



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

May 2003

SOUTHERN TOPICS

Working Together To Save Lives

[Southern Region Home Page](#)

[Previous Topics](#)

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

In just the first weeks of this month, over 200 confirmed tornadoes raked the Southern Region of the National Weather Service from Texas to Georgia. Although these storms claimed a total of 16 lives, all Southern Region offices involved provided timely and accurate warnings which substantially limited the number of deaths that might have been associated with such an exceptional outbreak. One of the first of the tornadoes, rated F4, hit the Jackson, Tennessee area just before midnight on May 4. Eleven people were killed in and around Jackson and rural communities to the southwest. WFO Memphis issued timely warnings and severe weather statements, giving the public a 13-minute lead time to the first report of the tornado.

On May 8 the Oklahoma City suburb community of Moore was hit hard by a tornado at 5:10 pm. Also an F4, the tornado ironically moved along the exact path followed by the devastating F5 tornado in May 1999. Remarkably, despite the rush-hour traffic on highways, the destruction of about 300 homes and damage to another 1500, no deaths were directly related to this tornado. WFO Norman's tornado warning gave the public a 21-minute lead-time for action. In addition, 2 ½ hours before the tornado struck the Norman staff conducted a live 10-15 minute briefing of the evolving weather conditions across all ten of its NOAA weather radio transmitters. That was followed by continuous live broadcasts to residents as the storm touched down and ripped through the area. The WFO received numerous accolades from their listeners regarding the broadcasts, which no doubt contributed to keeping residents informed and out of harm's way of the dangerous conditions. On the following day Oklahoma City was impacted again by a strong tornado, this one tracking across the northern portions of the city. Unfortunately one person was killed and 10 others injured, despite warnings from WFO Norman which provided an average lead-time of 28 minutes.



As if tornadoes were not enough, massive flooding took its toll across central and eastern sections of the Southern Region, killing four people. Three died in Cannon County, Tennessee on May 5 and another died in Wayne County, Tennessee on May 6. The CWFAs most impacted by flooding were WFOs Nashville, Morristown, Huntsville, Birmingham, and Atlanta. These offices issued nearly 500 flood-related watches, warnings and statements during just the four-day period of May 5-8.

Given the intensity, frequency, and geographical extent of the events of the last two weeks, the news in terms of human impact could have been so much worse, were it not for the exemplary skill and dedication of our WFO and RFC staffs. Time and time again accurate warnings of hazardous conditions gave the public and our valuable partners enough time to prepare and respond. All Southern Region employees can take great pride in their jobs done exceptionally well.

TORRENTIAL RAINS IN PUERTO RICO. Puerto Rico was not left out of significant weather events last month either, as extremely heavy rains in the 50 to 100 year return period range covered the island. On April 17 between 12 to 16 inches fell in just 12 hours in the vicinity of El Yunque. It's not without reason after all that they call it a national rainforest. Elsewhere rains of nearly 20 inches fell in two days. Flash flooding was common and warning lead times exceeded 2 hours.

SPRINGTIME IN TEXAS. On the front page of last month's *Topics* we commented on a "train" of three supercells which struck the northern tier of counties in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex with baseball-size hail on April 5. Latest estimates indicate the large hail caused at least \$800 million in property damage across northern Tarrant and Dallas counties. During this outbreak of severe weather there were 43 separate severe weather events in the Fort Worth WFO area of responsibility. The WFO's POD was 1.00 and the average lead time on warnings was 31 minutes.

ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARDS. Congratulations to the following National Weather Service Southern Region recipients of this year's NOAA Administrator's Awards:

David Sharp, SOO WFO Melbourne - For his exceptional innovation and scientific leadership in applying research results to improve the communication of hazardous weather information to the citizens of east-central Florida.

Bruce Sherbon, forecaster WFO Tulsa - For developing and producing the training tape, "An Overview of the NWS Upper-Air Program," which has been distributed to all NWS U/A sites. The tape is also used as part of the NWSTC upper-air training course.

Armando Garza (MIC) and **Marco Bohórquez**, **Douglas Streu** and **Teresa DeLand**, NWS staff, FAA Academy, Oklahoma City - For significant improvement of aviation weather services provided to pilots nationwide by the FAA specialists they have trained.

The awards were presented in a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on May 6.

MBA KUDOS. WFO Midland MIC Ray Fagen was recently selected by the faculty in the School of Business at The University of Texas of the Permian Basin as the Co-Outstanding Master of Business Administration graduate for 2002-2003. Congratulations, Ray, on this significant achievement. Ray, who began his MBA studies in 1999, was recognized by the university at an Honors Convocation in mid-April, and again at the 2nd Annual School of Business Honors and Recognition Ceremony on May 2. This is Ray's second Masters degree - he previously earned an MS in computer science at Johns Hopkins University.

IFPS

SOUTHERN REGION IFPS VISION. Over 100 votes were cast for the SR IFPS Vision. Two submissions (out of 43) garnered the most votes, and they combined perfectly to form the SR IFPS Vision: "Your Pin-Point NWS Forecasts for the 21st Century. Your way. Whenever you want them." Congratulations to Clay Anderson from WFO Austin/San Antonio and Mark Fox from WFO Amarillo for their submissions which led to the SR IFPS Vision.

ARKANSAS EMS GET IFPS BRIEFING. WFO Little Rock SOO Chris Buonanno and WCM John Robinson attended the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management mid-year meeting in March in Conway, Arkansas. This meeting was attended by many of the 75 state emergency managers. Chris and John spoke on "An Overview of the Interactive Preparation System," briefing the audience on the capabilities of IFPS, and the new products that are produced by IFPS. The National Digital Forecast Database was also introduced. Thank you, John and Chris.

IFPS METHODOLOGY TRAINING WORKSHOPS. All four planned IFPS Methodology workshops have now been completed. The valuable content shared and discussed at these workshops has been made available on-line at:

<http://www-md.fsl.noaa.gov/IFPS/2003IFPSmethodologyWorkshop4.html>

Thanks again, not only to the workshop planners, but to all the sites that contributed their ideas toward these successful workshops.

Future workshops to allow us to continue to address IFPS issues are being discussed, and are included in the training budget for next fiscal year. These workshops may be offered either as stand-alone workshops, or as part of other regional/sub-regional gatherings. Stay tuned!

CLIMATE, WATER AND WEATHER DIVISION

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES BRANCH

SMG BRIEFS COLUMBIA ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BOARD. The Spaceflight Meteorology Group (SMG) briefed the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) regarding WSR-88D data on March 28, 2003. Richard Lafosse and Tim Garner presented a brief introduction to WSR-88D operations and data, and then presented examples of the debris "plume" seen by the radars in east Texas and Louisiana on February 1, 2003. Tim Oram and Frank Brody also attended. The briefing was given at the request of CAIB "Group 3" that focuses on post-flight aspects of the investigation.

