NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Western Region Notes

April 7, 2005

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

NWS Scores High in Public Customer Satisfaction: The National Weather Service and the CFI Group conducted a national customer satisfaction survey for the general public in February and March, and initial results were announced this week.

Among more than 10,000 responses received from the public via a NWS web site, the ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) was an exceptional 84. By comparison, the average score for a federal government agency is 72. There were just over 2000 responses that came via WR web sites. The survey also included a group of over 450 people who were contacted outside of NWS web sites. The ACSI for this group was 77 and may be more indicative of the "man on the street" opinion of the NWS. This is also a very respectable score. Some general insights gained from the survey include:

- The "internal" respondents were mostly concerned with weather hazards, safety, and professional/job related activities
- The "external" responses generally use NWS data for making decisions on what to wear for the day and transportation
- Hazardous weather information has the greatest impact on customer satisfaction (not a real surprise); improving accuracy in this area would give us the greatest improvement in ACSI
- Of all the watch/warning information polled (tornado, winter, high wind, heat, freeze), the freeze warning had the highest degree of customer satisfaction (though all of them scored above 80 with both customer groups).
- In discussing forecast elements...headline information, precipitation, and temperature had the most impact on satisfaction; UV index and air quality had the least.

More detailed information on the survey results will be made available over the next few months.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

Statement of the Week: Our Statement of the Week comes out of WFO Spokane, which issued this Public Information Statement talking about the drought conditions in

the interior Pacific Northwest. The information is timely, detailed (but well-organized), and focused on the customers in the region. Excellent work Spokane!

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PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SPOKANE, WA
1015 AM PST WED MAR 23 2005

SO HOW DRY HAS IT BEEN SO FAR THIS WATER YEAR ACROSS THE INLAND NORTHWEST?

WITH SNOW PACKS AND STREAM FLOWS AT SOME OF THEIR LOWEST READINGS ON RECORD...DROUGHT CONDITIONS ARE BEING EXPERIENCED ACROSS THE REGION THIS SPRING. WE THOUGHT WE WOULD TAKE A LOOK AT THE PRECIPITATION RECORDS OF SPOKANE...WENATCHEE AND LEWISTON TO SEE HOW THIS LACK OF PRECIPITATION RANKS WITH PAST YEARS AND WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO RETURN TO AVERAGE PRECIPITATION BY JULY 1ST.

IN SPOKANE:

WATER YEAR PRECIPITATION OCTOBER 1 THROUGH MARCH 22
2004-05 5.22 OR 52% OF AVERAGE
AVERAGE 9.98

BY JULY 1 THE AVERAGE WATER YEAR PRECIPITATION AT SPOKANE IS 14.47 INCHES. THAT MEANS THAT BY JULY 1ST SPOKANE WOULD NEED 8.95 ADDITIONAL INCHES OF PRECIPITATION TO RETURN TO NORMAL. HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE? YES...BUT ONLY ONCE IN 125 YEARS OF RECORDS! FROM MARCH 22ND THROUGH JULY 1ST IN 1948 11.07 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL IN SPOKANE. THAT SPRING IS REMEMBERED FOR WIDESPREAD CATASTROPHIC SPRING FLOODING ACROSS THE NORTHWEST UNITED STATES. THE SECOND WETTEST PERIOD IS 7.81 INCHES WHICH FELL IN 1905 AND AGAIN 1978.

IF SPOKANE WERE TO RECEIVE AVERAGE PRECIPITATION FROM NOW UNTIL JULY 1 THEN IT WOULD END UP WITH 9.71 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FOR THE WATER YEAR...WELL BELOW AVERAGE AND THE 13TH DRIEST PERIOD ON RECORD GOING BACK TO 1881. THE DRIEST PERIOD GOES TO THE 1976-77 WATER YEAR WHEN ONLY 7.12 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL BETWEEN OCTOBER 1ST AND JULY 1ST. INCIDENTALLY...THE DRIEST PERIOD ON RECORD FROM MARCH 23RD THROUGH JULY 1ST OCCURRED IN 1924 WHEN JUST 1.02 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL.

IN WENATCHEE:

WATER YEAR PRECIPITATION OCTOBER 1 THROUGH MARCH 22
2004-05 3.02 OR 55% OF AVERAGE
AVERAGE 5.53

BY JULY 1 THE AVERAGE WATER YEAR PRECIPITATION AT WENATCHEE IS 7.43 INCHES. THAT MEANS THAT BY JULY 1ST WENATCHEE WOULD NEED 4.41 ADDITIONAL INCHES OF PRECIPITATION TO RETURN TO NORMAL. HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE? YES...TWICE. IN THE SPRING OF 1967 4.6 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL AND IN 1991 4.50 INCHES FELL.

IF WENATCHEE WERE TO RECEIVE AVERAGE PRECIPITATION FROM NOW UNTIL JULY 1 THEN IT WOULD END UP WITH 4.92 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION...WELL BELOW AVERAGE AND THE 8TH DRIEST PERIOD ON RECORD GOING BACK TO 1959. THE DRIEST PERIOD GOES BACK TO THE 1976-77 WATER YEAR WHEN JUST 2.66 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL BETWEEN OCTOBER 1ST AND JULY 1ST.

