is a permit-required confined space that may be reclassified as a non-permit confined space with appropriate safeguards of locking out "all main functions of the antenna." The ROC is preparing an instruction on how to implement the Lock Out/Tag Out requirements and will disseminate this to the field soon. Presumably the upper air domes will be classified the same as NEXRAD and will follow a similar process for Lock Out/Tag Out procedure development, which began this past week at WSH by facilities engineering and the upper air program office. A letter from OSHA was received for the larger WFO/RFC air handler units, requiring that the electrical disconnects be locked out and tagged before the HVAC contractor could enter the air handler for maintenance.

RF RADIATION HAZARD FOR ROOFTOP NWR ANTENNAS. A small number of NWR antennas with 1000W transmitters are mounted on high-rise building rooftops. The RF radiation emitted by an operating transmitter could possibly exceed the recommended maximum values of OSHA, FCC or IEEE exposure limits if NWS employees and members of the general public are too close to the antenna. This is most likely to occur when building maintenance personnel such as roofers or HVAC technicians are working on the roof near the NWR antenna. For these sites, signs will be made that warn of a potential RF radiation hazard.

After review and discussion with NWS and NOAA radiation safety personnel, warning signs for potential RF radiation hazard areas will be placed at four rooftop mounted NOAA Weather Radio antennas with 1000-watt transmitter power ratings.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

DIVERSITY/EEO AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

RFC Atlanta HIC John Feldt participated in the Principal of the Day program sponsored by the city of Atlanta public schools. He spent a full day shadowing the principal at Woodson Elementary School in the middle of the city. Woodson Elementary has a school-wide Title I program and services 370 students.

The Principal for a Day program places private sector and government officials into an Atlanta city school to experience what goes on during a typical day. Some activities during the visit included, touring the school facility, visiting classrooms and participating in the discussions, meeting school staff, giving morning and dismissal announcements, sharing lunch with students and staff, and addressing or teaching a class.

To follow up, the school will send a field trip to the National Weather Service Office later this spring.

WFO Tallahassee senior forecaster Ron Block participated in various activities centered around Black History Month. The activities included discussing minority opportunities in meteorology and hydrology at a youth fair in Quincy, Florida, and at a “Celebrating African-American Heritage” event at the Leon County main library. Along with SCEP Phil Shafer, Ron served as a judge at the Regional Science Fair bringing together the best middle and high school science projects from across north Florida and recommending that several meteorology projects from across north Florida advance to the state competition. Ron also lectured to the Rickards High School International Baccalaureate advanced science students on the role of mathematics in meteorology.

WFO Tallahassee staff continue to teach a course at the co-located Florida State University meteorology department entitled “Introduction to the National Weather Service.” This bi-weekly course has 19 students, with lectures augmented by invited NOAA/NWS experts, and provides a unique overview of NWS career opportunities and operations.

WFO Shreveport forecaster Patrick Omundson and DAPM Marion Kuykendall gave an office tour to a group of 14 Cub Scouts and parents last month. The group was able to watch a balloon release and toured the operations area.

WFO Shreveport forecaster Bill Murrell participated in Career Day at Ruston High School by presenting meteorology as a career to the students. Bill talked about the NWS mission and operations.

WFO Brownsville DAPM Jim Campbell, forecaster Carl McElroy, and HMT Alfredo Vega gave a tour to 24 winter Texans staying at the Rio RV Park last month. Jim gave a presentation on NWS operations and how weather affects life in the valley. He gave a quick tour of the National Weather Service Web site and showed each person how to access information from their nearest Weather Service Office. Jim emphasized the importance of NOAA weather radio and how each homeowner should own one. Many of the visitors had a receiver in their RV and were familiar with NWS broadcasts. Carl gave a realtime weather briefing, and showed some of the products he uses to prepare his forecasts. He answered many questions about the weather in each individual’s hometown. Jim and Alfredo gave a tour of the upper air facility. One lucky lady then released an old severe weather balloon.

WFO Brownsville DAPM Jim Campbell gave a presentation to 38 students and three facilitators from the Junior Leadership in Brownsville last month. The group develops leadership skills among outstanding high school students in the Brownsville area. The meeting was held at the Gladys Porter Zoo. Jim talked about the history of the Weather Service, our local operations and weather that affects the Valley. Several students approached Jim after the presentation and asked about internships at the office.

Jim also gave an office tour to the Leadership Brownsville group. The group consists of up and coming community leaders representing a variety of public and private sector interests. Jim provided an overview of NWS operations to the 40 attendees and the group was treated to a real-time weather briefing by SOO Kurt Vanspeybroeck . The group then toured the NWS Brownsville upper air facility.

WFO San Juan forecaster and marine focal point Scott Stripling recently visited the University of Puerto Rico marine science department at the Magueyes Island and conducted a presentation. Dr. Robin Williams and 18 faculty members and graduate students were briefed on NWS operations, the marine program and strategic goals for climate monitoring.

The WFO was visited by three faculty members from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus to see the morning upper air radiosonde release, discuss the on-going atmospheric science program, and become familiar with the WFO operations.

WFO San Juan HMT Jesus Figueroa conducted an office tour for 30 students of the Jose Nevarez Landron Public School from the municipality of Toa Baja.

WFO San Juan forecaster Hector Rivera conducted a one-hour seminar on the mathematical foundations of Numerical Weather Prediction models for 18 graduate students and faculty members of the University of Puerto Rico Physics and Chemical Physics Program.

WFO San Juan forecaster Andy Roche visited the University of Puerto Rico Institute for Tropical Ecosystem Studies of the chemistry department to lecture on meteorology and the importance of the meteorological parameters for atmospheric measurements science and research. As part of his presentation for eight graduate students and their professor, Andy discussed air pollution, saharan dust and volcanic ash.

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS
FEBRUARY 1 - 29, 2004

Southern Region Losses

<u>Name</u>	<u>From (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>From Title/Grade</u>
Francisco Baeza Balleste	WFO SJU	Retirement	DAPM, GS-12
Albert Pietrycha	WFO AMA	Transfer to Central Region	Forecaster, GS-12

Southern Region Gains

<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Christopher Juckins	WFO MFL	Transfer from NCEP	ITO, GS-11
Kristen Hurley	WFO BMX	New Hire - SCEP Program	Forecaster, GS-9

Within Region Transfers/Actions

<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
John Warrelmann	WFO JAX	Transfer from WFO LIX	PMO, GS-10
Steven Smart	WFO CRP	Transfer from WFO OUN	HMT, GS-11
Dan Gregoria	WFO MFL	Transfer from WFO SJU	Meteorologist, GS-12
Justin Weaver	WFO LUB	Promotion from WFO LUB	MIC, GS-14
Steven Cooper	SRH RD's Office	Transfer from SRH CWWD	DRD, GS-15