

NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

January 15, 2009

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

NOAA Bronze Medal Recipients: On December 31, WFO Oxnard and WFO San Diego were awarded the NOAA Bronze Medal for their outstanding fire weather forecast and briefing support to fire agencies fighting the catastrophic Southern California fires of October-November 2007. Please join me in congratulating these offices on a job well done!

American Meteorological Society Awards: During the American Meteorological Society (AMS) Annual Meeting in Phoenix, two Western Region employees have been given awards:

Andy Edman, WR SSD, as AMS Fellow
David Reynolds, MIC, WFO Monterey, AMS's Editor's Award from Journal of Applied Meteorology and Climatology

Chief of Operations for Western Region Selected: Please join me in congratulating Claudia Cox on her selection to the position of Physical Scientist, Chief of Operations for WR. Claudia will serve on the Regional Director's staff and be responsible for planning, developing, implementing and assessing the overall operations and services of Western Region Offices. In short, she will be the technical and scientific consultant to the Regional Director and Deputy Regional Director on operations, operational events, operational performance (verification, regional metrics, etc.), and ensuring operational readiness for decision support and high impact events. Claudia has very broad and deep experience and expertise in science coupled with demonstrated leadership and organizational skills. She was previously filling a dual role at WRH as the Regional Outreach and Planning Scientist and the NOAA West Regional Collaboration Team Coordinator.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

WFO Los Angeles/Oxnard Attend Local Fire Safe Council Meeting: Mark Jackson (MIC), Rich Thompson (IMET), Eric Boldt (WCM), and Dave Gomberg (fire weather program manager) were guests at a recent meeting of the La Habra Heights Fire Watch group, a branch of the Fire Safe Council. The purpose of the visit was to educate group members and the local city council about NWS fire weather services, and most importantly, provide information on the NWS Red Flag warning program. A staff representative from the Los Angeles County



George Andrewz of the La Habra Heights Fire Safe Council shows Eric Boldt (WCM, left) and Mark Jackson (MIC, right) their proposed warning signs alerting residents of Red Flag Warnings.

Fire Department Forestry Division also spoke to the group about the county's brush clearance program, and use of its Burn Index to provide specific fire danger information. The NWS visitors also received a tour of critical fire danger areas in and near La Habra Heights. The community is concerned with the fire dangers present due to the uncontrolled growth of a nearby wildlife conservatory. The mission of the Fire Watch Group is to educate and encourage active participation in fire mitigation efforts in and around La Habra Heights. They are exploring a proposal to add a RAWs station close by as well as posting warning signs at city entrances whenever the NWS issues a Red Flag Warning for the area.

WFO San Diego IMET and Fire Weather Program Manager In Fire News Video: Rob Balfour, WFO San Diego IMET and Fire Weather Program Manager, recently assisted the Fire Department News Network (FDNNTV), a new online fire fighter news service, in preparing an informational video on what a NWS IMET does at an incident. Rob's portion of the video was shot during his dispatch to the Freeway Complex Fire in southern California in November. The video is available at:

http://www.fdnntv.com/default.asp?Q=video&ID=E_4034_A_title_E_Weather_Forecaster_Assists_Firefighters_in_Battling_Wildfires

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Expo: The 2008 Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Expo was held in San Jose, California on November 6-8. The AOPA Expo provides a unique opportunity for aviators to gather valuable information on cutting-edge technology, attend daily seminars and check out more than 500 exhibitors with a myriad of product demonstrations. NOAA/NWS staffed an exhibitor booth and provided valuable NWS service information to our aviation customers. The booth was staff by WR reps (Dan Gudgel, WFO Monterey; Scott Birch, WR-MSD; Ken Venzke, CWSU Oakland; Brian Koeneke, WFO Eureka; Walt Rogers, CWSU Los Angeles; Alex Hoon, WFO Reno, and Carlos Molina, WFO Hanford), Alaska Region, and Aviation Weather Center. Almost 1000 aviators visited the NOAA/NWS booth. The customer comments on services were very positive, especially concerning NWS web pages. One web page held in high regard was the aviation mobile page (www.wrh.noaa.gov/zoo/MOBILE/ZOA2.htm) designed by Ken Venzke, MIC Oakland CWSU.



WR aviation forecasters (right to left): Dan Gudgel (WFO MTR), Walt Rogers (CWSU ZLA), Carlos Molina (WFO HNX), Brian Koeneke (WFO EKA) at AOPA EXPO 2008



MIC Mark Jackson, KCBS/KCAL Vice President/News Director Nancy Bauer Gonzales, Weather Anchor Josh Rubenstein, Assistant News Director Paul Button, and WCM Eric Boldt.