The SMG briefing emphasized the capabilities of the WSR-88D and its design to detect rain, making it not necessarily ideal for detecting large debris. However, the Board was interested in the long-lived debris plume and speculated on the composition of the particles which were tracked by the weather radars across the southeastern states. SMG utilized the Weather Event Simulator (WES) software to present the WSR-88D data.

More CAIB information is available at www.caib.us.

NON-EMERGENCY CEM AGREEMENT WITH WFO ALBUQUERQUE. Last month WFO Albuquerque and the state of New Mexico entered into an agreement for the forecast office to disseminate non-weather-related civil emergency messages (CEM) on NOAA Weather Radio and through AWIPS. New Mexico Department of Public Safety cabinet secretary John Denko signed for the state, while Bill Proenza signed on behalf of the NWS.

Before the signing ceremony, John Denko and MIC Charlie Liles discussed with local media how this procedure would work, the benefits to the people of New Mexico, and how imperative it is for all of our government agencies to work together at all levels for the protection of the people of our nation.

WFO AMARILLO FIRE WEATHER CUSTOMER MEETING. WFO Amarillo held its annual fire weather customer meeting in March. The customers at the meeting included the Potter County fire rescue chief, Skellytown fire chief, a representative from the National Park Service at Lake Meredith and the Amarillo-Potter-Randall County Department of Emergency Management, and a special guest from Southwest Area Region 3 Predictive Services Group in Albuquerque.

Senior forecaster and GFE focal point Roland Nunez gave a presentation on the fire weather formatters in GFE and explained to our customers how the fire weather products are created. Other items on the agenda included adding a NFDRS forecast for the CEDAR RAWS site at Lake Meredith, adding an afternoon fire weather forecast, highlighting the launch of the NWS Spot Forecast Request program, and adjusting the local Red Flag Warning criteria to the standardized Southwest Area Region 3 criteria.

WFO HUNTSVILLE AND AVIATION OUTREACH. WFO Huntsville participated in the Huntsville International Airport Airshow 2003 in March. Over 50,000 people attended the two-day event despite the unseasonably cold early spring weather. The Huntsville booth was staffed by senior forecasters Matt Zika and Chris Darden, MIC John Gordon, and intern Kurt Weber. The staff handed out severe weather safety brochures, promoted NWR, and responded to weather-related questions from thousands of show attendees who stopped by the NWS booth. Many individuals offered praise on WFO Huntsville's efforts during the past few months and were thrilled to have a new WFO in North Alabama.

WFO AUSTIN/SAN ANTONIO FIRE WEATHER OUTREACH. In March, fire weather program leader Monte Oaks gave a fire weather presentation at Bandera, Texas, as part of a prescribed burn training program for the USDA-National Resources Conservation Service. Charles Anderson, zone rangeland management specialist for the San Angelo Zone Office organized the training session which had about 17 attendees. The presentation mainly covered a brief overview of meteorology and how weather impacts a prescribed burn. On-line NWS resources were also presented with most of the emphasis on the newly introduced NWS Spot program and the experimental graphical forecasts. Some NRCS employees commented that they have already been using the graphical forecasts from our local Web page and that they appreciate the availability of three-hour data.

STORMREADY IN CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE. In March, WFO Morristown WCM Howard Waldron and MIC Jerry McDuffie participated in a ceremony certifying Hamilton County (Chattanooga) as being StormReady. A letter along with highway signs were presented to the county executive and county EM. Also present was congressman Zach Wamp of the Tennessee's 4th District.

MEDIA INTRODUCED TO IFPS/NDFD. WFO Morristown invited the TV meteorologists from the Knoxville and Tri-Cities areas to the WFO for a presentation concerning the changes involving IFPS/NDFD and GFE. SOO Stephen Parker and WCM Howard Waldron gave specific briefings to the five visitors. The feedback was very positive and they were very pleased with the additional information.

VIRGINIA EM MEETING IN WILLIAMSBURG. WFO Morristown MIC Jerry McDuffie and WCM Howard Waldron journeyed to Williamsburg, to attend the annual Virginia Emergency Management Meeting. Howard gave a presentation about the November 10 Morgan County, Tennessee tornadoes. Jerry gave a short summary of some of the problems encountered by the TEMA personnel based on information given by the TEMA East director.

COUNTY EM DIRECTORS ROAD SHOW. WFO Morristown MIC Jerry McDuffie and WCM Howard Waldron visited several of the county emergency management directors. Counties visited included McMinn, Rhea, Meigs, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, and Roane. Issues discussed included various weather topics from spotter training, AMBER, expected spring and summer weather, to our mission and purpose. Of the six EM directors visited, four are new to their jobs. It is important that they know us and we know them.

AMBER MEETING IN NASHVILLE ON MAR 6. On March 6, WFO Morristown WCM Howard Waldron and MIC Jerry McDuffie visited and participated in a state AMBER meeting held by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). WFO Nashville MIC Derrel Martin headed the NWS portion of the meeting. The state plan was discussed along with the fact that several of the cities plan to go with own local plans. The briefing allowed other state offices to know that our NWR is the most efficient means of activating the EAS. Further meetings in Nashville are planned.

WFO BIRMINGHAM AVIATION OUTREACH. WFO Birmingham aviation program leader Jason Wright attended the 3rd International Symposium on Aviation Emergencies, "Increasing Survivability," in March at the Miami Beach Convention Center. This symposium was unique in bringing together around 200 senior aviation and emergency services professionals from 15 different countries. Some of the world's most recognized authorities in these fields gave presentations. This event developed a network of these professionals. Jason established many contacts that could help benefit the local aviation program in Birmingham.

Jason also visited fixed based operators at these airports: Craig Field, Montgomery Dannelly Field, Auburn-Opelika Robert G. Pitts Field, Moton Field, Thomas C. Russell Field, and Revees Field. He discussed NWS aviation programs, and asked them to provide feedback on what we could do to better serve their aviation needs.

RANGERS GET SPOTTER TRAINING. U.S. forestry employees spend much of their time outdoors managing our national forests. Weather safety is a critical part of their daily operations and WFO Birmingham has provided safety seminars to several ranger districts across Alabama. To enhance weather safety, forecasters Mark Rose and Mark Linhares provided the Talladega Ranger District with its first spotter training class. Those attending received information on storm structure and synoptic patterns associated with severe weather in the Southeast. The storm spotter class also included information about the operations of the Birmingham forecast office.

ALABAMA TORNADO DATABASE COMPLETE. Want to know the specifics of a tornado back in 1819? 1900? 2002? Forecaster Mark Linhares and Michael Garrison created such a database on the WFO Birmingham Web site, containing all Alabama tornadoes from 1819 through 2002. Emergency managers have expressed appreciation for the database and indicated how much it will help in their operations. Birmingham received a request from customers and provided solid customer service. Nice work.

