



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

June 2003

SOUTHERN TOPICS

Working Together To Save Lives

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR

On May 21 I was pleased to participate in a news conference we arranged at SRH to launch the TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN campaign as, "words to live by." The TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN slogan is now the cornerstone of a nationwide public awareness campaign designed to reduce flood-related deaths. The National Weather Service Southern Region initiated the program and began its awareness campaign with the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH), Texas Division of Emergency Management, and other partners, to enhance public awareness of the dangers of driving or walking into flooded areas. During the 30 year period from 1972-2001 the average annual toll for deaths related to floods was 127, compared to 73 for lightning, 65 for tornadoes and 16 for hurricanes. We've learned all too well that approximately 80 percent of flood-related deaths occur when people drive or walk into moving water. The real tragedy is that most deaths associated with our leading weather-related killer are easily avoidable. If more people will follow the simple message, "Turn Around, Don't Drown," hundreds of lives will be saved in just several years.



Participating in the news conference was Hector Guerrero, WCM at WFO San Angelo, who helped coin the new slogan. The idea came out of a SkyWarn training session last year. Congratulations, Hector, and thanks for words many can live by.



More Record-Setting Weather in the Region. Torrential rains in South Florida on May 27 made the month the wettest May on record. At Fort Lauderdale, 10.21 inches for the 24-hr period ending at 7 a.m. on the 28th shattered the record of 3.10 inches set in 1954. That also brought the May rainfall total to a record 16.93 inches, breaking the old mark of 15.95 inches set in 1958. Most of the overnight rain on the 27th - 9.53 inches of it - fell during a 4-hr period from 5-9 p.m., with 7.60 inches falling in only two hours from 6-8 p.m. The 5-9 p.m. total exceeded the once in a hundred year rainfall rate for a 6-hr period. Local flooding was widespread and the Fort Lauderdale airport was closed for a few hours.

Cline Awards. The call has been issued for 2003 NWS Isaac Cline Award nominations. Remember there are three levels of recognition: local, regional and national. An [attachment](#) to this month's *Topics* contains a full description of this awards program. We have many individuals at all of our offices who distinguish themselves each year, and their dedication to public service is deserving of the recognition which comes with the Isaac Cline Awards. Please note the deadlines for submitting nominations:

- Local-level nominations are to be submitted to the local supervisor by June 16.
- Regional/office level nominations are to be submitted to SRH (attn: Camille Dyer/ADMIN) by July 15. Nominations should be on form CD-326LF. Be sure to include in Block 8 that this is a Cline Award, **and** indicate the category of the award.

Historic Meeting 50 Years Ago. June 24, 2003 will mark the 50th anniversary of a little known but historic gathering at Texas A&M University. On that date a small group of individuals with remarkable insight and enthusiasm, representing the U.S. government, the state of Texas, and private interests, met at College Station and set a course which would lead to the nation's first weather radar warning network, right here in Texas. That network, and other actions taken at the meeting, provided the foundation for today's NWS warning operations. What they accomplished in a matter of weeks - from meteorological concept to action - was truly remarkable. Read about the First Texas Tornado Warning Conference in a [technical attachment](#) to this month's *Topics*.

El Paso MIC. I am pleased to announce that William Alexander is the new Meteorologist-in-Charge at WFO El Paso. Bill began his NWS career in 1982 as an intern at WSFO Fort Worth before moving to WSFO Lubbock in 1986 as the Warnings and Preparedness Meteorologist. A few years later he returned to Fort Worth as the Warning Coordination and External Affairs Meteorologist at SRH. Bill then moved on to NWS Headquarters in 1992 to manage the National Severe Local Storms and Flash Flood Program. Since 1999 he has handled various duties at the Alaska Region Headquarters, including serving as the National Volcanic Ash Program Manager, deputy chief of Environmental and Scientific Services, Regional Aviation Meteorologist and Fire Weather Program Manager. Before joining the NWS Bill gained valuable experience with West Texas weather through graduate studies at Texas A&M and with the Texas Department of Water Resources, where he operated a forecast facility at Big Spring in support of the High Plains Cooperative Experiment (HIPLEX) evaluating Texas cloud seeding experiments. Please join me in welcoming Bill back to the region.

IFPS

NEW 'GRID' CUSTOMER. WFO Corpus Christi SOO Andy Patrick visited the Environmental Engineering Department and reported that Texas A&M Kingsville is a potential customer for IFPS/NDFD grids. They were very interested in obtaining data from both the NDFD site and the netCDF files from the SR site. For research purposes they are also interested in any analysis grids that we produce in GFE, which we can probably make available through our LDAD. Eventually, they would also be interested in climatology grids. This is the kind of outreach that will foster more and more interest in future NWS services.

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION. WFO San Angelo SOO Amy McCullough has created forecaster references of the NDFD required sizes. Two help sheets show what the maximum grid size is for each element (based on the IFPS required elements) for the midnight shift and the day shift (new Day 7 grids). See the graphics at: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/msd/html/gridelements.htm>
Thank you, Amy.

DEADLINE MET! Kudos go to all WFOs for their excellent work in meeting all requirements for the IFPS June 3 deadline. Many hours, hard work and long nights prepared our offices for the start of ORD (Operational Readiness Demonstration), June 16 - July 15. The testing prepares us for the goal of NWS IFPS, Initial Operating Capability (IOC). In particular several very important things were accomplished, including the move to LX1, new grid elements, expanding the CCF to seven days, producing the ten IOC products (<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/msd/html/tenioc.html>) issued by the grids (including the SFT for each WFO's CWA), and collaboration. Excellent job everyone!

IFPS/GFE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES. Since the first round of live teletraining sessions on collaboration in the NDFD era filled up so quickly, additional sessions are being offered. Again the number of openings in each session will be limited in order to facilitate discussion, so we encourage offices which have not yet taken advantage of the training to do so now. Sessions are scheduled for the following dates and times:

Tuesday, June 24	1 p.m. CDT
Monday, June 30	Noon CDT
Wednesday, July 2	9 a.m. CDT
Tuesday, July 15	2 p.m. CDT
Thursday, July 17	4 p.m. CDT

Please allow two hours for the presentation and discussion. Respond to Shannon White by email (shannon.white@noaa.gov) to sign up for one of these teletraining dates. On a space-available basis, unclaimed teletraining slots will be released to those requesting a second date on the day before the session. Include in your e-mail a point of contact with name and phone number, whether your office uses ISC, and whether your office uses 12Planet.

A Student Guide for this training, including talking points and VISITview installation instructions, is at: <http://www-md.fsl.noaa.gov/IFPS/CollabTrainingGuide.html>

For VISITview downloads go to <http://www-md.fsl.noaa.gov/IFPS/collabnew.exe>. The presentation is also available in PowerPoint format at: http://www-md.fsl.noaa.gov/IFPS/mws4/Collaboration_bird.ppt.

It is planned to release a recorded version of the training within the next few weeks.

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

THE REGIONAL OPERATIONS CENTER. We continue to encourage participation by eligible WFO and RFC staff in the SRH ROC operations. The following from former ROC duty officer Dan Gregoria (WFO San Juan) summarizes what's gained from the experience – from both a personal and regional perspective.

“the ROC position at Southern Region Headquarters provides a special opportunity. As ROC duty officer one becomes an integrated part of the fine team of SRH for a period of four weeks. My experience at the ROC, which happened to correspond to the most active week for tornadoes in U.S. history, was challenging, very rewarding and most definitely worth it!

While working at the ROC, I had the opportunity to give weather briefings to SR personnel, the Texas DEM and FEMA. I compiled several reports on significant weather events which were sent to NWS Headquarters and became part of the information sent to the Secretary of Commerce. I also was able to work on a few projects with members of the SRH, attended daily CWWD staff meetings, conference calls and seminars.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of this unique opportunity. I am more than confident that you will walk away from your experience knowing that the Southern Region WFOs are supported by a top-notch group of people.

I want to thank SRH for making this program possible. It was truly a gratifying experience. I also want to thank Israel Matos, MIC WFO San Juan, and the entire San Juan staff for covering the shifts while I was away allowing me the opportunity to participate in this rewarding program.”

SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY AT SAFETY CITY. Last month, WFO Lubbock forecaster Jody James represented the NWS at Safety City in Lubbock. Safety City is a miniature city with streets, traffic signs, and buildings designed to teach kids about traffic and bicycle safety. On this day, numerous healthcare and agencies dedicated to safety were invited to educate and inform K-6 school kids and their parents about safety issues in general. Approximately 200 people visited the Lubbock NWS display at Safety City with many students inquiring about severe weather safety, and some wanting to know more about a career in meteorology.

LUBBOCK OFFICE REPRESENTED AT SLATON AIRSHOW. On May 17, forecasters Jody James and Ron McQueen visited with spectators and aviation enthusiasts at the annual Slaton Air Show sponsored by the Slaton Air Museum. Many pilots who stopped by the NWS booth reported that they frequently use NWS aviation products. Jody and Ron handed out aviation literature and cloud posters to approximately 150 visitors from the booth set up in a hangar near the flight line. The airshow featured many warbird aircraft including the Navy Corsair and Bearcat, and a flyover by the Air Force F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter from Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico. WFO Lubbock continues to expand its aviation outreach to local airshows, pilots, flight instructors, and area FBOs (Fixed Base Operator - an airport's supplier for fuel and other aviation needs).

WFO MIAMI PARTICIPATES IN SOUTH FLORIDA HURRICANE CONFERENCE. On May 29, the National Weather Service/NOAA was represented at the 9th annual South Florida Hurricane Conference in Fort Lauderdale by NHC Director Max Mayfield, WFO Miami MIC Rusty Pfof and WCM Jim Lushine, and NOAA/AOML HRD Chris Landsea. After Broward County Mayor Diana Wasserman-Rubin opened the conference, Max gave a presentation on last year's hurricane season and the new five-day forecast for this year. Rusty discussed WFO services and the 75th anniversary of the devastating 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane that killed over 2,000 people in South Florida. Jim conducted a meteorology workshop for the emergency workers and staff members, and Chris gave a presentation on the Hurricane Research Division, including how seasonal hurricane outlooks are developed, and the effects of the ENSO and the multi-decadal oscillations in the Atlantic and Pacific affect hurricane season activity.

About 500 people attended the conference, mostly emergency management, law enforcement, and health care workers. Craig Fugate, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, and John Wilson, President, Florida Emergency Preparedness Association also gave presentations. Craig Fugate included the "Turn Around, Don't Drown" campaign in his presentation on personal preparedness plans and the state's response and help for emergency hurricane situations.

WFO BIRMINGHAM VISITS ALABAMA AIRPORTS. WFO Birmingham aviation program leader Jason Wright visited fixed based operators at these airports in May: Troy Municipal, Brundidge Municipal, Clayton Municipal, Eufaula's Weedon Field, and Union Spring's Franklin Field. Jason discussed NWS aviation programs and asked the FBOs to provide feedback on what we could do to better serve their aviation needs.

FIRE WEATHER TRAINING PROVIDED BY WFO LAKE CHARLES. Forecasters John Trares and Kent Kuyper from WFO Lake Charles taught the meteorology phase of the S-290 Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior Course at Angelina College in Lufkin, Texas. About 70 national and state forest service employees from Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma attended the training course.

MARINE

Team NOAA Implements New Marine Observations into AWIPS. In an excellent example of interagency collaboration, three NOAA line offices have contributed to a new marine data source from a commercial tug and barge company, Crowley Liner Services, as part of the NOAA Coastal Storms Initiative. WFO Jacksonville marine forecasters joined the eastern liaison officer from the National Coastal Data Development Center (NESDIS) and the computer team from the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (OAR). The Crowley terminal is located along the St Johns River in Jacksonville, and the managers at Crowley agreed to participate in the coastal volunteer observing program. Working with Tim Rulon at NWSH, a new WMO standard format was implemented with these observations. Tim Rulon at NWSH assisted with WMO formats, Christopher Sisco at NHC/TPC wrote scripts to collect the data, and thanks to software by WFO Miami SOO Pablo Santos, forecasters from Cape Hatteras to Slidell can now display new marine observations. The display on the D2D system completes the Team NOAA implementation of surface observations, confirming that teamwork among the NWS, OAR and NESDIS staff can overcome operational obstacles. Many of the participants on the Team NOAA approach are not directly funded by the CSI program, but the benefit of the data has been compelling for each person to make the system work. The cooperation of the Crowley company is also gratefully acknowledged.

Future enhancements include a new data entry tool under development by the OAR programmer Miguel Izaguirre for the Crowley dispatcher to enter the surface data directly into the MAROB format, and transmit the file to the AOML ftp site. No internal labor will be required to transmit data directly to the Gateway when this new enhancement is completed. Over three thousand individual measurements have been transmitted to NOAA offices and to US Navy forecasters since July 2002. For questions, you can email Mike Crane, NCDDC (Michael.Crane@noaa.gov).

DVDs of Tropical Weather Events. Donovan Landreneau (WFO Lake Charles) has recorded weather event DVD-Rs, which play just like a movie DVD. The DVD-Rs should play in most DVD-ROM drives on computers with the proper DVD player software, as well as most home DVD players capable of playing DVD-R discs. The *2000-2002 Atlantic Hurricane Season GOES Satellite Imagery* DVDs present a chronological succession of GOES-east satellite imagery for the Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. The time between images is ½ hour, with the exceptions of occasional short data outages and satellite eclipses. The images used for this project come directly from the Geostationary Satellite Server (<http://www.goes.noaa.gov>). The 2000 movie uses IR imagery from August 4 to October 31. The 2001 movie uses IR imagery from June 1 to December 5. The 2002 movie uses IR, water vapor, and visible imagery from June 1 to November 30. As a special addition, each year's disc has a separate section showing the imagery overlaid with each storm's track. The *2002 Tropical Storms & Hurricanes Affecting the United States: A Satellite and Radar Study* DVD chronicles the life cycles of the eight tropical cyclones that affected the United States in 2002. Each segment starts with GOES-8 IR, water vapor, and visible satellite imagery, and is followed by land-based WSR-88D radars in the areas affected.

Copies of these DVDs can be obtained through the National Climatic Data Center at:

Satellite Services Group
National Climatic Data Center, Room 120
151 Patton Avenue
Asheville, North Carolina 28801-5001

Attn: Axel Graumann
Telephone: 828-271-4850
Facsimile: 828-271-4876
E-mail: ncdc.satorder@noaa.gov

PUBLIC

NEW DIRECTIVE ON PRODUCTS. The long awaited Directive 10-503, which contains policy on products such as the AFD, SFP, CCF, SFT, and SFP, has been issued. It was signed on May 29, and has been posted to the NDS Directives Web site at http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/010/operation_services.htm. The directive will become effective October 1, but there will be a phased implementation of some of the products based on the deployment of IFPS-15 (October-December). We will receive more information later.

WFO LAKE CHARLES HELPS HAZMAT. Here is one example of excellent support SR WFOs are giving NOAA/HAZMAT, and the type of HAZMAT situations that can occur in our region. Early last month the tugboat Mathilde sank 60 miles south of Marsh Island, Louisiana while being towed. The tug went down in poor weather with 12,000 gallons of diesel and 200 gallons of lube oil. The oil was thought to be contained, but the diesel vents were not closed off prior to the vessel sinking. NOAA/HAZMAT provided an initial trajectory based on a catastrophic release of both products. WFO Lake Charles provided a marine and land site specific weather forecast. NOAA/HAZMAT thanked the Lake Charles forecasters, specifically Mark Wiley, for a job well done.

CLIMATE WEB PAGES. Southern Region is collaborating with the other regions and NWSH Climate Service Division in the creation of a new, standardized climate Web page for WFOs. It is envisioned that certain standard climate data will be available to all users in a consistent, easy to navigate format on the climate page of all WFOs. The Climate Page Web Team held its initial teleconference in late May.