WFO Los Angeles/Oxnard Meets with KCBS/KCAL Media Partners: MIC

Mark Jackson, WCM Eric Boldt, and Forecaster Curt Kaplan met with the Vice President/News Director, Assistant News Director, and daytime weather anchor from the Los Angeles-based KCBS/KCAL TV stations to discuss outreach partnerships and NWS products and services. A tour of NWS operations, and AWIPS workstation and GFE demonstrations were given to the visitors in a two-hour meeting. KCBS/KCAL is one of the largest media organizations in southern California with news coverage across the entire Los Angeles metropolitan areas, including nearby counties. The Vice President/News Director of KCBS/KCAL

was very interested in providing a webcam in the NWS Los Angeles/Oxnard office for remote “live” interviews during significant weather events. Plans for a winter weather workshop were discussed as well as outreach opportunities between the TV station and the NWS, including future weather awareness events at the Los Angeles Lakers and Dodgers sporting events.

WFO Phoenix Co-Hosts the Second Southwest Aviation Weather Safety (SAWS) Workshop:



SAWS II Organizers (left to right): **Matt Lorentson** (ARTCC CWSU Albuquerque), **Leslie Wanek** (WFO Phoenix), and **David Craft** (WFO Albuquerque).

In collaboration with the WFO and Air Route Traffic Control Center Weather Service Unit (ARTCC CWSU) in Albuquerque, WFO Phoenix hosted the second Southwest Aviation Weather Safety (SAWS) Workshop in Phoenix on October 23-24, 2008. The two-day workshop, promoting aviation weather safety and productivity through improved weather awareness and forecasting services drew in attendance over 80 meteorologists, aviators, controllers, instructors, and airline representatives. Presenters and attendees from ten NWS Offices across Western and Southern Regions collaborated with NWS Headquarters, the FAA Academy, Storm Prediction Center, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and Southwest Airlines to focus on customer needs, service innovation, and winter weather forecasting techniques. The workshop

was a tremendous success with attendees already requesting a third SAWS Workshop!

To view the presentations from the SAWS Workshop II, please visit

http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/psr/aviation/SAWS2_Workshop/Agenda.php

WFO Seattle participates in Pacific Marine

Expo: WFO Seattle participated in the Pacific Marine Expo, the largest industrial marine show in the Pacific Ocean basin, at the Qwest Field Event Center on November 20-22. The NOAA booth, included the NWS, NOS Charting, National Marine Fisheries and Fisheries Law Enforcement. The WFO partnered with OPC and NWS Alaska Region in the NWS booth as well as a marine weather training seminar on waves. Matt Glazewski represented OPC, Juneau MIC Tom Ainsworth represented Alaska Region and the WFO was represented by IMET Jim Prange, PMO Pat Brandow, Lead



Forecaster Dana Felton, SOO Kirby Cook and WCM Ted Buehner. The marine weather seminar on waves was attended by about 45 mariners from a wide range of marine interests including crabbing, fishing, tug and barge, merchant marine and recreational. The seminar was jointly presented by Tom, Matt and Ted. As Matt put it, "What a great group of deep ocean and coastal mariners at this event - all our customers!"

HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

Access to Hydrologic Service Manuals: To make it easier for WFOs and RFCs to access Hydrologic Service Manuals (HSMs), an effort is being made to place HSMs in one centralized location. HSMs from 15 Western Region WFOs have now been posted to the Resources section of the HCSD web pages <http://ww2.wrh.noaa.gov/hsd/hydro/resources.php>



Modernizing the Fischer Porter Rain Gage: The Fischer Porter hourly precipitation gage is being retrofit to eliminate the paper punch tape used to record the measurements. This eliminates the need for a mechanical punch block, which at times would malfunction, mailing paper tapes, and reading/translating the data from the holes on the paper tape. Data

from the gage will be downloaded to an SD memory card by the observer and sent to the WFO for processing. The data will be forwarded electronically to the NCDC. The retrofit of approximately 2000 gages is expected to be completed in three years. This includes about 550 gages in the Western Region. Susan Nelson in HCSD is the WR contact for this project.



Hydrology Science Field Seminar Series: HCSD and SSD will be hosting Western Region Hydro Science Field Seminar Series webinars in January and March. On 1/29/09 Mary Mullusky from OCWWS/HSD will be providing us with the latest information about the National River Flood Warning Verification System, prototyping of the verification system, and when the system is expected to go live. On 3/26/09 Victor Hom from OCWWS/HSD will be providing a training webinar on flood inundation mapping. Both one hour long webinars will begin at noon PT/1 MT.