CWSU MEMPHIS. Last month Larry Boatman from CWSU Memphis represented the National Weather Service in the Governor's "Aviation Career Day" in Memphis. The event was sponsored by the FAA and was held at the worldwide hub of Federal Express in Memphis. Participants included students from ten public schools in the regional area. A total of fifteen aviation-related organizations had information booths set up at the event. A box lunch was provided for the students, which was the result of donations from the organizers. The event is held yearly, but from most who participated, this was the best yet. The NWS was well represented, using the recently acquired free standing display and the excellent cloud chart provided by Southern Region Headquarters, which was a topic of conversation.

NOAA WEATHER RADIO

CIBA Specialty Chemicals Delivers Weather Radio. To celebrate completing the safest quarter in years, the West Memphis, Arkansas Ciba plant awarded NOAA Weather Radio receivers to all 250 employees and contractors. Plant manager Mike McFarlane cited reaching the safety achievement as part of their effort to make 2003 the safest year ever at the West Memphis installation. In the award ceremony, McFarlane and plant safety coordinator Quinton Simison also honored members of the company's Emergency Response Team, along with retiring environment, health, and safety employee Stuart Johnson. The award ceremony took place in weather that made having a weather radio quite in keeping. A strong south wind had prompted wind advisories for the area, along with a moderate risk of severe storms.

Weather Radio Expansion Continues. Southern Region was at various stages of NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) installations last month. WFO Jacksonville will provide broadcast audio for a dual 300 watt transmitter that became operational at Palatka, Florida. This NWR will serve parts of northeast Florida. A 1000 watt dual transmitter became operational at Spencer, Tennessee and will serve an area between Chattanooga and Cookeville, Tennessee. Broadcast audio for this site will originate from WFO Nashville. A second 1000 watt dual transmitter went on-air at Selma, Alabama where WFO Birmingham will provide weather information for an area west of Montgomery. In addition, two 1000 watt transmitters were delivered and installed at Cisco, Texas and Marvell, Arkansas. These two sites are expected to begin broadcasting in May. The addition of April's weather radio transmitters brings to 18 the number of NWR stations brought on-line by Southern Region this fiscal year.

MARINE

Rip Current Information in Standardized Product. In response to the needs of NWS customers, each NWS coastal forecast office which provides rip current information was to begin disseminating the information via the Surf Zone Forecast product (SRF) on May 15. The surf zone is the very narrow area of water between the high tide level on the beach and the seaward side of breaking waves. The April 15 PNS for the SRF at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/notifications/scn03-24surf.txt>, identifies which offices will be producing an SRF.

NWR Marine Messages. WFO Lake Charles is working with the local marine community getting homeland security and marine safety messages over NWR. Two recent meetings have been hosted by the Lake Charles Pilots with NWS, USCG, the Port of Lake Charles, the CCA, and the sheriff offices of Cameron and Calcasieu parishes, and also the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, local fishing guides and others, regarding the awareness of recreational boaters and commercial fisherman on the compliance of moving temporary security zones in the Calcasieu Waterway. The movement of tankers through the waterway creates security zones which requires boaters to avoid approaching the ship and staying well to the side of the channel. WFO Lake Charles started broadcasting a notice of this on the local Lake Charles weather radio. Kudos to Steve Rinard and his staff for their help in this endeavor.

HYDROLOGIC SERVICES BRANCH

SUCCESSFUL REMOTE TEST OF SR RFC BACKUP SYSTEM. In March ABRFC conducted a successful operational backup test that simulated conditions for a total loss of the RFC facility. The test was conducted by ABRFC personnel at a hotel in Tulsa using a portable laptop system. This test proves the utility of a practical, low cost backup strategy whereby an RFC provides for operational backup themselves in their home metropolitan area for any failure scenario using any facility with a dedicated Internet connection and voice phone line available for 24x7 NWS use. The laptop computer system ran the river forecast model 25 times faster than AWIPS (as measured in average CPU time). Similar performance improvements were noted across the board for other applications.

From a cold start, the system was made ready for use by a forecaster in one hour and ten minutes. Cold start is defined as the system having no model files, no observed data, no files of estimated radar precipitation, no QPF files and not connected to the Internet. Ready for use is defined as a completed run of the entire river forecast system ready for interactive use by a forecaster and data ingest/dissemination running. Data ingest software was improved significantly from a previous ABRFC test of a desktop backup system in May 2002. The changes in data ingest software brought the receipt of observed height data (river stage, lake elevation, etc.) to an acceptable level of 98.6% versus the May 2002 level of 67.2%. The test was totally successful as the laptop computer system was able to host operations and provide full-featured ABRFC forecast and guidance products to customers in a timely and transparent manner. The system ran totally independent of AWIPS. The hydromet situation was fairly benign during the test with only light precipitation noted in the ABRFC area of responsibility. Therefore, only a representative routine daily river forecast, flash flood guidance and hydrometeorological discussion products were issued using the backup system. Congratulation to ABRFC for this successful test.

AHPS WEB PAGE INTEGRATED WORK TEAM FORMED. NWS Headquarters has formed a team that will develop and prioritize the near-term and long-term requirements/tasks to provide a nationally consistent, easy to navigate, core suite of hydrologic information graphics on AHPS Web pages. Southern Region's representative on the team is Kandis Boyd.

In the near-term the team will specify requirements for the implementation of consistent national and local Web pages at all existing AHPS locations (defined as a river forecast point where a forecast hydrograph and a probabilistic hydrologic forecast are provided on the WFO AHPS Web page), based on the Central Region AHPS Web page look and feel. In the long-term the team will specify requirements for a phased implementation of the AHPS Products and Information Team (APIT) report, "A Core Suite of Graphical Hydrologic Products and Information." The APIT report will be finalized and released sometime this summer.

The Office of Hydrologic Development will be responsible for providing technical solutions and implementation activities. Software development, implementation, and maintenance will also be supported by OHD. Based on the requirements agreed upon by the team for each phase, OCWWS HSD will coordinate an implementation plan/schedule with OHD. The two offices will work closely with the CIO's office to ensure Web pages are compliant with NWS-wide requirements/directives. The team will also be responsible for collecting user feedback and, if necessary, either coordinating modification of existing Web pages or updating requirements for future work.

We now have access to a regional LINUX Web server. This will allow our Southern Region AHPS Web team, in collaboration with our Dissemination Enhancement Team, to become familiar with the scripts to develop and test a subset of WFO AHPS Web pages. We will keep you posted on future activities associated with the WFO AHPS Web page implementation in our region.

WGRFC AND LMRFC PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL HURRICANE CONFERENCE. Last month representatives from Southern Region RFCs with responsibility for forecasting along the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic coasts staffed a booth at the 25th National Hurricane Conference held in New Orleans. WGRFC's Cyndie Abelman and Jeff Grascel, and HIC Dave Reed of LMRFC highlighted hydrologic products and services provided to emergency managers involved in hurricane preparedness. Dave Reed also presented talks on "Hydrologic and Meteorological Input to the Hurricane Warning Program" and "Assessing and Communicating Risk for Inland Flooding -A River Forecast Center Perspective."