CREATION OF NEW CLIMATE PRODUCT. WFO Huntsville, in collaboration with Alabama state climatologist Dr. John Christy, has established a new climatological record for Muscle Shoals. The period of record was established back to 1893. A daily (CLI) and monthly (CLM) climatological report is now being published for the Muscle Shoals area. User feedback has been very favorable, with the most positive comments centering on the value of the more localized information being made available.

NWSH CLIMATE SERVICES PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM. The NWSH Climate Services Division (CSD) has initiated a two-week Climate Partnership Program in conjunction with the NCEP Climate Prediction Center. The purpose is to acquaint potential architects of local partnerships for climate services with the operations of the CPC and the NWSH CSD team that supports these partnerships. Participants will spend one week at CSD and one week at CPC. Contact Victor Murphy at 817-978-2652 x 130 or check the following URL for additional information: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/csd/visitors>

AWPAG INSTALLATION AT FAA-SPONSORED ASOS SITES. Southern Region has notified OCWS of the fact that 20 Local Climatological Data sites nationally, including nine LCD sites within SR, were not slated to have the new All-Weather Precipitation Accumulation Gauge (AWPAG) installed. This is because the sites in question are FAA sponsored ASOS sites, and the FAA has not contributed monies for the AWPAG. Having non-standardized rain gauge equipment at LCD sites was troublesome, so coordination with NWSH CSD has resulted in a request being made to NWSH Surface Observing Systems Branch for funding to secure 15 AWPAGs nationally at sites most prone to receive freezing or frozen precipitation.

NOAA WEATHER RADIO

WFO Norman Applauded for Live NWR Broadcasts. The largest tornado outbreak in many years prompted officials at WFO Norman to make innovative use of Oklahoma's network of NOAA weather radios. At 2:30 p.m. on May 8 the WFO broadcast a live 10-15 minute severe weather forecast briefing on all ten of the NWR transmitters operated by the office. The briefing included the very latest thinking on the expected impacts, timing, locations, a real-time description of the first radar echoes forming, along with a review of tornado safety rules and preparedness and awareness information.

The briefing was advertised via a banner on the WFO's Web site, weather radio announcements, and e-mail sent to all local emergency managers and media in its area of responsibility. KSWO-TV, the ABC affiliate in Lawton, Oklahoma, ran a crawl to advertise the briefing to its viewers. On May 8 and 9, WFO Norman also provided continuous live coverage (for over an hour each day), for the tornadoes affecting the Oklahoma City metro area. This was done exclusively on the Oklahoma City transmitter and relayed the very latest spotter reports, damage and tornado location reports gleaned from all available sources, including TV stations, and radar locations and trend information from all available radars, including the FAA's Terminal Doppler radar.

The broadcasts garnered positive feedback from listeners and partners, including:

"I listened to the continual live coverage of yesterday's tornado on my weather radio. This coverage was superb. Your people should be commended for their actions." --from a listener

"I just wanted to thank you and the [Norman] staff for giving the live briefings yesterday. I think it is a wonderful addition to the NWS radio service, and I'm sure most of the metro area was very appreciative." --from a listener

"...I heard live nowcasts from the NWSFO at Norman via the NWR. Kudos to MIC Mike Foster and his staff for providing excellent information to the public..." --from a storm spotter/chaser

"We did listen to the live weather briefing on Thursday...our chasers out in the field that were listening found this VERY helpful. You guys are doing some great things this spring." --from KOCO-TV

WFO Norman also received numerous verbal comments from people who were listening and indicated it was very valuable.

Weather Radio Expansion Continues. Southern Region had two 1000 watt NWR stations brought on-air in May. One was installed at Cisco, Texas with broadcast audio originating from WFO Fort Worth for an area between Abilene and Stephenville, Texas. The second transmitter was delivered to Leakesville, Mississippi, to serve a portion of southeast Mississippi and southwest Alabama between Hattiesburg and Mobile. Programming for this NWR station will originate from WFO Mobile.

SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS AND OUTREACH

WFO Huntsville MIC Speaks to Realtors. MIC John Gordon was the guest speaker at the Huntsville Association of Realtors (HAR) monthly luncheon. John spoke to 220 Realtors across the Tennessee Valley and discussed the new NWS office, tornado shelters, NWR, tornado climatology, and winter weather preparedness. The board was so enthralled with the talk that they will soon be linking the Huntsville Web site to the HAR Web site.

Kids Day for WFO Huntsville. Forecaster Priscilla Bridenstine participated in Kids Quest in Albertville by setting up a booth aimed at informing kids about the National Weather Service. Approximately 1000 kids attended the event and were taught weather safety, as well as having the opportunity to make tornadoes in a bottle. Parents received numerous brochures relating to weather safety and also had specific questions answered regarding tornado safety. The event was an excellent way to reach out to the community and attendees were very pleased with the newest WFO.

WFO Huntsville Briefs Space Flight Association On May 13, MIC John Gordon and HMT Lary Burgett spoke to 42 members of the Russellville Rotary Club. The following day John also spoke at the Marshall Space Flight Center Association at the Redstone Arsenal Officers Club. He discussed the latest innovative programs that WFO Huntsville is involved with, placing special emphasis on how leadership and teamwork have played huge roles in the development of the new office. There were 50 in attendance.

WFO Miami Makes the Hurricane Talk Circuit. Preparing for the projected busy tropical season, WFO Miami WCM Jim Lushine participated in two hurricane preparedness workshops at Office Depot stores in South Florida at the request of South Florida's Small Business Development Center, a department of Florida Atlantic University. Also, Jim participated in a "Town Hall Meeting" on hurricane preparedness in Palm Beach County and appeared live on WPTV's 11 p.m. news show.

Hurricane Hunters Visit Orlando. Each spring, staff from the NHC, SRH, and Southern Region field offices, along with other agencies, conduct a hurricane preparedness tour along either the Gulf or East coasts, alternating coasts each year. This year's tour, which emphasized the hazards of inland flooding and wind from tropical cyclones, brought the NOAA-P3 Hurricane Hunter aircraft to five cities along the East Coast, including a final stop in Orlando. The Orlando stop attracted significant media attention. Directors Bill Proenza and Max Mayfield fielded numerous media interviews from virtually every network affiliate in the Orlando market, including the Hispanic television network Telemundo.

This year's team was spearheaded by NWS Southern Region director Bill Proenza and NHC director Max Mayfield, along with tropical experts including Regional WCM program manager Walt Zaleski, WFO Melbourne MIC Bart Hagemeyer and WCM Dennis Decker, and the flight crews of the P3. At Orlando they also provided opportunities for nearly 250 Orlando area 4th and 5th grade school children to board the hurricane hunter aircraft and learn about the impacts of tropical cyclones.



From left to right: Bart Hagemeyer, Dennis Decker, Max Mayfield, Bill Proenza, Justin Mosely (SCEP-WFO Melbourne)

WFO Mobile Hurricane Awareness Week Promotion. WFO Mobile, with the help of Alabama governor Bob Riley, went full-throttle in the promotion of this year's national Hurricane Awareness Week (May 18-24). WFO Mobile internally produced and distributed their annual Hurricane Awareness Week pamphlet for Alabama and mailed out about 150 copies before the week began. In a collaborative effort with state of Alabama, nearly 4,000 of the pamphlets were printed at no cost to the local NWS office.

Also, as part of the Hurricane Awareness Week activities, WFO Mobile co-hosted with the Mobile County Emergency Management, a hurricane workshop that was open to all government and businesses leaders, media and private citizens. The highly successful workshop was attended by hundreds with talks provided by the staff of WFO Mobile, state and local emergency management from Alabama and Florida, Red Cross and the local media. The highlight of the workshop was a media and public tour of an Air Force Reserve, C130 Hurricane Hunter aircraft, arranged by WFO forecaster Dan Darbe.

WFO and CWSU Team Up to Tout Meteorology at Career Day. WFO Miami MIC Rusty Pfost and CWSU MIC Stan Holland set up and manned a booth at the Florida Safety and Career Day held in the courtyard at the state Regional Service Center in downtown Miami. Over 3,000 Miami-Dade County public school students participated in the event which included a parade and a concert as well as the fair. Stan and Rusty talked about careers in meteorology and hydrology with the students and handed out preparedness and career information.

