



# NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

October 1, 2008

## DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

### Welcome to our new Deputy Director

Mark Tew, Deputy Regional Director, has arrived at Western Region Headquarters. Mark began his NWS career in Western Region as a meteorologist intern at WFO Pendleton and then at WFO Portland before moving on to Central Region (Grand Rapids, MI), Southern Region (San Angelo, TX) and then to NWSH where he further diversified his experience through leadership positions as the National Public Weather Warning Program Leader, Acting Chief of the Fire and Public Services Branch, and National Marine Weather



Program Leader in the Office of Weather, Water, and Climate Services (OCWWS). Mark is a native of Pennsylvania and attended Penn State and the San Jose State University where he earned his Meteorology degree. I look forward to Mark's innovation, organization, high energy, and his leadership skills in helping lead Western Region forward.

### Western Region Administrator's Award Recipient

I am pleased to announce that Mike Staudenmaier, WFO Flagstaff has been selected as a winner of the 2008 Administrator's Award. This award will be presented at a ceremony on October 22, 2008. Mike was given this award for the development of presentations and materials critical to effective communication on climate change in the National Weather Service. Congratulations, Mike!

### Regional Cline Award Winners Announced

The following Western Region people have been awarded the Regional Cline award. Each has contributed to the region in some unique way. Congratulations for a job well done:

Leadership: David Gomberg – WFO Oxnard  
Program Management: Clair Ketchum – WFO Flagstaff  
Meteorology: Brian Tesar – WFO Billings  
Hydrometeorology: Johnathan Wolfe – WFO Portland  
Hydrology: Cass Goodman – CBRFC  
Admin Support: Karrie Schmidt – WFO Pocatello

Electronics: Bryan Tilly – WFO Pocatello  
 Outreach: Leslie Wanek – WFO Phoenix  
 Diversity: WR Diversity Action Committee

## **LIFT IV Class Selected**

The attendees for the fourth Leadership and Innovation For Tomorrow (LIFT) class have been announced. The attendees will be:

John Adair, Lead Forecaster, WFO Las Vegas  
 Brian Bezenek, Senior Forecaster, WFO Juneau  
 Connie Clarstrom, Forecaster, WFO Medford  
 Claudia Cox, Outreach and Planning Scientist, Western Region Headquarters  
 Dawn Fishler, Forecaster, WFO Boise  
 Karl Foster, Secretary, Western Region Headquarters  
 Patrick Gilchrist, Lead Forecaster, WFO Glasgow  
 Steve Goldstein, Lead Forecaster, WFO Sacramento  
 Ryan Knutsvig, Science and Operations Officer, WFO Elko  
 Edan Lindaman, Meteorologist Intern, WFO Las Vegas  
 Gina McGuire, Forecaster, WFO Reno  
 Glen Merrill, CWSU Meteorologist, CWSU Salt Lake City  
 David Myrick, Meteorologist, Western Region Headquarters SSD  
 Holly Osborne, Forecaster, WFO Sacramento  
 Erik Pytlak, Science and Operations Officer, WFO Tucson  
 Mike Seaman, Lead Forecaster, WFO Salt Lake City

The LIFT class will be taught in Boise, Idaho in November. Thanks to all who applied for the program, and congratulations to those who were selected.

## **Leadership Corner - Core Values (Continued from previous Staff Notes Edition)**

### Middle Level Core Values

Middle core values are best practices. These values are admirable and desirable, very good ideals to uphold as values for yourself and your organization. They include things like customer focus, communication, compassion, diversity, duty, ethics, excellence, innovation, honesty, leadership development, quality, respect, service, support, teamwork.

So why are these “highly regarded” values not listed in the “high” category? It has to do with the potential for misuse. If these values were embraced and used to guide employee actions, they could still leave an organization vulnerable to unscrupulous decisions. As an example, with customer focus as a key operating principle, the MIC of a Forecast Office might hire people who are passionate about customer service. With a cadre of enthusiastic people, aligned with the office’s core values, all looks good. Personal relationships are developed with key partners in Aviation, Fire, Media, and Emergency Managers, leading to changes in products and services to better serve customer needs.