WFO ALBUQUERQUE ATTENDS RIO GRANDE MEETING. Last month Albuquerque service hydrologist Ed Polasko, MIC Charlie Liles and senior forecaster Kerry Jones attended the annual Rio Grande Basin Snowmelt Runoff Forecast meeting, sponsored by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (previously the Soil Conservation Service). Ed presented the current Water Year 2003 precipitation status for New Mexico while WFO Pueblo FIC Larry Walrod gave the status report on southern Colorado precipitation. Ed gave the CPC long range precipitation forecasts and talked about how the current PDO cycle may be pointing toward less precipitation in the next decade or so for the Rio Grande Basin. WGRFC senior hydrologist Paul Greer showed how the previous water year runoff forecasts (a joint NRCS - NWS effort) for WY 2002 trended lower each month from January through June as the drought worsened. Paul presented the current runoff forecast which approaches near normal for some New Mexico tributaries but is still well below normal for the Rio Grande Basin in total. The meeting brings together more than 30 federal and state (Colorado and New Mexico) water managers, reservoir operators, and weather and water forecasters for discussion and planning.

WFO TALLAHASSEE ALERT SYSTEM. Leon County, Florida has been awarded Alert System funding for the Greater Capital Area Flood Warning Network by the state of Florida. This includes several counties in the WFO Tallahassee County Warning Area (CWA). WFO Tallahassee will receive a new base station and Diadvisor System at no cost. This new capability will serve as a demonstration model for other urban areas in the WFO Tallahassee CWA.

CAREER DAY AT STUART R. BRADLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. WFO New Orleans/Baton Rouge senior service hydrologist Patricia Brown visited the Stuart Bradley Elementary School in New Orleans last month to participate in the Annual Career Day activities. Various professions were represented at the Career Day to offer a variety of speakers and experiences for the children. Topics included staying in school, making good life decisions, studying mathematics and science, the study of meteorology, the study of hydrology, the water cycle, thunderstorms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and various other subjects. The children asked many questions and freely shared their weather experiences and career goals.

LMRFC PARTICIPATES IN EARTH DAY. Lower Mississippi RFC participated in an Earth Day Celebration held by Leadership Slidell, a leadership training program hosted by the Slidell Chamber of Commerce last month. In their booth, the LMRFC highlighted the effects deforestation has on runoff and flooding.

WFO AND RFC PARTICIPATES IN THE COMITE RIVER DIVERSION PROJECT. In March, WFO New Orleans/Baton Rouge MIC Paul Trotter, LMRFC HIC David Reed, senior service hydrologist Patricia Brown, and DAPM Gil Barton attended the ground-breaking ceremony for the Comite River Diversion Project. The commencement of the diversion project is the culmination of more than fifty years of hard work, persistence, bargaining, and cooperation between the federal government, the state of Louisiana, the local governments, and residents of those parishes through which the Comite River flows.

The project is spearheaded by the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers, the Amite River Basin Commission and the state of Louisiana, along with the parishes of Ascension, East Baton Rouge, and Livingston. The \$163 million Comite River Diversion project will protect several thousand area residents and business owners against catastrophic property damage by lowering water levels during floods in the Comite and Amite rivers. Upon completion of the 13-mile canal project, flood waters from the Comite River will be rerouted through the channel into the Mississippi River, relieving flooding in Baton Rouge and surrounding municipalities, as well as over rural and suburban areas.

Baton Rouge city-parish government will maintain the canal and control structures. Construction is expected to be completed in six to nine years. Millions of dollars will be saved in damage costs alone. With less disruption to businesses and commerce, the savings dollars should further rise. In addition, residents should see monthly savings in flood insurance premiums.

WFO MORRISTOWN AND THE TVA CREATE PRECIPITATION WEB PAGES. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has teamed up with WFO Morristown to create Web pages which portray basin precipitation for various upper Tennessee River basins. The Web pages are available at the following URL: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mrx/hydro/tvarainfall.htm>

FLOOD AND FLASH FLOOD SAFETY WEB SITE. The CWWD Hydrologic Services Branch has created a Web site to promote flood and flash flood safety:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tadd/index.htm>

The Web site includes safety rules and downloadable information.

SURVEYING FLOOD AREAS. During the last two months, WFO Tallahassee senior service hydrologist Joel Lanier has been very active visiting river forecast point locations across his primary and supporting HSA that have been impacted by flooding. Changes in demographics have led to significant flood impact changes at many of his river forecast point locations. As an example Joel met with WFO Jacksonville hydro focal point Parks Camp and DAPM Michael Mcallister to survey the flooding on the Alapaha River at Statenville, Georgia during this period. Some homes have been built in the flood plain and were affected by the most recent flooding. At other river forecast point locations, the flood impacts associated with particular flood category levels had also changed. Joel noted that an important lesson learned from this recent flood event is the need to constantly update and review flood categories to account for changes in demographics. The use of GIS tools can help in this regard.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

TRAINING IN WARNING METHODOLOGIES. The Warning Decision Training Branch in Norman is developing training in Warning Methodologies which comprises a systematic four-part approach to the severe weather warning process. It is intended to provide guidance for an office severe weather operations plan, methods for continuous environmental assessment, and storm-scale detection and analysis of severe weather types (tornado, hail, damaging winds and flash flooding). The training is based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform duties as identified in the Forecasting and Warning Severe Convection PDS, available at <http://www.nwstc.noaa.gov/nwstrn/d.ntp/meteor/svrpds.html>.

The four parts of the Warning Methodologies training will cover:

- Part 1 Severe weather staffing strategies (assignment of responsibilities, coordination of duties, when and how to sectorize areas of focus, etc.).
- Part 2 Environmental threat assessment, both synoptic scale and mesoscale.
- Part 3 The storm interrogation and analysis process.
- Part 4 Continual reassessment of data in the warning decision making process.

As part of the training development WDTB will visit and film severe weather operations in offices this spring and summer (they began in Fort Worth last month with the event which was featured on the front page of the April *Topics*). The goal is to incorporate into the training the successful methodologies which have been developed at field offices, and the skills of the most experienced warning forecasters during both real-time events as well as when assisting with local WES-based training. The WDTB plans to begin providing some parts of the methodology training via tele-training later in FY03, and in FY04 they will integrate all of these topics into a distance-learning version of the Warning Decision Workshops, to be called the Advanced Warning Operations Course (AWOC).

NWS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. Work is proceeding toward the June-July debut of the new NWS Learning Management System (LMS). This is planned to be the means by which NWS employees will register for all NWS courses, including instructor-led training conducted as residence courses at the NWSTC and COMET, teletraining classes conducted by VISIT or others, and all NWS on-line courses and modules offered on the MetEd, NWSTC and regional Web sites. As the name implies, the LMS will also handle training record-keeping. Some background information on the LMS was published as an attachment to the November 2002 *Southern Topics*.