IF THIS DRY TREND CONTINUES IN WENATCHEE AND THIS IS INDEED AS DRY A WATER YEAR AS IT LOOKS TO BE...THIS WOULD BE THE 3RD YEAR SO FAR THIS DECADE OUT OF THE 8 DRIEST YEARS. THE 2000-01 PERIOD IS THE 6TH DRIEST ON RECORD AND 2001-02 IS THE 7TH DRIEST ON RECORD. INCIDENTALLY...THE DRIEST PERIOD ON RECORD FROM MARCH 23RD THROUGH JULY 1ST OCCURRED IN 1973 AND 1986 WHEN JUST 0.26 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL.

IN LEWISTON:

WATER YEAR PRECIPITATION OCTOBER 1 THROUGH MARCH 22
2004-05 4.17 OR 69% OF AVERAGE
AVERAGE 6.07

BY JULY 1 THE AVERAGE WATER YEAR PRECIPITATION AT LEWISTON IS 10.46 INCHES. THAT MEANS THAT BY JULY 1ST LEWISTON WOULD NEED 6.29 ADDITIONAL INCHES OF PRECIPITATION TO RETURN TO NORMAL. HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE? YES IT HAS...14 TIMES SINCE 1881. WAY BACK IN 1885 LEWISTON REPORTED 8.12 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION IN THIS PERIOD. AS RECENTLY AS 1998 6.10 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL.

IF LEWISTON WERE TO RECEIVE AVERAGE PRECIPITATION FROM NOW UNTIL JULY 1 THEN IT WOULD END UP WITH 8.56 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION...WELL BELOW AVERAGE AND THE 14TH DRIEST ON RECORD GOING BACK TO 1881. THE DRIEST PERIOD GOES BACK TO THE 1976-77 WATER YEAR WHEN JUST 5.35 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL BETWEEN OCTOBER 1ST AND JULY 1ST.

INCIDENTALLY...THE DRIEST PERIOD ON RECORD FROM MARCH 23RD THROUGH JULY 1ST OCCURRED IN 1924 WHEN JUST 1.17 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION FELL.

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(L to R) HMT Garland "Hardy" Hardamon and Patrick Gilchrist staff the NWS booth.

WFO Missoula Participates in the Montana Hunting & Fishing Outdoor Show: Missoula Forecaster Patrick Gilchrist and HMT Garland "Hardy" Hardamon manned a booth at the Montana Hunting & Fishing Outdoor Show in Kalispell, Montana on March 11-13. The booth highlighted the different products and services that WFO Missoula produces, especially those useful to outdoor enthusiasts. The most popular portion of the booth was the interactive version of the weather.gov/missoula webpage. "People were amazed at the versatility of the Experimental Graphical Forecasts and the Prototype Digital Forecasts portions of the webpage," said Gilchrist. Approximately 4,500 people attended the show.

San Diego MIC Jim Purpura answers questions about the 2003 Southern California Wildfires at the National Severe Weather Workshop.

Western Region "Hot" at the National Severe Weather Workshop in Oklahoma: Western Region's participation was well-received at this year's National Severe Weather Workshop in Midwest City, Oklahoma. Jim Purpura (MIC, San Diego) provided an excellent presentation on the devastating October 2003 Wildfires in southern California. His presentation included dramatic video and other images from the conflagration. Rhett Milne (WCM, Reno) provided two presentations – one discussing WFO fire weather products and services and one on "typical IMET assignment duties."

The National Severe Weather Workshop (NSWW) is designed with media and emergency managers in mind. Presentations focused on products and services these customers can use to optimize not only their missions, but also the NOAA National Weather Service's mission.

Weather Forecast Offices are encouraged participate if they are able. Next year's workshop will be held March 4-6, 2006 in the Oklahoma City area. If you are interested

in more information on this conference, please contact Western Region's NSWW planning committee representative, Rick Dittmann (WCM, Great Falls).

WFO Medford Participates in Tsunami workshop for the Port of Brookings: On March 19, WFO Medford participated in a tsunami workshop sponsored by The Chetco Cove Yacht Club. The workshop focused on what boaters at sea and on the docks should do if there is a tsunami threat. Representatives from the Coast Guard, the Port of Brookings, and WFO Medford were available to answer questions. WFO Medford WCM Ryan Sandler explained the tsunami warning and watch system and answered questions about tsunamis.

The Port of Brookings was exploring whether it would be beneficial to allow large boats to go out to sea if a tsunami watch is issued and there is enough time to get safely out. Another important issue was how those on the docks and those already out at sea could get the notice that a tsunami watch or warning has been issued so they can take the proper action.

Sven Nelaimischkies (center left) displays Internet forecasts, while Ryan Sandler (center) gives marine safety brochures to a customer.