Then comes a day when the forecast indicates low clouds and thick fog will form over your major airport, shutting down aviation operations. Your friend and valued partner calls from Ajax Airlines, informing you all arrivals and departures are on hold because of the “zero visibility” forecast conditions. What’s more, he says, the cost of this “ground stop” could go into five or six digits as delays, backlogs, missed connections, and unplanned fuel usage spread across the national air space system. However, if the TAF could be adjusted upward to 200’ and ¼ mile, they could resume the flight schedule and minimize losses. From his perspective, a small compromise could satisfy everyone and salvage lost revenue. Assuming the visibility really is zero, and it is expected to remain zero for the next three hours, the Ajax request has forced a crucial decision. If “customer focus” is a nonnegotiable which is not underpinned by a higher principle, compromising public safety becomes an option, transforming an otherwise “good” value (customer service) into a poisonous tipping point for the office.

### ***High Level Core Values***

High core values stand on their own merit as pure, enduring, and sustainable. These are the highest principles – what Gus Lee calls “the platinum standard in a world that likes to trade in tin”. **There are only three high core values: *integrity courage character***

Unlike middle values, when crisis creates tension at a key decision point, these values become more powerful when tested under pressure. Chief among Teddy Roosevelt’s values was a firm belief in the inherent greatness of democracy practiced in its purest form.

The *integrity* to act with compassion toward the underprivileged; the *character* to enact laws ensuring safety, health, and opportunity for all citizens; the *courage* and vision to preserve the environment for future generations – these were the trademarks of his leadership.

There is value in thinking about values. Articulating what nonnegotiable principles we will follow in our daily decisions, behaviors and relationships is crucial to sustaining success as public servants. To do so, we must be as intentional about upgrading our principled practices as Teddy Roosevelt was in rebuilding pride and confidence in American government.

It starts with the three enduring principles of integrity, courage, and character. It continues with identifying practices, many associated with “middle” values, built on a commitment to one or more of the enduring principles. And it matures from practicing and modeling those values in our daily actions.

Consider some office discussions about what principles you should adopt as a team to guide your journey toward reaching your vision. It can also be useful to deliberate on the priority of your values. Disney, for example, considers “customer courtesy” as one of its highest values, superseded only by “safety”. Ordinarily it would be a values violation for a cast member to be rude to a guest, but if “Goofy” is posing for a photo with a five-year old fan and suddenly someone nearby begins choking, it is perfectly acceptable, in fact expected, that he will ignore the adoring youngster and rush to assist with the safety emergency. The choice in that example is an obvious one, but it illustrates the benefit of thinking through priorities to facilitate easy decisions when circumstances create tension between competing values.

So what are your core values? What are the values of your office or team? Are the two in alignment? Do your publicly advertised values match those that actually guide your practical, visible behaviors? Have you considered prioritizing so the list actually assists decision making under conflicting demands? If not, what will it take to make that happen? And when will you do it?

*Kim Runk, MIC, WFO Las Vegas*

## METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

**Kid's Day, Spokane 2008:** WFO Spokane participated in the KSPS Kid's Day Festival on August 9, 2008 located in Riverfront Park in Spokane, WA. The event featured over 40 vendors that offered free activities for kids. This was the 24<sup>th</sup> Kid's Day Festival in Spokane and it attracted an estimated 12,000 people from the area and surrounding towns. The NWS booth featured multiple displays demonstrating instruments used for weather observations, weather balloon flights, and significant weather events that occurred across the Inland Northwest. The booth also displayed educational pamphlets for hazardous weather events, careers in NOAA, and handouts for the kids and parents. The main attraction was the craft tables set up to the left of the tent (pictured below) where we made *weather forecasting wheels* with the kids and featured a hands-on water basin model demonstrating the uniqueness of water drainage during heavy rain events over mountains. Approximately 250 kids participated in the crafts that were offered and many visitors expressed appreciation of the NWS and activities that we provide.



*Left to right: Jon Fox, (lead forecaster), Steve Bodnar (intern), and Royce Fontenot (Service Hydrologist). Laurie Nisbet also participated (not pictured).*



*Left to right): General Forecaster Dave Groenert, ESA Michael Pereira, and General Forecaster Josh Smith working the booth the first day of the Magic Valley Air Show.*

**Magic Valley Air Show:** Six members of the Boise WFO staffed a weather information and safety tent at the Magic Valley Air Show in Twin Falls, Idaho. Over the two days an estimated 50,000 people attended the air show headlined by the Blue Angels. Visitors at the tent were from all over the West and even included a couple from Switzerland. Several potential new spotters and a couple of future meteorologists were among many of the people who stopped by the tent to learn about the National Weather Service. Along with the handouts an indoor/outdoor thermometer provided entertainment as the tarmac temperature rose to 120 degrees while the NWS tent remained a cool 90 degrees. And to top it all off a couple of the visitors provided enough anecdotal and

visual evidence to verify a tornado warning from an outbreak of severe weather which had occurred in the Magic Valley earlier that week.