Over the past two months Bernard Meisner (SSD) has delivered seminars concerning the NWS LMS at 15 of our field offices, and he began delivering the seminar as teletraining (live and recorded) to all interested offices this month. Slides from his presentation can be viewed at http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ssd/Presentations/Bernards_NWS_LMS.htm

The feedback he has received from his seminars is valuable and will result in some changes to the LMS. For example, in addition to the MICs, the LMS will now be programmed to allow DAPMs and ESAs at the WFOs to track the training of the individuals they supervise. Teletraining sessions yet to be conducted will be on:

Tuesday, May 20 at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm CDT
Thursday, May 22 at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm CDT

If you have not already done so, please respond if your office is interested in participating in one or more of these teletraining sessions. Bernard will make a recorded version of the teletraining available for download later this month. Additional training on the LMS for all employees and for supervisors and training officers will be provided by the NWS and NOAA as the roll out date approaches.

ON-LINE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES. Regional and local funds available for training and travel related to training have been severely restricted because of overall budget reductions, but a number of training opportunities are still available. An additional feature of the NWS Learning Management System is that it will provide access to over 1600 online courses in two commercial libraries (SkillSoft and NETg). The per capita cost for access to the entire library is very low, and at the end of the last fiscal year we acquired that for 150 SR employees. Names of volunteers were solicited from all field offices to help us evaluate the courses in these libraries. Other regions and NWSH did the same. These courses run the gamut from leadership and management, to personal development, Microsoft Office, computer programming, and an array of information technology (IT) related topics. Lists of available courses were provided to WFO and RFC managers last fall. To date, although many of those who have access have yet to take advantage of the opportunity, many others have already completed several courses - the record is over two-dozen! In addition to the LMS, a small subset (40) of the SkillSoft and NETg course libraries are available at no cost to all federal employees through the OPM supported Government Online Learning System (<http://golearn.gov>).

Given the limitations on training and travel funds for the remainder of this fiscal year, we encourage all offices and employees to take fullest advantage of potentially useful training available through the NWS LMS, as well as Go-Learn.

OPERATIONAL UTILITY OF LOCAL MODELING. The Science and Technology subcommittee of the NWS Corporate Board will meet in the Dallas-Fort Worth area next October. One of the items on their agenda will likely be a review of local modeling (now also called distributed modeling). We are encouraging all offices which run local models to document how the output from those models has helped (or possibly hindered) their forecasts. For example, here's an excerpt from a recent WFO Jacksonville Area Forecast Discussion:

CSIHOT WARF MODEL [the local Jacksonville model] INDICATING VISIBILITIES DROPPING TO NEAR ZERO BY 09Z AT THE AIRPORT. THIS IS A MOST DEFINITE POSSIBILITY GIVEN THE MODEL HAS DONE VERY WELL WITH FOG. WILL UPDATE ZONES TO BEEF UP WORDING FROM PATCHY TO AREAS OF LOCALLY DENSE FOG.

In this case the model was right on and provided forecasters with significant advance notice for more accurate aviation forecasts.

RUC-20 IMPROVEMENTS. A change in the analysis system of the operational Rapid Update Cycle (RUC) model is planned for Tuesday, May 20th. The change is to a three-dimensional variational (3DVAR) analysis, replacing the previous optimal interpolation (OI) analysis. While the code change is significant, the difference in RUC analyses and forecasts is not as noticeable. Generally, the RUC 3DVAR analysis fits observations more closely while avoiding some small-scale noise produced by the OI analysis. Forecast skill from RUC forecasts using 3DVAR is very nearly the same as those from the OI analysis, slightly better for upper-level winds.

The RUC 3DVAR analysis uses the same hybrid isentropic-sigma coordinate as the current RUC analysis and forecast model. Overall, the RUC 3DVAR provides:

- Slight improvement or about equal skill overall in 3-h and 12-h forecasts compared to those from the previous RUC OI analysis as verified against rawinsondes,
- Closer fit to observations than the RUC OI analysis,
- A smoother analysis increment (correction to 1-h forecast field) and quieter short-range forecasts, and
- Capability for assimilation of indirect observations such as radial winds, satellite radiances, and wind speed.

Also, a few minor changes to the RUC post-processing are also being implemented with this change package, including addition of 0-1 km helicity. A Technical Procedures Bulletin describing these changes in detail can be found at: http://ruc.fsl.noaa.gov/ppt_pres/RUC-3dvar-tpb-May03.htm.

IFPS/GFE TELETRAINING. In response to requests made at the recent IFPS Methodology Workshops, Tim Barker (SOO WFO Boise), will deliver teletraining on the topic, “Change Grids: An IFPS Forecast Methodology” during May. This teletraining is intended for forecasters regardless of whether they currently use the change grid methodology. The change grid methodology involves organizing one's thoughts in a critical way to address the changes needed from model guidance. In addition, Tim will also detail the functionality and behavior of the widely-used “Serp” Smart Tool. Due to overwhelming response, all the initial sessions were quickly filled. Additional sessions will be announced shortly.

MODEL OUTPUT STATISTICS (MOS) CHANGES. Two recent changes; one deletion and one addition, to the flow of MOS guidance have taken place over the past month. First, on April 8, the old MRF MOS (FMR) was discontinued. The older MRF-based MOS should not be missed, however, as it will continue to be superseded by the newer MRF-based MOS also known as the MEX MOS. Details on this change can be viewed here: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/synop/changes.htm>

Second, as of May 6, it was officially announced that surface wind guidance based on the AVN model for approximately 121 marine sites has become available. Southern Region field offices with marine responsibilities surely will welcome this new marine MOS guidance as an addition to their repertoire to aid their production of marine forecast products. Details on this new guidance can be viewed here: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/synop/marinedesc.htm>

NEW SOOs. Greg Patrick, former senior forecaster at WFO Tulsa, has assumed the SOO position at WFO Fort Worth. Greg is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and entered the NWS as an intern at WSO Tulsa in 1987. He helped that office make the transition from WSO to WFO in the early 1990s, and he became a senior forecaster there in 1994. Greg brings a wealth of experience in warning and forecast operations to the Fort Worth office. Welcome to the Southern Region SOO ranks, Greg.

Steve Cobb, currently the SOO at WFO Midland, will be moving shortly to WFO Lubbock to assume the SOO position there, behind Loren Phillips.

NEW SPC WEB PAGE FEATURES. The Storm Prediction Center experimental Hourly Mesoscale Analysis Web page now includes multiple geographic domains and a display of new convective forecast parameters, the parameters commonly used by SPC forecasters in formulating Convective Outlooks, Mesoscale Discussions, and Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm Watches. The intent is to share SPC's latest severe weather forecasting techniques and parameters with WFO forecasters, and to provide real-time mesoanalysis information during severe weather operations. The Web page is at: <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/exper/mesoanalysis/>.

CLIMATE CDs DISTRIBUTED. CDs containing the latest (September 2002) NCDC *Climate Atlas of the United States (v. 2.0)*, have been provided to all SR offices. We received authorization from the NCDC to duplicate and distribute the CD for NWS use only. The CDs may not be duplicated for external use. Any requests for copies of the CD from outside NOAA should be directed to Sam McCown (NCDC) at sam.mccown@noaa.gov. The cost for this data set is about \$100.