WFO Sets Up Shop at the Florida Sportsman Fishing Show. WFO Tallahassee WCM Bob Goree and marine focal point Brandon Bolinski staffed a display and actively participated at the Florida Sportsman Fishing Show in Tallahassee. The booth featured the NWS Tallahassee marine program, including a live Web display, and attracted a wide spectrum of marine users such as sport fishermen, local fishing guides, weekend boaters and even inland lake and river boaters from around the Big Bend and Southwest Georgia. Approximately 2,000 people attended this event and most passed the NWS booth and were handed weather awareness materials and discussed NWS marine products and services.

WFO Cruises at Key West Boat Show. WFO Key West cruised through Key West's "First Annual Boat Show and Nautical Market," sponsored by the Key West Rotary. WFO Key West MIC Matt Strahan, WCM Jon Rizzo and forecasters Chip and Laura Kasper provided information on hurricane protection, safe boating and NWS marine products and services at the show's former Navy's Inner Mole venue. Many favorable comments were received on local NWS forecasts along with helpful suggestions for the WFO's Internet site and NOAA Weather Radio program. The show also hosted representatives from NOAA's Florida Key National Marine Sanctuary, the Key West Power Squadron, and US Coast Guard Auxiliary. During the two-day event, the WFO booth greeted over 1,000 visitors, including 33 canines, one feline, and one cockatiel.

WFO Key West also served up hurricane and pilot safety at the Marathon Seafood Festival, held on location at the Marathon Airport. The MIC, WCM, DAPM Thomas Tarlton and forecaster Jim Bagnall joined Monroe County emergency management planner Jerry O'Cathey to provide NWS promotional materials and brochures to over 500 visitors. In addition, NWS staff met with and informed flight instructors and Experimental Aircraft Association members from Marathon FBO Paradise Aviation, as well as Monroe County Sheriffs Aviation Division Lt. Mike Pandol, who operates the county's Trauma Star helicopter, regarding the new terminal forecast service for Marathon Airport.

Sun "N" Fun Makes Big News in Florida. WFO Tampa and NWS Headquarters helped celebrate 100 years of powered aviation at the annual "Sun-n-Fun" fly-in at Lakeland, Florida in April. The WFO Tampa Bay outreach booth, one of 500 exhibits, included Internet access which provided pilots the opportunity to view up-to-date weather information via NWS Southern Region and WFO Web sites. Attendance at the seven-day event was a whopping 250,000.

WFO Fort Worth Outreach. On May 18 MIC Bill Bunting conducted a ten-minute discussion on weather forecasting over VHF amateur radio during the North Texas Weekly Emergency Net meeting based in Fort Worth. Using the Internet and the Internet Radio Linking Project (IRLP), the discussion was also broadcast via a Provo, Utah, repeater to a similar amateur radio net meeting in progress at the same time. Bill fielded questions from amateur radio operators throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex *and* the Salt Lake City/Provo area, and he did that using a 5 watt handheld transceiver from his home! WFO Fort Worth continues to explore the use of IRLP and other capabilities for long-range storm spotter communications during severe weather events.

WCM Gary Woodall represented the NWS last month at the 50-year commemoration ceremonies of the May 1953 Waco tornado. On May 9 Gary opened the program with remarks to a crowd of 135, including all three Waco TV stations and one Austin station. He recalled the loss of over 100 individuals in that storm, described the progress in our warning program over the past 50 years, and acknowledged the continuing challenge to strengthening our local relationships. On Saturday May 10 Gary participated in a tornado seminar at the Waco Hippodrome Theater, providing a 30-minute program on the weather on May 11, 1953, and comparing our detection and dissemination systems then and now. Approximately 280 were in attendance at the seminar.

On June 3, Gary met with representatives of JCPenney's corporate headquarters in Dallas. The company is assembling an information kit for their employees, including those newly relocated to the north Texas area. Gary provided them with copies of the flood safety and tornado/thunderstorm/lightning preparedness brochures, and with copies of the WFO Fort Worth informational brochure. The JCPenney staff were appreciative of the information, especially the flood materials. They are planning a general staff meeting in the fall, and hope to include a WFO weather awareness presentation on the agenda.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATION

StormReady. The number of new StormReady sites in Southern Region has increased to 31 for FY03. There were seven additional StormReady recognitions in Southern Region in May. WFO Tallahassee recognized Walton County, Florida and Lowndes County, Georgia, while WFO Birmingham recognized Tallapoosa County in Alabama. Meanwhile WFO Atlanta recognized Troup and Cobb counties in Georgia, and WFO Fort Worth recognized the cities of Garland and Allen.

WFO Huntsville MIC John Gordon and WCM Tim Troutman led a StormReady ceremony for the recognition of the *entire WFO Huntsville county warning area* as being StormReady. In attendance for this event was Alabama governor Bob Riley, congressmen Bud Cramer and Robert Atterholdt, and Alabama emergency management director Bruce Baughman. Also in attendance were around 80 county and local dignitaries from all 11 north Alabama counties and representatives from all 11 north Alabama emergency management agencies.

WFO Jackson Hosts EM/Media Workshop. WFO Jackson hosted the second annual Emergency Managers/Media workshop in Brandon, Mississippi which was co-sponsored by the Mississippi Civil Defense Emergency Management Association. The workshop provided 75 emergency managers and media personalities a two-hour Weather Event Simulator demonstration of the November 10, 2002 tornado outbreak that affected a large portion of the South. The group was also provided a two-hour session on NWS Web-based products, digital forecast products, and an introduction to the Emergency Managers Decision System.

The technical presentations on the latest NWS products and services was extremely well received by the attendees who provided significant positive feedback on the Hazardous Weather Outlook (HWO) and Short Term Forecast (NOW).

WCMs Team Up in Louisiana. WCMs Jim Butch (Jackson), Bruce Burkman (Shreveport), and Frank Revitte (New Orleans), represented the National Weather Service serving Louisiana at the LEPA Workshop in Baton Rouge. The NWS participated by having a booth in the vendor area supplied by WFO New Orleans. Two WFO New Orleans forecasters, Robert Ricks and Freddie Ziegler, also produced a number of high quality graphics and pictures depicting meteorological products and weather damage from the active tropical season of 2002. The NWS display received several favorable comments on the quality of the graphical images. Jim, Bruce and Frank staffed the exhibit and had contact with a number of representatives from state and parish emergency management agencies. Most of the parishes represented were from the southern half of Louisiana.

WCM Represents Louisiana at Coastal Hurricane Conference. WFO New Orleans WCM Frank Revitte actively participated in the Mississippi Hurricane Conference in Biloxi, sponsored by the Mississippi emergency management community during mid-May. The conference was attended by nearly 150 emergency management personnel, many of them from coastal and southern Mississippi. Frank teamed up with WFO Jackson WCM Jim Butch to provide a 90-minute presentation on storm surge and the inland effects of tropical cyclones. Frank also attended the dedication of the Wade Guice Hurricane Museum, which honors the retired civil defense director who helped prepare the Mississippi Gulf Coast in advance of Hurricane Camille in 1969.

MEDIA/PUBLIC EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Rangers Get Spotter Training From WFO Birmingham U.S. Forestry employees spend much of their work time outdoors managing our national forests. Weather is a critical part of their daily operations and to enhance weather safety, WFO Birmingham forecasters Mark Rose and Mark Linhares provided employees at the Talladega Ranger District with their first spotter training class. Those in attendance received information on storm structure and synoptic patterns associated with severe weather in the southeast United States. In addition, the storm spotter class began with an introduction about the operations of the Birmingham forecast office.

WCM Honored. Brian Peters, WFO Birmingham WCM, was honored as the Birmingham Area Federal Professional of the Year. A committee made up of federal executives in the Birmingham metropolitan area reviewed dozens of entries. The selection of Brian for this honor was a unanimous vote by the committee, recognizing his many years of dedication to saving lives and public awareness. Congratulations, Brian.