**Arizona Fire District Association Conference:** At the semi-annual Arizona Fire District Association Conference in Tucson, Arizona Valerie Meyers, General Forecaster and IMET from WFO Phoenix, presented information to the over 200 representatives, mainly Fire Chiefs, on services available from the NWS. She received many praises for her presentation which allowed Fire Fighters to better understand what we can do for them. Following the presentation, Valerie Meyers and Tom Evans, WCM Tucson, tended a booth and spoke to most of the attendees as they gathered safety and service information.



*Valerie Meyers tending a booth at the Arizona Fire District Association Conference, August 23, 2008*



*Left to right: Susan Jolliff, George Buckwold, and Travis Mayer load up the school supplies to deliver to a Boise elementary school.*

**Boise School Supply Drive:** Administrative Support Assistant, Susan Jolliff, led BOI WFO in partnering with all National Interagency Fire Center agencies in conducting a school supply drive for a local school in need. Susan selected a school that had special needs this year, with 71% of the students coming from low-income households. The drive was very successful, with boxes of supplies filling an entire pickup truck. The school principal was elated with the outpouring of support.

**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



*Left to right: 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.*

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.

**A N.E.A.T Experience in Northeast Montana:** NWS Glasgow recently participated in the Northeast Aviation and Technology (NEAT) program in Glasgow. The three-day long program was held to introduce area students to the world of aviation, science and technology through



*HMT Jim Branda discusses severe weather safety with a group of students.*

several programs. HMT Jim Branda has been serving as the NWS representative to the planning team for this event for the past year. The first program was a career fair for high school students throughout the region. WCM Tanja Fransen discussed careers within NOAA to interested students. Several have followed up to do tours of the office, and possible volunteer internships in the future. Next, students were able to go to four sessions that were 45 minutes in length to hear professionals in the aviation, science and technology fields discuss their careers. SOO Bill Martin, IMET Patrick Gilchrist and WCM Tanja

Fransen all gave presentations on topics including aviation weather, fire weather, and societal impacts of large weather events. The final event was two days long, in which Jim Branda, Tanja Fransen, and intern Rob Smith staffed a booth that was visited by nearly 1,000 school children throughout northeast Montana. The booth included cloud charts, the "Space Junk" comic book, and the "Teaching Tornado" machine along with various videos playing throughout the day.



**Leadership Pocatello Begins for Two NWS Employees:** Two members of the WFO Pocatello staff, Karrie Schmidt (ASA) and Dean Hazen (SOO), were selected by the Pocatello Chamber of Commerce for the 2008-2010 Leadership Pocatello program. They recently returned from an overnight retreat which included a challenge course and several team building activities. The activities were designed to build trust, to

*WFO Pocatello ASA Karrie Schmidt attempts to stand atop a telephone pole while WFO Pocatello SOO Dean Hazen and their Leadership Pocatello classmates encourage her.*

enhance communication, to showcase diversity, and to develop a sense of team. One activity was designed to challenge individuals to step out of their comfort zone. This involved climbing a ladder onto staples in a telephone pole, standing on the top and jumping to a trapeze bar. The evening session challenged all members with group discussions on the five key issues facing our current presidential candidates. At the end of the retreat the group was required to select a member to Chair the class fundraising activity. Dean was selected by the group to be the fundraiser project Chair. The funds raised are used to support the next Leadership Pocatello class and to fund various community based projects. Founded in 1984, Leadership Pocatello brings together experienced and motivated individuals from the various sectors of the community in an on-going two year program. This program is designed to develop community-based leadership and to provide broad exposure to community concerns and resources. Ultimately, the program provides opportunities for participants to develop their leadership skills and then use them to address community challenges through exchange of ideas, development of solutions and participation in service projects. Leadership Pocatello is sponsored by the Pocatello Chamber of Commerce.

## SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

### Upcoming Science Meetings:

- **12th Annual Great Divide Weather Workshop, Billings, Montana**  
**October 7-9, 2008:** The workshop web page and registration page can be found at: [weather.gov/Billings](http://weather.gov/Billings) and [weather.gov/Glasgow](http://weather.gov/Glasgow)
- **AMS Annual Meeting** – January 11-15, 2009 in Phoenix, AZ.