RECORD HAIL IN KEY WEST. The largest hail ever officially recorded in Key West fell between 4:10 and 4:20 p.m. on April 27. The hailstones ranged from ½ to 1 ¾ inches in diameter, with unofficial reports of stones as large as 3 inches. The previous record-size hail was ½ inch, observed on May 10, 1961. That was also the largest hail ever recorded in Monroe County - which encompasses the Florida Keys. This year's April 27 hailstorm was the eleventh time since 1871 that hail was observed in Key West.

COMET TRAINING. The COMET program has announced the release of "ENSO and Beyond," featuring Dr. Marty Hoerling from the NOAA-CIRES Climate Diagnostics Center. This presentation has been part of the COMET Climate Variability workshops and in the on-line format it comprises a 40-minute Webcast with printable summary bullets, a bibliography and a climate terminology glossary. The presentation has been well received by forecasters, who suggested a Web-based version for broader availability. The Webcast requires the FLASH 6.0 player to provide the audio and accompanying animation sequences. The most recent versions of both Internet Explorer and Netscape will have the FLASH player plug-in installed, however, if you need to install the FLASH 6.0 player, follow the directions in the Tech Notes for each module. The Webcast is available at: http://meted.ucar.edu/climate/enso_beyond/index.htm.

For further information on these Webcasts contact Pat Parrish, Managing Instructional Designer, at pparrish@ucar.edu, or Wendy Schreiber-Abshire at abshire@ucar.edu.

NEW TECH MEMO. NOAA Technical Memorandum [NWS SR-224](#), *Chronological Listing of Tropical Cyclones Affecting North Florida and Coastal Georgia*, by Al Sandrik (WCM, WFO Jacksonville) and Chris Landsea (NOAA/AOML/Hurricane Research Division), has been issued in electronic format. Beginning with this tech memo we will dispense with paper copies. The on-line versions will be in pdf format to facilitate printing locally, if desired. They will allow us to distribute the tech memos more efficiently than by conventional mail, include greater use of color graphics, and also allow animation if desired by the author.

Links to indices of SR tech memos and tech attachments can be found on the Southern Region Web site at: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ssd/html/pubs.htm>.

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION BRANCH

AWIPS. The Southern Region design for the AWIPS Linux workstation was recently approved to replace the current HP workstations. Beta test sites for the region were chosen based on the ability to rigorously test the new workstation before national deployment tentatively scheduled for late this year. The following Southern Region sites were chosen to test the new workstation:

- WFO Morristown
- WFO San Juan
- RFC West Gulf River Forecast Center Fort Worth

These sites are among the 13 chosen for the operational acceptance test (OAT) and will provide a broad spectrum of types of sites and programs, including hydrology, OCONUS sites, marine, Great Lakes, continental, hurricane, and severe weather, etc. Deployment will begin shortly after the completion of a successful OAT in the fall. Schedule calls for early delivery of the hardware for “kit-proofing” and WSH installation testing in July with OAT beginning in August and running through September. The Linux workstations require AWIPS release OB2 which is scheduled for delivery a few weeks prior to the beginning of the OAT.

Due to a critical bug in IFPS 13.2 causing GFE to crash when using the Contour Tool, the regions halted installations pending a fix by FSL. Installations resumed early this month and include an IFPS 13.3 patch that will fix the GFE crashing problem. All CONUS WFOs must be on IFPS 13.3 by June in preparation for the IFPS Operational Readiness Demonstration (ORD).

Operational Build 1 (OB1) installs are continuing across the region. All CONUS WFOs must be on OB1 by June in preparation for the IFPS ORD. Maintenance Release OB1.1 (MROB1.1) has been approved for installation at OB1 sites. MROB1.1 contains 18 patches. MROB1.2 is currently proposed for the June/July time frame.

The RFC Archive Server (RAS) delay is disappointing and we hope to be hearing more about the mod note and scheduling soon.

Our EMDS installs continue with 11 sites currently up and running. We have had to stop further development and deployment of this service until some networking issues can be resolved at the regional hub site. This will also effect our plans for the implementation of the archive level II data for the WSR-88D.

WSR-88D. With the proliferation of the radar displays on the Web in addition to numerous other new uses by tri-agency members, a renewed effort is underway to emphasize the data quality of the products generated by the radar. It is important to ensure the products we are sending from the WSR-88D are as free from bad information and errors as we can make them.

We can do this by emphasizing the following:

- Ensuring electronics technicians have ample opportunities to install software updates and perform preventative maintenance.
- Generating clutter bypass maps on a seasonal basis.
- Monitoring radar system performance on a shift by shift basis.
- Performing accurate and timely operator defined clutter suppression.

We have been collectively working with NWSH, Radar Operations Center and all sites in the region to complete the PUP Disposal Plan.

Some additional information on operator defined clutter suppression can be found at: <http://www.wdtb.noaa.gov/resources/PAPERS/clutter/CLUTTER.pdf>

(Note: This document has not been updated for the MSCF and still references the UCP. However, it contains good information on many other areas relating to clutter and its effects on data quality.)

Another good paper on WSR-88D data quality by Chrisman and Chrisman can be found at: <http://www.wdtb.noaa.gov/resources/PAPERS/z-error/zerror.pdf>

ORPG Build 3.0 software Modification Note 21 has been released for full field deployment. After extensive and successful field testing, the go-ahead to deliver the modification software note to all sites was given by the beta testing director in March. Several Southern Region sites have already reported completing the installation of the software modification.

IT. We are moving ahead to implement the new DOC password policy in the region. Many issues need to be worked out with NWSH on do this without disrupting operations. Hopefully these issues will be resolved soon.

We are looking forward to the migration to the updated Netscape Mail system and plan to send two people to the upcoming training sponsored by NWSH. We have some concerns about the future of the calendar system, and understand that it is no longer being supported.

UPPER AIR. The Key West ART-1 pedestal stripped the azimuth tachometer gears again. NRC built-up an assembly that included a drive motor, tachometer, and alignment gears and shipped it to the office. Since Key West will be a data continuity site for the new RRS system the U/A program office is having NRC refurbish a GMD pedestal to ART-1 standards and ship it to Key West for eventual switch out. This site must be kept in good operational condition to meet the needs for the data continuity evaluation.

NOAA WEATHER RADIO. The program continues to move forward at a feverish pace in Southern Region. Last month three NWR sites were installed and began on-air broadcasts. The three new sites were Palatka, Florida; Spencer, Tennessee; and Selma, Alabama. This brought the total number of new installs to sixteen so far this fiscal year.

In the region's continuing effort to provide emergency backup power at all NWR sites, RMSs Phil Shideler and Larry Tennison coordinated and oversaw the successful installation of auxiliary power generators at sites in Amarillo and Covington. The next sites being given consideration for future installs are Waco and Live Oak, Florida.