WFO Huntsville Briefs Congressional Representative/Interagency Leaders. MIC John Gordon briefed congressman Bud Cramer, representatives of FEMA, SBA, Alabama state emergency management and local county emergency managers and local media involving how WFO Huntsville performed during the May 2-7 severe weather events in north Alabama. The meeting was very positive as John was able to tout the average tornado warning lead time of 25 minutes and flash flood warning lead time of 50 minutes through the severe weather event of May 6. John also spoke about NWS coordination with our core customers, and how well the equipment, including NOAA Weather Radio and the Hytop WSR-88D performed during the extended period of severe weather.

WFO Brownsville Connects with the Border. WCM Jesus Haro and MIC Shawn Bennett were guests on two live Televisa Matamoros morning news shows. Although the shows originate in Mexico, they have a sizable audience on the American side of the Rio Grande, as well as the entire Mexican state of Tamaulipas. Both interviews revolved around hurricane preparedness and were moderated by Televisa Weathercaster Oscar Sobrevilla. A very heavy emphasis was placed on the need to protect children from floodwaters associated with landfalling tropical cyclones, given the flood-prone nature of the entire Rio Grande Valley.

Shawn and Jesus were also guests on the half-hour "Davis Rankin Show" on KURV radio in Edinburg, Texas. This show is one of the most listened-to local talk shows in the Rio Grande Valley. The main subject of the interview was hurricane preparedness and the 2003 forecast for the Atlantic Basin.

WCM Teams Up with Local Media to Preach Hurricane Preparedness. WFO New Orleans WCM Frank Revitte teamed up with weathercaster Carl Arredondo of CBS television affiliate WWL in New Orleans, to talk about hurricane preparedness in one of the most tropical cyclone vulnerable metropolitan areas in the country. The lengthy interview covered several hurricane related issues including the new five-day hurricane forecast, seasonal outlook for the 2003 season, and hurricane preparedness plans the residents of southeast Louisiana should be undertaking now.

NWS WCM Provides Rip Current and Lightning Expertise. WFO Miami WCM Jim Lushine provided review, significant input and expertise on the subject of rip currents and lightning for a new book entitled *Dr. Beach's Survival Guide* (Yale University Press). The book's author, Florida International University prof. Stephen Leatherman (a.k.a. Dr. Beach), asked for Jim's input on the subjects of rip currents and lightning safety while he was conducting research for the book. The professor was quite grateful and impressed with Jim's vast knowledge and database of Florida-related rip currents and lightning.

WFO Corpus Christi Coordinates with Local University. WFO Corpus Christi MIC Jim Purpura, WCM John Metz, DAPM Dave Davenport, and HMT Tom Dever met with geology professors at Texas A&M University in Laredo. The university will begin offering basic meteorology courses in the fall of 2003 and requested NWS input on the meteorological curriculum. In addition, the professors requested NWS input on how they could improve their local weather stations in and around Webb County, Texas and bring them in line with NWS standards. John Metz concluded the meeting by providing a spotter training course to a dozen college students that afternoon.

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

MPE TELETRAINING COMPLETE. Our regional MPE team completed their teletraining sessions on May 22. In all, the team provided eight sessions for our WFOs. Please help us in expressing our appreciation for the team's outstanding efforts in developing the teletraining materials, integrating the training materials into the VISITVIEW software package, and conducting the teletraining sessions. We also want to express our appreciation to Bernard Meisner from SSD for providing technical guidance to the team on the VISITVIEW software, and to Marian Baker and James Kaplafka of the NWS Training Center, for allowing us to use their Web-based class registration process.

The MPE team members include West Gulf RFC senior HAS forecaster Cyndie Abelman, Southeast RFC senior HAS forecaster Judi Bradberry, Lower Mississippi RFC HAS forecaster Carolyn Levert, and Arkansas-Red Basin RFC HAS forecaster Larry Lowe.

We plan to form another team to identify the MPE information that can be provided from the RFCs to the WFOs so the WFOs can effectively and efficiently use the MPE application with minimal human resources.

NWS/COE/USGS MEETING. A tri-agency meeting was held last month to discuss subject matters dealing with the reimbursable COOP networks in the COE's Galveston District service area. The meeting focused on network data requirements, access, and availability, NWS hydrometeorological product access, data exchange between the NWS and COE offices, and the COOP program modernization. NWS folks in attendance included SRH COOP program manager Mike Asmus, SRH HSB chief Ben Weiger, WGRFC HAS forecaster Greg Story, and WFO Houston/Galveston DAPM Don Oettinger. Seven actions came out of the meeting dealing with the subject matters listed above.

TROPICAL STORM ALLISON - TWO YEARS LATER. HSB chief Ben Weiger gave an overview presentation on AHPS at a symposium at Rice University on May 8. The symposium focused on new floodplain mapping technologies and efforts underway to update flood insurance rate maps for Harris County, Texas. Ben described the WFO AHPS Web pages that will be accessible to customers in southeast Texas in the near future and showcased some of the partnered activities underway in the NWS to demonstrate flood forecast mapping capabilities using GIS. Ben also discussed the Web-based new RFC precipitation products and asked for feedback on these experimental products.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS DAY AT LOUISIANA TECHNICAL COLLEGE - SLIDELL CAMPUS. WFO New Orleans/Baton Rouge senior service hydrologist Patricia Brown represented the NWS during the first annual Louisiana Technical College (LTC) Awareness Day activities held in Slidell last month. MIC Paul Trotter was also in attendance.

The goal of the Awareness Day was to introduce to Slidell and the other Northshore communities the programs and curriculums offered at this branch of LTC. Patricia provided information highlighting the start of the 2003 hurricane season. Of special interest were the new brochures, *Tropical Cyclones and Flooding, Rip Currents*, and the *Tropical Cyclones and Inland Flooding for the Southern States - Action Guide*.

The roles of the WFOs, RFCs, and NCEP/TPC were also discussed, along with the educational requirements for becoming a meteorologist and/or hydrologist. Emphasis was also placed upon other technical occupations within the NWS and NOAA, especially those corresponding to the curriculums at LTC. The Community Awareness Day event was well received, with approximately 200 attendees of all ages. Door prizes were donated by some participants and sponsors; WFO Slidell provided a cloud chart and sheltered thermometer.

WFO JACKSONVILLE MONTHLY PRECIPITATION MAPS. WFO Jacksonville hydrology focal point Parks Camp has created monthly precipitation maps that are accessible via the Internet. The maps are available at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/jax/hydro.shtml> and were created using an Avenue script for ArcView to generate the maps from simple spreadsheet tables. The normals are from the annual climatology data from NCDC. Sites without climatology or without rainfall for a particular month are displayed with gray dots. New maps should be available by the 3rd of each month.

STAGE III DATA USAGE IN CROP PREDICTION MODEL. LMRFC received a request to provide Stage III precipitation estimates in shape file format for import to a Geographic Information Systems. NASA, along with the Mississippi State Agricultural Extension Service, are working to ingest this data into a crop prediction model. The model will help optimize yields, lower costs, and reduce chemical usage. Model inputs include remotely sensed data, LMRFC Stage III precipitation estimates, and entomological data. The crop prediction model will run twice weekly.

LMRFC COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE. What do you do when an RFC loses communications? On May 6, LMRFC had to operate this way when a contractor cut all phone lines to LMRFC and WFO New Orleans/Baton Rouge. The RFC and WFO could receive AWIPS products through the satellite broadcast feed, but could not talk to any office over the phone lines or issue products over the land-based wide area network. Major flooding was ongoing in the LMRFC area. By using personal cell phones of staff members, LMRFC was able to relay critical crest forecasts to WFOs with major flooding.

ENHANCED RIVER FORECAST SERVICES NEAR PALMDALE, FLORIDA. WFO Miami held a press conference on May 8 to announce new river forecast services for Fisheating Creek near Palmdale, Florida, that began May 15, 2003. The forecasts for Fisheating Creek are part of a larger effort by the Southeast RFC to provide water inflow forecasts to Lake Okeechobee in support of recreation, water supply, transportation, and flood control efforts. Participants included MIC Rusty Pfost, WCM Jim Lushine, and WFO Tampa Bay service hydrologist Eric Oglesby. The press conference included climatological information on the south Florida rainy season, a forecast of what to expect during the 2003 rainy season, and a brief history of the 1928 hurricane which killed over 2000 people in South Florida, primarily residents on the south side of Lake Okeechobee. This was the second largest loss of life due to a natural disaster in U.S. history behind the 1900 Galveston hurricane.