### Activities:

**Western Region Continues Active Learning Management System (LMS) Usage:** Between the advent of the new LMS on June 1, 2007 and August 31, 2008, the following training has been completed:

- Western Region employees have completed 12,027 web based training (WBT) modules via LMS. This averages 800 modules per month.
- Modules completed vary over the entire spectrum of NWS training: from radar and satellite, to hydrology and meteorology, to leadership and collaboration.
- Western Region employees have completed more WBT modules than any other NWS region, and the WR total accounts for nearly one third (32%) of all modules completed by the entire NWS.
- Western Region has also completed 436 Instructor Led Training (ILT) courses. ILT course completions include courses on climate, GIS, safety, ASA training, and management and supervision.

**New Cell Phone Text Alert Released:** For the last couple of months SSD has hunkered down into development mode working towards big improvements to interactiveNWS (iNWS, formerly NWSmobile). **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.
  - 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.

**WFO and CWSU Cell Phone application:** The Randy Weatherly (WFO Salt Lake City) and Ken Venzke (CWSU-ZOA) mobile pages are on the pages with instructions on how to get started are included.

### **Long term awareness of changes**

- Stay current on the latest development by subscribing to our feed at <http://inws.wrh.noaa.gov/news/feed>

### **Applications/features planned to be released in the near future include:**

- iNWS Mobile -- (mid Oct) The new and improved Java application (previously MAMA) for your cell phone (major changes - really our third version based on your comments. This version will be the 1.0
- Cell version of iNWS page -- (mid Oct) When visiting <http://inws.wrh.noaa.gov> on your phone's web browser, you will soon get a page formatted for mobile devices.
- NWSchat (IEMchat transitioned to NWS servers and maintenance)... We are not developing this, just helping to get it implemented.

Thank you for all of your feedback so far. If you have any questions or concerns about where we are going with the project please let us know. You can contact us here in SSD (Aaron, Mike, or Andy).

**New COMET Training and Professional Development Modules:** COMET has published 8 new training materials in the areas of satellite meteorology, oceanography, tropical meteorology, aviation, climatology, and hydrology.

- **Environmental Satellite Resource Center** or "ESRC". Available online at <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/esrc>, this site is a searchable database-driven website that provides easy access to a wide range of information about geostationary satellites
- **Introduction to Tropical Meteorology: Tropical Cyclones** is a very thorough treatment of the topic and is available online at <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/tropical/textbook/>.



- New Hydrology titles are:
  - **Dams and Dam Failure - Module 2: St. Venant Equations, Modeling, and Case Study** at <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/hydro/damfailure/basic2/>
  - **Introduction to Distributed Hydrologic Modeling** at <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/hydro/DHM/Intro/>
- New Oceanography titles include:
  - **Analyzing Ocean Swell** at [http://www.meted.ucar.edu/oceans/ocean\\_swell/](http://www.meted.ucar.edu/oceans/ocean_swell/)
  - **North Wall Effects on Winds and Waves** at <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/oceans/northwall/>
- Aviation forecasting:
  - **Writing TAFs for Winds and Low-Level Wind Shear** available at <http://meted.ucar.edu/dlac2/mod3>
- **Introduction to Climatology** which is available at <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/afwa/climo/intro/>

**Teletraining Sessions for October:** 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](mailto:visit@comet.ucar.edu).

- Utility of GOES Satellite Imagery in Forecasting/Nowcasting Severe Weather by Dan Bikos (CIRA) (Intermediate, Oct 21,23)
- Interpreting Satellite Signatures by Scott Lindstrom (VISIT/CIMSS) (Basic, Oct 22)
- Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential Using GOES Sounder Derived Products (Basic, Oct 20)
- Satellite Interpretation of Orographic Clouds/Effects (Basic, Oct 9)
- Cyclogenesis: Analysis utilizing Geostationary Satellite Imagery (Basic, Oct 16)
- CRAS Forecast Imagery in AWIPS (Basic, Oct 14)
- TROWAL Identification (Basic, Oct 30)
- Basic Satellite Principles (Basic, Oct 8)

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

## **HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION**

**WFO Portland and NWRFC Holds Water and Weather Workshop:** On September 17, 2008, WFO Portland and the Northwest River Forecast Center (NWRFC) held a Water and Weather Workshop for approximately 50 media, emergency managers and public safety officials. Several staff members from the WFO and NWRFC gave presentations on Pacific Northwest winter weather hazards, river forecasting processes, specialized weather support available for all hazards and how to stay informed. Also discussed was new technology, such as NWS Mobile and IEM Chat that are available for customers to help keep them informed about impending significant weather events.