The regional staff is putting in a considerable amount of effort in this program area, ranging from the ordering and coordination of telephone service, frequency management and, as stated above, emergency power installation.

ASOS. The Following Items are from the NWSH Office of Operational Systems last monthly report.

ASOS Implementation Status (as of March 28, 2003)

New Synergy processor boards approved for deployment	713
New Synergy processor boards installed	12
Dew Point sensors (DTS1) approved for deployment	248
Dew Point sensors (DTS1) installed	21 (note 1)
Ice Free Wind sensors approved for deployment	0*
Ice Free Wind sensors installed	12 (note 2)
All Weather Precipitation Accumulation Gauges approved for deployment	0*
All Weather Precipitation Accumulation Gauges approved for deployment	2 (note 3)

* Ice Free Wind sensor and All Weather Precipitation Accumulation Gauge are in operational acceptance tests phase and have not yet been approved for deployment.

(Note 1) Two DTS1 sensors removed from operation after causing system problems.

(Note 2) Six IFW sensors returned for refurbishing and redeployment.

(Note 3) One AWPAG sensor removed from operation after causing system problems.

Collection of ASOS data at AWPAG Operational Acceptance Test (OAT) Site

OPS24 continues collecting ASOS system logs and archive data from all All Weather Precipitation Accumulation Gauge (AWPAG) OAT sites. These logs and precipitation data files have been provided to OST32 to monitor the performance of each AWPAG. Southern Region ASOS Focal Point requested OPS24 do “quick-look” analysis of AWPAG performance against current Heated Tipping Bucket Rain Gauge (HTBRG) for heavy convective rain event at ASOS OAT site Macon, Georgia (MCN). Results indicate precipitation measurements from AWPAG lag those from Tipping Bucket by about 4 minutes and total precipitation from AWPAG is about 10% higher than Tipping Bucket. OST32 noted lag time was expected. The 10% discrepancy between gauge amounts might be due to HTBRG not performing required number of tips during convective heavy rain. Southern Region ASOS focal point used “quick look” analysis results to express concerns to Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services of not deploying AWPAGs at all ASOS sites.

OBSERVATIONS AND FACILITIES BRANCH

COOP PROGRAM SUPPLY SHORTAGE. A shortage of drive motors for the Fischer & Porter recording rain gauges has become critical. Drive motors have been on backorder since December 2002 and promised delivery dates have slipped several times. Southern Region WFOs have been working together gathering operational parts across the region just to keep existing gauges operational. Field offices no longer have any spares available. Without the availability of replacement drive motors from NLSC the NWS will not be able to record hourly precipitation data at the cooperative observer locations.

The standard rain gauge measuring sticks are also unavailable from NLSC and all requisitions are being placed on backorder. Southern Region WFOs have a very limited number of on-site spares remaining. A delivery date for measuring sticks is unknown at this time.

INTERAGENCY MEETING. An interagency meeting between the National Weather Service and the Galveston District Corps of Engineers (COE) is planned for later this month. The meeting will focus on NWS data acquisition procedures and methods used to disseminate the data within the agency and to our partners. Additional meetings with other COE district offices are also being planned.

WXCODER II SUPPORT. The data acquisition staffs at WFOs Lubbock, Houston and San Juan continue to test Central Region's WxCoder II Internet coop observation collection system. The testing is going well and observers are pleased with the system. SRH is working with CRH to make the system available to the rest of Southern Region later this month.

PC-ROSA REPLACEMENT PROJECT. SRH Observations and Facilities Branch is nearing completion of the new Interactive Voice-Remote Observation Collection System (IV-ROCS). Both the primary and backup servers (appropriately named Climo and Hydro) were installed early this month. Testing and acceptance will follow over the next 15 calendar days before becoming operational around June 1. The system successfully completed initial quality assurance testing the end of last month.

The old PC-ROSA system used by NWS today requires the observer to enter a varying string of 18 to 36 characters through the telephone keypad, without any quality control features, and is usually riddled with errors. The new IV-ROCS system greets the observer with a custom interactive voice response menu to enter daily observations. The system has built in quality assurance features and programable climatological parameters to confirm both normal and extreme events. It has a built in e-mail notification system to notify local NWS representatives when equipment needs to be repaired or the observer wishes the local NWS to contact them. IV-ROCS is simple to use, reduces the coop program equipment costs, and reduces time and complexity of training coop observers. It will also significantly improve the quality of the coop observations and will make the observations available to our customers, including NCDC and the regional climate centers, in near-real time. In the future, our goal is to use IV-ROCSs Oracle database and reporting capability to eliminate the monthly B-91 form mailed by the observer saving an estimated \$12,000 per year in stamps and envelopes in our region alone.

SURFACE OBSERVATION PROGRAM. Southern Region received 114 requests from the aviation community for new certificates, cancellation and changes in type of surface observation certificates. A review of the list of observers from second order stations received from SR WFOs resulted in many changes in the list of observers at each site.

UPPER-AIR OBSERVATION PROGRAM. This time last year, WFO Little Rock upper air program was struggling, unable to move up in the rankings no matter how hard they tried. DAPM Jimmy Russel and ESA Dean Klimt, were frustrated with problems they were having with the equipment. MIC Renee Fair asked for SOD assistance. In mid-March, Mike Asmus and Charlie Lake traveled to Little Rock to work with the staff on both the upper air procedures and to take a look at the upper air tracking equipment. Working closely with the office electronic and operational staff, the team corrected some problems with the tracking equipment and improved several upper air observer procedures. As a result, WFO Little Rock upper air scores started to climb steadily, and that month (March) Little Rock became the top upper air site in Southern Region with a score of 298.77. Also, in March, Little Rock's 12-month average became sixth in the nation overall and first in SR with a score of 294.01. Congratulations to all involved in this achievement.

Other WFOs showing steady improvement over the past three months are Nashville (298.02), Jackson (295.58), Amarillo (295.06), El Paso (292.13), Birmingham (291.15), and New Orleans with a score of 290.66. Following Little Rock's 12 month average are WFOs Brownsville (292.97), Fort Worth (292.29), Miami (291.98), Del Rio (291.78), Nashville (291.45), Corpus Christi (291.04), and New Orleans with an average score of 290.58.

NEW UPPER-AIR EXAMS. In late March, a complete new set of upper-air examinations were sent to each upper-air site in SR. These exams were written to correct errors found in the Upper Air Exam Series A (VIZ) and B (Vaisala). All copies of Exam Series A and B should be destroyed upon receipt of the new Exam Series C (VIZ) and D (Vaisala).

KEY WEST RENDERING RECEIVED. The artist's rendering of the new WFO Key West building was received from the architect and plotted in both large and small versions. The large version to be sent from the architect will also be mounted on rigid foam backing for display purposes.