DISTRIBUTIVE HYDROLOGIC MODELING PROTOTYPE TESTING. In April, Lee Cajina of the NWSH Office of Hydrologic Development and contractors from Apex Digital Systems, Inc. visited the ABRFC to discuss requirements for an operational distributed hydrologic model. ABRFC and OHD are working together to enhance a prototype distributed hydrologic model, the Hydrology Laboratory Research Modeling System, so ABRFC can actively work with the prototype on a regular basis later this summer. By running these prototypes we will be able to gather more precise requirements for the eventual development of an operational system to be delivered to all RFCs through AWIPS.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

SEASONAL HURRICANE FORECASTS. What do seasonal hurricane forecasts mean to the residents of Florida? In a very brief essay that echoes that question in the May 2003 *AMS Bulletin*, Prof. Jim Elsner at Florida State University points out the answer may not be as obvious as you think. Seasonal forecasts issued by NOAA, Prof. Bill Gray and others usually address whether the upcoming hurricane season will have more, less, or an average number of storms. Elsner points out that on average there are five to seven Atlantic hurricanes a year; a below average year has fewer than five, and an above average year has more than seven hurricanes.

Over 52 years (1950-2001), 21 seasons had an average number of hurricanes, 15 seasons were above average and 15 were below average. But what about Florida? The mean number of Florida hurricanes during the "average" years was 1.38. For the above and below average years the means were 1.25 and .80, respectively. In other words, the probability of a hurricane affecting Florida is highest during average seasons! In Elsner's words, "a forecast of an average season is the most ominous to the residents of Florida."

The not so salient message here is that statistics are wonderful, but one should not lose sight of what it is the statistics deal with. NOAA recently released the 2003 seasonal outlook (<http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories/s1146.htm>) which calls for six to nine hurricanes, with two to four classified as major hurricanes (category 3 or higher), but the release does not address landfall probabilities.

WRF MODEL AT JACKSONVILLE. As its name implies, the Weather Research and Forecast (WRF) model is being developed as a community model. It's based on a modularized software structure so, for example, university researchers could design and test new physics routines (modules) with the otherwise operational WRF configuration, with the intention of moving them toward operational implementation at NCEP. Since it's made up of such modules, there's actually no "one" WRF. The NCEP version of the WRF is expected to become operational in late 2004, and the transition to the full WRF suite will take place in stages.

With funding provided by NOAA's Coastal Storms Initiative (CSI) and assistance from SRH, Weather Service Headquarters and the NOAA Forecast Systems Lab, the WRF model version 1.3 is now running operationally on a Linux computer cluster at WFO Jacksonville. The cluster has nine nodes (Red Hat Linux 7.3, 18 Atlon 2100 CPUs with 18-gig RAM) with a simple gigabit ethernet switch. WRF was compiled with the Portland Group 4.1 compilers. The model runs with ETA12 as lateral background conditions and a "hot start" LAPS spin-up with local data assimilation. The data assimilation progress is slow but it is hoped to soon import several feeds from the FSL MADIS datasets, including GPS-based precipitable water observations (see the [tech attachment](#) to the September 2002 *Southern Topics*). Brent Shaw and John Smart (FSL) and Art Wildman (WFO Jacksonville ESA) have been the leaders along with SOO Pat Welsh in this project. The next challenge is to move the WRF to the IFPS/GFE suite to allow forecasters to use its output in their gridded forecasts. Forecasters are already gaining considerable experience which will be valuable for development of future training as WRF approaches implementation nationally.

NCEP QUARTERLY BACKUP TEST. The National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) will perform a quarterly backup exercise on Wednesday, July 9, 2003 during the 1200 UTC model cycle (1200-1800 UTC). If weather conditions preclude performing this exercise it will be rescheduled for Thursday, July 10th. During this test no operational products will be available from the Central Computer System. The Nested Grid Model (NGM) and NGM Model Output Statistics (MOS) will be transmitted at the conclusion of the test. Backup products will be made available on the NWS Telecommunications Operations Center FTP server in place of the NCEP products. Further information on the type of products available from the backup processing and their approximate delivery times can be found at:

http://www.ncep.noaa.gov/NCO/PMB/nwprod/osobackup/ncep_backup.html

NCEP MODEL UPGRADES/CHANGES. The Rapid Update Cycle upgrade with the 3-Dimensional Variational Analysis (3DVAR) initialization and fixes to the post processor was implemented at 1200 UTC on May 27, 2003. While the code change to the 3DVAR analysis, which replaced the previous optimal interpolation (OI) analysis is significant, the difference in RUC analyses and forecasts is not so big. Generally, the RUC 3DVAR analysis fits the observations more closely than the OI analysis, but avoids some small-scale noise produced by the OI analysis. Forecast skill from RUC using 3DVAR is very nearly the same as that from the OI analysis, slightly better for upper-level winds. A Technical Procedures Bulletin with more detail on the change, verification statistics, and examples of comparisons of analysis and forecast is available online at: http://ruc.fsl.noaa.gov/ppt_pres/RUC-3dvar-tpb-May03.htm.

The next upgrade to the NCEP Mesoscale Model (Eta-12) has been tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, 8 July 2003. The changes are designed to address the following issues:

- Improve model forecasts through modifications of the cloud microphysics and radiation
- Improve model QPF and cloud predictions through assimilation of cloud information from satellites
- Improve model forecasts through assimilation of radar-derived wind fields
- Provide an expanded suite of products to the forecast community.

A Technical Procedures Bulletin describing the changes in detail is at:

<http://wwwt.emc.ncep.noaa.gov/mmb/tpb.spring03/tpb.htm>

At the request of NWS field forecasters and the NCEP service centers, the 0600 and 1800 UTC Eta model runs will be extended out to 84 hrs, just as the current 0000 and 1200 UTC runs. The extended output beyond 48-h will not be added to the AWIPS Satellite Broadcast Network until proper user notification can be accomplished. However, the files will be distributed to Southern Region field offices via our Local Data Manager (LDM) server, just as those from the 0000 and 1200 UTC runs are currently distributed.

On July 15, 2003 all FAX charts based on output from the Nested Grid Model (NGM) will be removed from the NWS FTP server. Additionally, on August 15, 2003 all FAX charts based on output from the Eta model will be removed from the NWS FTP server. Alternate products can be found at: <http://www.nco.ncep.noaa.gov/pmb/nwprod/analysis/>

Alternate MOS products can be found at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/synop/products.htm>.

A summary of the major changes to the Production Suite for 2003 is available at: <http://www.nco.ncep.noaa.gov/pmb/changes>

NWS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. SSD is working to prepare SR field offices to make the most of the new NWS Learning Management System. If there is anyone in the region who is not yet familiar with the soon-to-be-released LMS, don't blame Bernard Meisner, SSD's regional point of contact for the national LMS team. Over the past few months he conducted one or more LMS training sessions for staff at the 15 WFOs and RFCs he has visited, as well as for SRH staff. Bernard then developed and delivered eight teletraining sessions on the LMS during May for those offices he was not able to visit. During his presentations he encouraged use of the Government Online Learning Web site (<http://golearn.gov>) which has been developed by the same vendor as the NWS, NOAA and DOC systems. From his presentations and office discussions Bernard gained considerable feedback which he provided to the NWSH training division and the LMS vendor to improve the functionality of the NWS LMS.

In mid-May we also hosted at SRH a two-day meeting of the NWS LMS Quality & Assurance Team. The participants, who included representatives from other NWS regions, NWSH and other NOAA elements, provided several favorable comments regarding how well organized and effective that meeting was. We're looking forward to full implementation of the LMS later this year.