### **Hybrid Visualization: A Unique Use of NDFD data:**

A unique collaboration between the NWS and a physical terrain modeling group was featured at the 2008 ESRI GIS International User Group Conference in San Diego, CA during the first week in August. Jayme Laber, Senior Service Hydrologist at WFO Oxnard, teamed up with a local physical terrain modeling group (Solid Terrain Modeling, Inc) to demonstrate a unique hybrid visualization tool that combines NWS NDFD gridded forecast data and a 3-D terrain model. Weather data are projected on top of the 3-D model using an animated slideshow to display various forecast elements and weather data layers, such as wind, temperature, and relative humidity forecasts, radar imagery and past fire boundaries. The 3-D model with NDFD overlay was featured at the conference Exhibitor's Hall, where thousands of people could see this joint effort, as this is the largest GIS tradeshow in the World. This demonstration truly showcased the varied and marketable uses of NWS NDFD data by showing it as an effective briefing and teaching tool that combines a physically based surface with NWS forecast digital data. Please see

<http://ww2.wrh.noaa.gov/hsd/gis/NDFDapplication.pdf> for further information.



*Top: NDFD Wind forecast displayed  
Bottom: Jayme Laber (NWS WFO-Oxnard, front), standing with Lawrence Faulkner (STM, back) at the STM booth in the Exhibits Hall at the ESRI User Conference. Radar imagery is projected over the 3-D model of the Southern California Coast.*



### **ESRI GIS International User Conference, San Diego, CA: August 3-8, 2008:**

Several NWS Geographic Information Systems (GIS) users gathered at the 28th Annual ESRI GIS International User Conference held in San Diego, CA, August 3 to 8. Over 14,000 people from around the world attended this year's "Geography in Action" meeting, making it the world's largest GIS

*From left: Jenna Meyers (NWS-WRH), Brent Bernard (CBRFC), Dave Cokely (NWSTC), Ira Graffman (NWSH/OST/SEC), Jayme Laber (WFO-LOX), Bonnie Bartling (WFO-LOX), and Kris Lander (NWS-CRH). Not pictured: Ken Waters (WFO-PSR), Julie Sepanik, (NWSH/OST/MDL), and Ken Pelman (NWS/NCEP/CPC)*

event. The conference offered hundreds of technical training workshops, moderated paper sessions, and access to specialists within the company for product and technical support. The Exhibits Hall and map gallery showcased over 300 industry and government organizations involved in GIS.

Over 80 NOAA employees attended the user conference with 10 of those being from the NWS (5 from Western Region). NOAA's presence was spotlighted at the conference through the NOAA Exhibit booth, a special interest group meeting and a NOAA-specific technical session. Additionally, the NWS had two moderated-paper sessions where presentations overviewed current GIS activities within the NWS. NOAA's booth this year was staffed by volunteers from all of the NOAA line offices including NWS (pictured left) and it featured the Magic Planet displaying weather, water, and climate data.

## **SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION**

**Promotion (and new job) for Steve Brueske:** On October 12, 2008 Steve will assume the position of MIC for WFO Milwaukee. Steve's NWS experience includes posting as a radar instructor at the Warning Decision Training Branch in Norman, Oklahoma, a term as Science and Operations Officer at WFO Charleston, SC, and Meteorologist In Charge at WFO Great Falls. Prior to his selection to lead the Milwaukee office, he was our Deputy Chief of the Systems Operations Division at WRH. Steve will be missed and our loss is Central Region's gain. We wish Steve the very best and congratulate him on his promotion!

**New CISSP in SOD:** Congratulations to Sean Wink who recently attained his CISSP certification. This certification is the platinum standard for IT Security, is a globally recognized standard of achievement, and is very difficult to attain. In fact, Sean is now one of 58,000 IT Security Professionals in over 130 countries with this certification. Congrats!

**Energy Awareness Month:** The Month of October is Energy Awareness Month. This year's theme is *"Working to Secure a Clean Energy Future: Where Energy is Abundant, Reliable, and Affordable"*. Working to achieve a clean energy future is not simply a long-term goal. Every little action, taken by all of us whether it be at home or work, creates immediate benefits by enhancing economic vitality, increasing energy security and improving environmental quality. Every office is encouraged to review its environmental footprint, and possibly form a local team focused on improving water and energy efficiencies and establish a local recycling program.