RECENT SAFETY INCIDENTS. Several incidents have occurred in which contractors have arrived to perform work at WFOs without notifying NWS employees of their presence, leading to potentially dangerous situations. In one case a person was inside the upper air dome when the antenna was energized in preparation for a balloon launch, and in a second case the contract employee was in an elevated lift near the WSR-88D dome with the radar operating. NWS employees must be vigilant for non-NWS personnel present on NWS property and take care to specify on all work orders and contracts that all contractors must check in at the beginning of each business day with NWS personnel in the office.

SAFETY TRAINING. DuPont safety training courses scheduled for April in Norman and May in Fort Worth were cancelled due to budget restrictions. The DuPont STAR training planned for five Southern Region focal point trainers in Fort Worth in April was also postponed due to funding availability. Safety focal points new to their positions will still be attending a 3-day safety training course during the summer at NWSTC.

SEVERE WEATHER PRESENTATION. WFO Fort Worth WCM Gary Woodall made a severe weather presentation at the April meeting of the DFW Federal Safety Council at the University of Texas in Arlington. The membership of the safety council is drawn from military and civilian safety professionals and persons assigned safety as a collateral duty in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Gary's message of awareness and preparedness was very well received and numerous questions were posed by members of the audience.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE. The wastewater pH at WFO Shreveport returned to a normal value of 6.8 in mid-April following the discontinuation of acid-based toilet cleaning agents. The pH level is checked on a periodic basis at Shreveport and other sites in Louisiana as part of the state wastewater permit requirements. Additional samples will be made to verify that pH levels remain within the 6.0 to 9.0 range.

Efforts continue at NWSH to coordinate the removal and replacement of the PCB-containing transformers in the current ART-I upper air systems at fifteen Southern Region sites. Dates for the shipment of the replacement counterweight have not yet been announced, nor the planned removal and disposal of the PCB transformer. The transformer should not be removed until the licensed waste hauler is ready to pick it up since the EPA has strict requirements for storage, handling, and transport of PCB-containing materials.

NOAA TIER II ECS OFFICE REVIEWS. Arrangements were made with four offices in West Texas (Amarillo, Lubbock, Midland and San Angelo) for informal environmental and safety reviews in early May by Mark George and Rhonda Carpenter of MASC and Terry Brisbin of SRH. Mark and Rhonda have already brought their environmental compliance and safety expertise to Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Fort Worth, Little Rock, Memphis, Nashville and Morristown. They typically tour the site with the ECS focal point(s) and provide verbal and written guidance to the local staff for improvements in environmental compliance and safety issues.

GALVESTON COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FACILITY. Site preparation for the Galveston County emergency management facility is tentatively scheduled to begin the last of this month. Construction of the building should begin in November 2003 and finish in November 2004.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

DIVERSITY/EEO AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Bill Proenza attended the National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives (NAHFE) Summit V. The theme of the conference was "Opening the Doors for Hispanic Leadership in the Federal Government." The event focused on issues affecting Hispanic representation participation in the federal government and gave the participants the opportunity to explore the details of how other federal managers solve specific challenges in this area.

WFO BIRMINGHAM. WFO Birmingham WCM Brian Peters was honored as the Birmingham Area Federal Professional of the Year. A committee made up of federal executives around the Birmingham metropolitan area reviewed dozens of entries. The selection of Brian Peters for this honor was a unanimous vote by the committee for years of dedication towards saving lives and public awareness. Congratulations Brian!

During the 2002 Project Impact, a drawing was held to award a school an all expense paid trip to visit the National Weather Service in Birmingham. Jefferson County paid for lunch and bus rental for Gate City Elementary to visit the weather office. Students spent several hours learning about operations and weather safety. Since the students' teacher had been deployed to Iraq for the war, forecaster Faith Borden and lead forecaster Patricia Hart presented information on Iraq weather giving the students a sense of what their teacher was experiencing. Congratulations to Gate City Elementary.

DAPM Dave Wilfing, forecaster Michael Scotten, and SCEP student Krissy Hurley participated in the Selma, Alabama, Earth Day Celebration. There were approximately 2300 students and teachers in attendance. They passed out weather packets to the teachers, which included the laminated cloud charts. They also had a slide presentation that was originally designed for fourth and fifth graders, but with half of the students in K thru second grade, Krissy was able to quickly reformat the show to fit their needs.

WFO LITTLE ROCK. Senior forecaster Joseph Goudsward represented the Little Rock WFO at "Celebrate Earth Day 2003." The event was held at the Harmony Grove School in Haskell and included many other state, county and local agencies that deal with environmental issues. Attendees included not only students, teachers, school administrators and the general population, but U.S. Representative Vic Snyder of the Arkansas 2nd Congressional District.

The focus of the celebration was the earth's environment, natural resources and how the numerous agencies work to promote and protect them. Joe set up a booth emphasizing the mission of the National Weather Service, the numerous programs, and severe weather. He also had composed a slide show about careers in the field of meteorology in the NWS, and included numerous handouts. A total of 962 students came by the display, with the number of teachers, administrators, and general public probably pushing the total to more than eleven hundred visitors.

WFO SHREVEPORT. Forecaster Mary Keiser gave an office tour to the Special Needs Class of Turner Middle School in Shreveport. Mary spoke on the operations of the NWS, as well as safety rules, upper air releases, NOAA Weather Radio, severe weather warnings, and a history of the Easter 2000 tornadoes that affected Shreveport.

WFO SAN JUAN. MIC Israel Matos was the keynote speaker at NOAA CREST Day sponsored by the University of Puerto Rico Center for Hemispherical Cooperation in research and Education. Israel's presentation was on remote sensing, climate prediction, and NWS WFO operational use of these tools.

SOUTHERN REGION WORKFORCE TRANSACTIONS			
<u>APRIL 1 - 30, 2003</u>			
<u>Southern Region Losses</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>From (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>From Title/Grade</u>
Richard McDougall	WFO LIX	Retirement	HMT, GS-11
Todd W. Hall	WFO EPZ	Transfer to WR	Met Intern, GS-11
David Marn	WFO EYW	Resignation	Met Intern, GS-11
Loren Phillips	WFO LUB	Resignation	SOO, GS-13
Pamela Gresham	WFO MEG	Retirement	HMT, GS-11

<u>Southern Region Gains</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Mark J. Wiley	WFO LCH	New Hire	Forecaster, GS-11
David Futterman	WFO EYW	Transfer from WR	Forecaster, GS-11
Michael Rapsik	WFO EYW	Transfer from ER	Senior Forecaster, GS-13

<u>Within Region Transfers/Actions</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>To (Office)</u>	<u>Action/Transfer</u>	<u>To Title/Grade</u>
Timothy Tinsley	WFO CRP	Transfer from LUB	Senior Forecaster, GS-13
Michael Gittinger	WFO CRP	Promotion from MLB	Senior Forecaster, GS-13
Jason Deese	WFO JAX	Transfer from TBW	Forecaster, GS-12
John MacLeod III	WFO LZK	Promotion from LZK	Senior Forecaster, GS-13