E-PAPERS. WFO Miami has created a memorial Web page which calls attention to the devastating hurricane which struck the Lake Okeechobee area in September 1928. Although the exact number can never be known, it is nearly certain that more than 2500 individuals were killed, making that the second most costly natural disaster - in terms of lives lost - in U.S. history. Only the 1900 Galveston hurricane killed more. Coming close on the heels of the Great Miami Hurricane of 1926, the 1928 storm further devastated the economy of the South Florida area, effectively ending the already declining "boom" in development. More details and graphic depictions are included on the WFO Web site at <http://www.srh.weather.gov/mia/newpage/Okeechobee.htm>.

PICTURE OF THE MONTH. The new "all electronic" format allows us an opportunity to include photographs in Southern Topics for the first time in many years. With this issue we're initiating a "Picture of the Month," and we solicit reader input. WFO Midland MIC Ray Fagen provided the picture below of a dust cloud associated with intense thunderstorm outflow winds during a severe weather event on June 3, 2003. The winds snapped a number of power poles in the Midland area. The photograph taken by Stacey Jackson, wife of Midland ITO Greg Jackson.



SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION BRANCH

UNIT RADAR COMMITTEE MEETINGS. This is just a reminder that all sites are required to have two URC meetings per year. These meetings are a great avenue to discuss the operation and maintenance of the WSR-88D with other tri-agency members, or with the local staff, depending on who comprises your URC. Please send a copy of your meeting minutes to the Southern Region WSR-88D program manager after your meetings.

AWIPS. Awips Operational Build 1 (OB1) installs are coming to an end across the region. All CONUS WFOs have completed the OB1 install and all offices in Southern Region will have completed OB1 by the second week in June. The OB1.1 and OB1.2 maintenance releases should also be installed by the end of the second week in June in preparation for the IFPS Operational Readiness Demonstration (ORD).

Operational Build 2 (OB2) Alpha was recently installed at SRH. Some of the new features coming with OB2 include the following:

- Managed color curves.
- GOES High Density Winds.
- LAPS now utilizes PIREPS and static land use datasets.
- Many changes to WWA/WarnGen templates.
- RFC Archiver supported.
- The old Radar Archiver functionality has been removed.
- and much more.

OB2 deployment is scheduled to begin in late July or early August.

A new WarnGen QC will be performed when issuing products via WarnGen. It will be looking for the following to be accurate:

- proper UGC and VTEC codes
- UGC line matching text counties, zones, etc.
- internally consistent times
- product type matching the Mass News Disseminator (MND) section and text in the first bullet
- correct contents and format of the MND and the first three bullets
- \$\$ at the end of the product.

Extra care will be needed when modifying templates with OB2 WarnGen and more information will be forthcoming on this issue.

WSR-88D. The WSR-88D RPG Build 4.0 is nearing final stages of testing prior to the planned system-wide deployment starting September 29. As part of the normal process of testing, the Beta Test Branch typically uses or selects certain offices that have different configurations. The Southern Region offices selected for testing and proposed dates for on-site beta testing next month are:

Atlanta (NWS Single configuration-Private T1 Wideband)	July 9-11
Tampa Bay (NWS Single configuration-Hardwired Wideband)	July 15-17

LINUX REPLACEMENT WORKSTATION. Phase I of these new Linux workstations deployment is scheduled to begin in October. Phase I will include replacing all baseline HP workstations at all WFOs and RFCs in Southern Region. Although a contract has not yet been awarded, SR offices have been provided with specifications for the new workstations.

IT. During the May 21 teleconference on the Level II archive data project many questions were brought up involving security aspects of the project. A second teleconference was held on May 22 and many of the security issues were discussed and either resolved or tagged for action.

On May 22 an incident report was filed with N-CIRT from one of our WFOs concerning a virus that had gotten into the local LAN. Working quickly with the local ESA the virus was contained and eventually cleared from all systems. As a follow up, we found that some offices were using the Windows shares feature with other PCs in the office. This in effect set up a local peer-to-peer network on the LAN. The shares were password protected for access, but on Win98 machines once the share is accessed on a PC, it will stay connected until a reboot or a log off is issued. Many of these machines were not logged off or rebooted for many days or weeks. Then when one machine was infected, the virus propagated easily across the shared drives and eventually infected up to 12 PCs. We think the actual insertion point was through a file brought in on a disc from the home of a user. We are cautioning all of our offices about these issues and suggesting that they review their network topologies.

We have been notified by the OCIO that they will be conducting an IT systems security audit for three offices in the SR during the week of June 23. The following offices will be reviewed by the NWS ITSO: WFOs Shreveport, Norman and Austin/San Antonio.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS. We have been focusing on the NWR program. This month we have ordered new circuits and ROAMS lines for Leakesville, Mississippi; Cherokee Village, Arkansas; and Cisco, Texas. As soon as contact information is confirmed for the Seguin, Texas site, we will also order lines for that location. Frequency proposals have been submitted for each of these locations.

Circuits were accepted for Oneonta, Alabama and Dilley, Texas NWR sites. Circuits for Palatka, and Largo, Florida should be ready soon for NWS testing and acceptance.

AT&T completed the installation and testing of the Alabama state and regional NAWAS circuits for WFO Huntsville. Both circuits are now operationally ready. This was the final comms issue for the Huntsville office.

The SRH video teleconferencing system was upgraded this month. A short training session was completed on the basic functionality of the system and the new upgrades. Also, training documentation was passed out in the divisions to familiarize staff with the system. The system is currently on-line and operational.

CRS/NWR. The NOAA weather radio program brought two more sites on the air in May. The two new USDA installs were located at Cisco, Texas and Leakesville, Mississippi. This brings the number of new installs to 18 for FY03. As busy as May was in the NWR program, June appears to be even busier with 12 sites scheduled for delivery.

In the CRS world, two Southern Region sites assisted the Test and Evaluation Branch at NWSH in testing the new CRS Build 9.0 and the Voice Improvement Processor (VIP) Build 3.0. The two region sites which participated in the testing were WFOs Miami and San Juan. The OAT commenced April 22 and concluded May 23. All sites reported that the new CRS and VIP systems tested were operational and stable with the new software. Nationwide distribution of the new builds began on June 2.

OBSERVATIONS AND FACILITIES BRANCH

NOAA TIER II ECS SURVEYS. Environmental Compliance and Safety (ECS) surveys were made at four WFOs in Texas (Amarillo, Lubbock, Midland-Odessa and San Angelo) by MASC employees Mark George (environmental engineer) and Rhonda Carpenter (safety/industrial hygienist) accompanied by Terry Brisbin of SRH. The visits typically included a half day at the site followed by a drive to the next location in the afternoon. A brief overview was presented to the office ECS staff and MIC, followed by a tour of the buildings, including WFO, upper air, and generator and RDA shelters. The storage of flammables and controlled wastes were noted, as well as fire extinguishers, required signs, posters, and logs and a debrief was given before leaving. Mark and Rhonda will prepare a written report within 30 days for each site along with recommendations for possible corrective actions. Some outstanding ECS efforts were noted during these four visits, both on an individual and team basis.

WFO MIDLAND-ODESSA REVERSE OSMOSIS WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM. Quotes have been received from three local water purification vendors in the Midland-Odessa office. The three systems quoted vary in capacity from what was requested, and the quotes will be evaluated with the order placed in late May to ensure a new system is installed and operating in June.

NOAA REQUEST FOR ECS PROJECTS. In late April WSH forwarded a request from NOAA environmental and safety managers to the NWS field offices for ECS projects needing funding in FY04. Projects submitted by SR to NOAA so far include safety upgrades to primary wire weight river gauges at 38 locations, updates to expired SPCC spill plans at nine locations, and funding for asbestos/lead surveys at nine older upper air sites. Other projects may be added to these as funding needs are identified, however, there is no guarantee of NOAA funding at this time.

FLORIDA ABOVE-GROUND STORAGE TANK CONFERENCE. WFO Jacksonville HMT Bob Kerns attended the North Florida storage tank conference in Jacksonville in late April and shared the material discussed in the seminars with other ECS focal points at Florida WFOs. Partly because of the high water table and proximity to rivers, lakes and ocean waters in Florida, the state is very proactive about spill prevention from petroleum sources such as the diesel tanks NWS has at the WFOs.