WFO Medford Participates in the Brookings Beachcombers' Festival: On March 19-20, Forecaster Sven Nelaimischkies and WCM Ryan Sandler staffed a booth at the Brookings Beachcombers' Festival.

High-speed internet was available to showcase NOAA's products, especially marine observations and forecasts. The NOAA display had four themes: tsunamis, marine forecasts, internet forecasts, and weather radio. Sven and Ryan also gave a one hour presentation on tsunamis.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

Bi-annual PD&T and Intern Progress Reports: The bi-annual Western Region Professional Development and Training (PD&T) and Intern Progress Reports are due from each WFO and RFC on April 15, 2005.

New Science Papers: Two new WR publications were added to the web.

> *Technical Attachment 05-01*: Effects of Wildfire in the Mountainous Terrain of Southeast Arizona: Post-Burn Hydrologic Response of Nine Watersheds; written by Mike Schaffner and William B. Reed

Technical Memorandum 271: Climate of Las Vegas, Nevada; revised by: Andrew S. Gorelow, January 2005 Previous Edition Paul H. Skrbac, December 1999.

They can be found at: http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrh/pubs.php.

Space Weather Training Module: The Space Environment Center is the newest addition to the NWS family. COMET has produced a short introduction training module about Space Weather and the Space Environment Center. The COMET training module can be found at: http://meted.ucar.edu/spaceweather/intro/ and the Space Environment Center web site can be found at: http://sec.noaa.gov/.

Annual AWIPS and Training Requirements Review Underway: Each year, NSTEP gathers training requirements and develops a training schedule (NWSTC, COMET and WDTB) for the next fiscal year. The task is difficult since requested training often exceeds the training budget by a factor of 3 to 1. A dozen groups are preparing training requirements for the various disciplines within the NWS. The AWIPS SREC is currently reviewing the requirements for AWIPS Build 7. Mark Mollner will continue to send updates on each requirement activity as interim milestones are completed.

RFC and WFO QPF grids: During the last 6 months, SSD has been transmitting the CNRFC HAS QPF grids to the WFOs under the CNRFC umbrella. The grids are used as a first guess for the NDFD QPF grids, which can then be edited by the WFO forecasters. This emerged as a best practice during the WR SOO/DOH workshop. Kirby Cook has written WR Mod Note 05-02 that provides set-up instructions.

Teletraining Session for April: The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) and the Integrated Sensor Training Professional Development Series (ISTPDS) sessions are listed below. Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: visit@comet.ucar.edu.

The teletraining calendar is at: http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/visit/ecal.asp.

The sessions for April are:

- Predicting Supercell Motion in Operations
  (Intermediate, Apr 11, 25)
- Modern Severe Weather Parameters
  (Basic/intermediate, Apr 5, 19)
- Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential Using GOES Sounder Derived Products
  (Basic, Apr 14, 28)
- Water Vapor Channel Satellite Imagery
  (Basic, Apr 21)
- RSO imagery with other Remote Sensor Data for Diagnosing Severe Weather across the CONUS (RSO 3)

(Intermediate, Apr 12, 13, 26, 27)
- Enhanced-V: A Satellite Severe Storm Signature (Basic, Apr 12)

Advanced Warning Operations Course (AWOC): It is important that offices keep up with the training schedule. In WR, we have broken the two track deadlines up into first and second half of FY05. Completion will be tracked by LMS and reported in the WR Professional Development and Training plan.

March 31, 2005: Complete Core Track (WFO and CWSUs)
August 31, 2005: Complete Severe Weather Track (WFOs and highly recommended for CWSUs)
TBD (probably March, 2006): Winter Weather Track (WFOs)

For more info on AWOC and LMS go to: http://wdtb.noaa.gov/courses/awoc/index.html.

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

2005 IMET Workshop: Jeff Walker, Regional ITSO, gave a presentation on IT Security to IMET's at the 2005 IMET Workshop in Boise, ID.

Telecommunications: Starting in FY06, a number of telecommunications task codes will be cancelled due to redundancy and lack of use. Telecommunication Purchase Orders will be updated the first quarter of FY06 reflecting the accounting code changes.

To lessen the workload and streamline the telecommunications Purchase Order (PO) certification process, PO's with like services will be combined into a single PO, where possible. SOD will begin this process this quarter, starting with the Salt Lake City WFO. WASC has stated that multiple lines of accounting are acceptable on one PO, although this is contingent on the vendor allowing the services to be combined on one invoice. Most of the Services can be combined if they are located within the same state, although some vendors have exceptions to this general rule of thumb.

Norstar Facelift: Western Region Headquarters Norstar phone system will be undergoing a software update within the next month. This update will occur on a Saturday to bring phone system up to current software level. The current software revision is over ten years old. The software upgrade will update many existing features and add many new features. Training will be provided at a later date.

UPS Failure: Lee Jenson WR Facilities Technician, responded to a UPS failure at the Santa Anna Mountain Nexrad site. Lee was assisted by Electronics Technician John Meyer. Their quick response correcting this failure ensured there was no loss of critical radar data or damage to expensive radar components.