Climate Change Workshop: There will be a WR Climate Change Workshop April 14-16 in Boulder, CO. One representative from each office (likely the Climate Focal Point) should attend. A block of rooms has been set aside at the Residence Inn and Courtyard in Boulder, and the workshop will be held next door to the Residence Inn at UCAR's Center Green Campus. The hotels will have a website set up in early January to make hotel reservations. The WR Climate Change Technical Advisory Committee is currently working on the agenda. There will be sessions on the latest Climate Change science, IPCC, CCSP, societal impacts, media inquiries and outreach, the current status and future plans for the Climate Change models, and how NOAA, the NWS, and partner agencies are helping the public with Climate Change information. Expect more detailed information in the next few weeks from Andrea Bair.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

Upcoming Science Meetings:

- **AMS Annual Meeting, January 11-15, 2009:** Phoenix, AZ
- **13th Annual Northern Plains Weather Workshop, April 7-8, 2009:** Abstracts are due March 1, 2009. Details are available at <http://www.ias.sdsmt.edu/NPWorkshop/index.htm>
- **AMS 13th Conference on Mesoscale Processes, August 17-20:** Salt Lake City, Utah. Abstract Deadline: April 17, 2009, Preregistration Deadline: July 20, 2009.

Activities:

Climatology Probability of Precipitation Methodology, Tool and Training: The training for the climatology pops (climoPOP) is available on the WRH Intranet:

http://ww2.wr.noaa.gov/ssd/digital_services/training/climopop_new/. WR is adopting the climoPOP application and methodology and has been the basis for the last three SOO/DOH calls. Basically, the methodology is to start with the climoPOPs and adjust up/down from these long term normals. The methodology is:

- Use the climoPOP tool for editing POP grids
- Start with the climoPOP (long term normals generated for each office). This will help WR correct our long term dry bias. Adjust POPs up/down from these normals.
- The tool places the terrain adjusted POP in the correct location.
- Raise POPs in any period (days 1 through 7) to highlight high impact events that have a precipitation component, consistent with other products, like the AFD and SPS.

- Aid collaboration between offices and reduce workload by adoption of a common grid editing practice. Place more focus on the meteorology of the situation rather than knobology.

Latest Cell Phone Updates: iNWS is aimed at improving decision support to community decision makers by providing interactive tools and services. The concept is to be able reach these community decision makers, any place – any time. iNWS encompasses the development and use of new technologies such as mobile, web 2.0, chat, and on-line briefings. iNWS is targeted at community decision makers from which we hope to gather feedback that will steer future development efforts.

Here is a summary of the latest developments of iNWS:

Improved Text Alert Management page

- Get started by visiting <http://inws.wrh.noaa.gov> on you PC's web browser.
 - Improved page layout, look and feel
 - Added the ability to create text message alerts based on county or landmark, address, city or zip code.
 - Improved mapping interface to manage text message alerts.

Upgraded client/new web features released:

- iNWS Mobile -- The new and improved Java application (used to call MAMA) for your cell phone (major changes - really our third version based on your comments. This version will be the 1.01. We have approval from NOAA security for add to the office blackberries , just waiting for the MOC to release.
- Cell version of iNWS page -- When visiting <http://inws.wrh.noaa.gov> on your phone's web browser, you will soon get a page formatted for mobile devices.

NWSChat Update: NWSChat Admin team conducted four (4) GOTOmeeting sessions for NWS staff to introduce them to the NWSChat.weather.gov website and service. Training included: registration, client configuration, online documentation and resources available. The Webinar recorded and posted at <https://nwschat.weather.gov/nws/nwstoolbox.php>

ESpotter Update: ESpotter is a system to facilitate the submission of spotter reports online. The system is being developed to enhance and increase timely and accurate online spotter reporting and communications between spotters and their local weather forecast offices. The use of the system is currently available for trained spotters and emergency managers.

E-Spotter information can be found at <http://espotter.weather.gov> This program is hosted and serviced by Central Region Headquarters at cr.espotter@noaa.gov .

There are three main eSpotter interfaces:

1. A Spotter interface (web based)
2. A WFO interface (web based)

3. An Admin interface (web based via WRH or CRH)

There are two ways to monitor for incoming Spotter reports

1. eSpotter Monitor (Windows PC tray application)
2. On an AWIPS Text workstation (eg, xt2-vhw) through LDM scripts.

WR Verification Task Force: Ken Pomeroy (SSD) and a group of six WR SOOs are working on a next generation verification/forecaster feedback for high impact precipitation events. The team is making good progress and will be rolling out a new application in early February.