### **WFO San Joaquin Valley Upgrades Security System:**

WFO San Joaquin Valley recently added two more surveillance cameras to its security system. These will improve the Hanford office's ability to monitor the grounds around the WFO. The tower from the co-located WSR-88D was used as a mounting platform for bird's-eye views.



*Pictured are ET's Tim Johnson (on the tower) and Marc Ganey (on the lift) installing the new equipment. Not pictured is FET Jim MacLellan, who was also involved in the project.*

**NWR and ASOS Upgrades:** WR Facilities Engineering Technicians have been hard at work making several NWR and ASOS locations more resilient. Most recently backup generators have been installed at Port Angeles and Friday Harbor ASOS sites and at the Mt. Eldon and Bootlegger NWR sites.



*Friday Harbor, WA ASOS site with new generator.*



*Port Angeles, WA ASOS site with new backup generator*

Gerry Deiotte, Rex Bernhart, and Dave Coleman (VEF) performed the initial prep work and installation of the new NWR located on Brock Mtn that will provide coverage into the Tonopah, NV area. Once the user group approves the installation the radio will go on air.

Gerry Deiotte and the local Billings ET staff installed one of the very few Armstrong G1000 transmitters on Banner Peak, WY. The installed went very smoothly and the new Armstrong Transmitter will provide greater reliability.

Joe Lachacz, Gerry Deiotte, and the local electronics staff visited several NWR's in the Tucson, Flagstaff, and Phoenix area correcting several problems and installing filters to help eliminate interference. Joe and Gerry spent two weeks traveling.

Rex Bernhart and Gerry Deiotte visited the Bootlegger Hill NWR site to prep the facility for a future move. Gerry and Rex will focus on RF grounding and antenna placement. A generator has also been installed and the new location thanks to the facilities team.

### **Electronics Technician assists**

**firefighters:** On September 26, while driving to the Spirit Mountain NWR transmitter site, David Colman, Electronics Technician, WFO Las Vegas, and WECOM Technician Darrell observed smoke originating from the side of the mountain. Deciding to investigate, they soon came across an abandoned ranch. After verifying that there were no occupants, they grabbed a fire extinguisher and hiked approximately 600 yards to discover a tree engulfed in flames. David attempted to put out the flames with the extinguisher but the scale of the fire was too large. Darrell called 911 while David worked to keep the fire from spreading by tossing dirt onto the flames.

They hiked back down the hill and drove to the main road to direct the firefighters. The fire department vehicles were unable to get anywhere near the source of the fire, so they used the WECOM 4X4 vehicle and loaded the back of the truck with extinguishers and other firefighting equipment and drove back to the ranch. David and Darrell aided the firefighters by helping to carry their equipment the 600 yards up the hill and upon the request and under the specific directions from the firefighters, they assisted in successfully putting out the fire (utilizing axes and shovels).

Upon examination of the scene, the firefighters determined that the wildfire had likely started when a lightning strike, which may have occurred during the night, had split the tree. The firefighters were very appreciative for David's and Darrell's assistance while noting that there was an abundance of dry brush in the area that could have ignited had it not been for their efforts.

**Cell Phone Use Information:** There are two dangers associated with driving and cell phone use, including text messaging. First, drivers must take their eyes off the road while dialing. Second, people can become so absorbed in their conversations that their ability to concentrate on the act of driving is severely impaired, jeopardizing the safety of vehicle occupants and pedestrians. The latest research shows that while using a cell phone when driving may not be the most dangerous distraction, because it is so prevalent it is by far the most common cause of this type of crash and near crash.

A study by researchers at the University of Utah found that motorists who talked on hands-free cell phones were 18 percent slower in braking and took 17 percent longer to regain the speed



*L-R Three firefighters from the Cal Nev Ari Fire Department David Coleman, ET from WFO Las Vegas, Darrel from WECOM.*

they lost when they braked.

Motorists who use cell phones while driving are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves, according to a study of drivers in Perth, Australia in 2005.

A survey conducted by the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) showed that teens considered sending text messages via cell phones to be their biggest distraction. Of the teens surveyed, 37 percent said that text messaging was extremely or very distracting, while 20 percent said that they were distracted by their emotional states and 19 percent said that having friends in the car was distracting.

**If you must talk on a cell phone while driving, then pull off the road to a safe location and place your call.**

This website lists the cell phone driving laws for each state.

[http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone\\_laws.html](http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html)