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

SHORTAGE OF CRITICAL SUPPLIES CONTINUES. A shortage of drive motors for the Fischer & Porter recording rain gauges continues. These motors have been on backorder for many months and the expected delivery date has slipped several times. As of May 27, there were 343 motors on backorder while the current order is for 300. Without these motors the NWS will not be able to record Hourly Precipitation Data (HPD) at the cooperative observer locations.

The measuring sticks used with the standard rain gauge (SRG) are also in short supply and new requests for sticks add to the 578 units already on backorder at NLSC. These sticks are required to determine the rainfall values from the SRG.

INTERAGENCY MEETING. An interagency meeting with the Galveston District Corps of Engineers (COE) was held on May 29. The meeting focused on NWS data acquisition procedures and methods used to disseminate data within the agency and to our partners. Additional coordination meetings with other COE district offices are being planned.

PC-ROSA REPLACEMENT PROJECT. The Interactive Voice-Remote Observation Collection System (IV-ROCS) has been delivered to SRH and is in the final phase of operational testing. This system will eventually replace the PC-ROSA system that has been in use by the Southern Region volunteer observers since 1996. Barring any last minute problems, the system will become operational on June 2. A presentation on the operation and advantages of the IV-ROCS by the Observations and Facilities Branch design team was given to SRH staff on May 20.

SURFACE OBSERVATION PROGRAM. Southern Region received 99 requests from the aviation community for new certificates, cancellation, or changes in type of surface certificates.

AWOS. In early May, Southern Region surface program manager Alton Abernathy learned that TXDOT recently installed several new Automated Weather Observation Systems (AWOS) across Texas. Most of these new systems were installed at stand alone sites, but a few sites were installed and commissioned at sites with current non-fed observer programs in place. A meeting with FAA and local NWS representatives on May 14 outlined details about what role the current non-fed observers will have at these locations. Many questions and concerns were raised and answered at this meeting. Cecilia Shilling, FAA System Requirements Branch, Kathryn Oestricher, FAA Non-Fed Observer Programs, Billy Tennison, FAA ASOS Technician, attended along with WFO Fort Worth DAPM James Maxwell and Alton.

UPPER-AIR OBSERVATION PROGRAM. Southern Region's April upper air rankings were excellent with 19 of the 23 offices receiving scores above the national average. The national average for April was 288.83. WFO Miami led all Southern Region sites with its highest rating of 299.69. Their score was .12 points below the top spot in the nation. Other offices showing remarkable improvement over the past month include: WFOs Albuquerque with a score of 297.38; Jackson, 297.03; Jacksonville, 296.96; Midland, 296.22; Atlanta, 294.48; Tallahassee, 293.02; and Shreveport with a score of 291.34.

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

RSOIS. Phase II implementation continues to move towards completion as the weather warms up across the region. Sixteen of 20 sites in SR have their RSOIS installed and are being used operationally. WFOs Little Rock and Tampa Bay are currently working to have their towers installed as weather permits.

RADIOSONDE REPLACEMENT SYSTEM (RRS). RRS program managers plan to schedule the next national coordination meeting sometime in July to jumpstart the replacement program delayed by various radiosonde production and contractual issues.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

DIVERSITY/EEO AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Bill Proenza attended the 2003 National Image Training Conference and Exposition where he was a delegate to the electoral process for the organization's elections for officers this year. This year's conference theme was "A Tribute to Diversity, Culture and Opportunity - Rising to the Challenge, Reaching to the Stars."

Image was originally founded in 1972 to address the needs of Hispanic employees in the federal government. Later, however, the membership saw a need to expand their activities to serve the needs of Hispanics outside the federal government. The new organization, National Image, expanded its activities to increase its impact on employment, education and civil rights. National Image, Inc. is a network of professionals committed to finding positive and creative solutions to the challenges facing the Hispanic community in the United States. It also provides a national forum for awareness, as well as a platform for effective change.

WFO BROWNSVILLE. DAPM Jim Campbell gave presentations to 55 migrant students at Vermillion Elementary in two sessions. He was assisted by ASA Rachel Gutierrez and HMT Alfredo Vega. The presentations were given in English and Spanish and elaborated on the role of the National Weather Service. The students were briefed about weather hazards in the Rio Grande Valley and also at locales to which they will be heading. The *Brownsville Herald* newspaper provided coverage of the presentations for a story.

Jim Campbell also provided an office tour to 16 honor students from The Incarnate Academy in Brownsville. New lead forecaster Matt Lorentsen pitched in and gave the students a weather briefing.

WCM Jesus Haro gave a hurricane preparedness presentation to the "Leadership Laguna Madre" civic organization. The presentation discussed preparedness tips and the latest forecast for the Atlantic Basin. The organization includes business leaders from all around South Padre Island.

WFO SHREVEPORT. WFO employees continued to be active in giving talks and tours of the office. Forecaster Mary Keiser gave a tour to 7th and 8th graders from Springhill Jr. High from Springhill, Louisiana. Mary discussed the operations of the NWS and a presentation on Weather Safety; forecaster Bill Murrell gave a tour to a group of home schooled children from Shreveport. Bill discussed the operations of the NWS and safety procedures; and forecaster Jason Hansford talked to 155 8th graders from Haughton Middle School in Haughton, Louisiana, on education, careers in the NWS, the NWS operations, and past weather events.

WFO SAN JUAN. WCM Rafael Mojica and forecaster Ernesto Morales, spoke to a group of 4th grade students at Carvin Elementary School in Carolina on basic hurricane preparedness.

Cub Scout Troop 411, from the southern Puerto Rico city of Ponce, toured the WFO as part of their weather merit badge activities. Forecaster Ernesto Morales, and HMTs Robert Mitchell and Jesus Figueroa assisted the group.

MIC Israel Matos conducted a hurricane preparedness briefing for 25 emergency management students at the National College of Business and Technology in Bayamon.

Lead forecaster Brian Seeley was the career day speaker for three student sessions at the Antilles Middle School in Fort Buchanan, and DAPM Pancho Balleste conducted a satellite interpretation workshop for 60 Antilles High School students.

GOING BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY TO SAVE LIVES AND PROPERTY. WFO New Orleans RMS Larry Tennison was in the spotlight for his quick response that may have resulted in a life being saved. On his way to performing a phone line test for a new NWR site near Leakesville, Mississippi, Larry witnessed a traffic accident that involved a large logging truck and a pickup. Immediately, Larry called the Leakesville City Hall and informed the local fire chief of the accident. Due to Larry's timely call, emergency personnel were quickly dispatched to the scene where a badly injured driver was freed from the twisted wreckage. Larry's quick action and knowledge of who to contact, and where, ultimately aided in sparing a victim from likely death.

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS
May 1 - 31, 2003

Southern Region Losses

<u>Name</u>	<u>From (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>From Title/Grade</u>
David Biggar	WFO JAN	Resignation	Forecaster, GS-12
John Chambers	WFO EPZ	Retirement	Forecaster, GS-12
Michael Longnecker	RFC ALR	Transfer to ER	Senior Hydrologist, GS-13
Larry Dunn	CWSU ZJX	Retirement	Meteorologist, GS-12

Southern Region Gains

<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Paul McKee	RFC FWR	New Hire	Hydrologist, GS-12
William Bennett II	WFO MLB	Transfer from ER	El Tech, GS-11
Jason M. Straub	WFO BRO	New Hire	Forecaster, GS-7
Scott Cordero	WFO MEG	Transfer from PR	WCM, GS-14
Matthew Hirsch	WFO MLB	Transfer from ER	Forecaster, GS-9
Kenneth L. Hunter	WFO AMA	Transfer from CR	ESA, GS-12
Matthew Lorentson	WFO BRO	Transfer from PR	Senior Forecaster, GS-13
R. Bryan Henry	WFO JAN	Transfer from WR	Forecaster, GS-11
Mark R. Conder	WFO LUB	New Hire	Met Intern, GS-7

Within Region Transfers/Actions

<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Gregory Patrick	WFO FWD	Promotion from TSA	SOO, GS-14
Helen McCall	WFO EYW	Promotion from EYW	HMT, GS-7