Debris Flow: The USGS and NWS are conducting a prototype debris flow project over southern California for a fourth winter. The goal is to identify debris flows stemming from heavy rain over fire burn areas. Dave Streubel (SSD) has organized the last few Debris Flow conference calls between the USGS. Results to date for this year have been mixed. Southern California has experienced heavy rains over the burns areas with only minor debris flows reported. The joint team is examining how to improve the guidance.

New COMET Releases: You can access all COMET modules through the LMS.

- [Weather and Health](#)
- [S-290 Unit 5: Temperature and Relative Humidity Relationships](#)
- [Operational Use of Wave Watch III](#)
- [S-290 Unit 4: Basic Weather Processes](#)
- [Advanced Satellite Sounding: The Benefits of the Hyperspectral Observation](#)

Teletraining Sessions for January: The teletraining calendar is at:

<http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ecal.asp> Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: visit@comet.ucar.edu.

- Utility of GOES Satellite Imagery in Forecasting/Nowcasting Severe Weather (Intermediate, Jan. 27)
- Cyclogenesis: Analysis utilizing Geostationary Satellite Imagery (Basic, Jan. 22)
- Water Vapor Imagery and Potential Vorticity Analysis (Intermediate, Jan. 14, 28)
- MODIS Products in AWIPS (Basic, Jan. 21)
- CRAS Forecast Imagery in AWIPS (Basic, Jan. 20)
- TROWAL Identification (Basic, Jan. 29)
- Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential using GOES sounder DPI (Basic, Jan. 26)

All previous sessions including those with recorded instructor audio and annotations are available at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ts.html>

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

IT Infrastructure upgrades: We recently upgraded the Load Balancer (Web), the Procurve Switches and also the database servers for ROMAN (Real-Time Observation Monitor and Analysis Network). This ROMAN upgrade included both the slave and master database servers.

New NWR: Joe Lachacz assisted the Spokane Electronics shop with the installation of a new Armstrong G300 NWR replacement. Training was also provided to the electronics staff on the transmitter. The transmitter was installed with the help of Paul Kozsan and Mike Henry. The Spokane electronics shop has installed 3 replacement transmitters within the last 3 weeks. Great job to the electronics shop!

88D Work: Rex Bernhart along with the Oxnard electronic staff of Tim Menschke and Deacon Smith replaced the klystron on the Ojai Mountain Radar. The klystron was replaced with minimal downtime during the recent fires in Southern California.

CPR Training Pays Off: Recently Tim Meschke, Electronic Technician at WFO Oxnard, was entertaining a guest and during a game of ping pong the individual collapsed. Tim checked and found that his friend's heart had stopped and he was not breathing. Tim had his wife call 911 while he started CPR. The medics arrived shortly and with an AED were able to get the individual's heart pumping again. It is very likely Tim's actions saved this individual's life and the training he received at the WFO was critical to the situation. We are proud of you, Tim!

Reno Radar Damage: On December 19, a peak wind gust of 140 mph during a severe wind storm damaged the dome at the Reno radar site (Figure 1). On the WFO Reno webpage, there is detailed information about the wind event and the radar's damage as well as some great photographs taken by the WFO electronics team:
<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/rev/current/radar.php>

On Christmas day, a complete dome failure occurred (Figure 2). The Reno radar is offline until further notice.

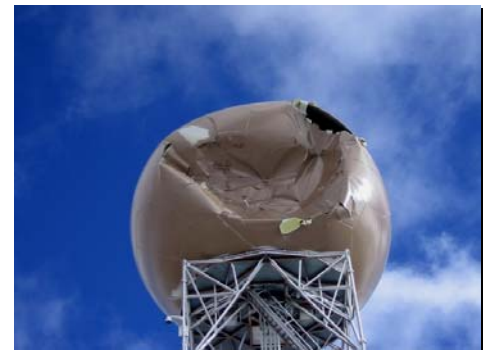


Figure 1

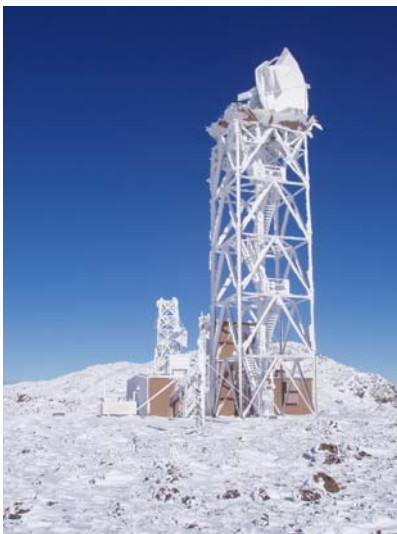


Figure 2