NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Western Region Notes

November 17, 2005

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Western Region Gold & Silver Medal Winners: The 2005 Department of Commerce Gold and Silver Medal Awards were recently announced. Congratulations to the following Western Region winners:

Gold - WFO Oxnard and WFO San Diego
WFOs Oxnard and San Diego won a joint gold medal for their life-saving weather support to the residents of Southern California during the record-breaking rains and floods of January 2005.

Silver - WFO Reno
WFO Reno is recognized for providing extraordinary warning services for a record-breaking winter storm in the Sierra during a highly traveled holiday period.

Western Region Cline Award Winners: We are pleased to announce the winners of the 2005 regional Cline Awards. The following winners will be competing for the national Cline Awards:

Meteorology:	Paul Tolleson, WFO Portland
Hydrometeorology:	Shawn Weagle, WFO Monterey
Support Services:	Diana Koenig, WFO Glasgow
Program Management:	Kirby Cook, WRH SSD
Hydrology:	Jayme Laber, WFO Oxnard
Leadership:	Tom Salem, WFO Glasgow
Electronics:	Kris Johnson, WFO Tucson
Outreach:	Andy Bailey, WFO Las Vegas
Upper Air:	WFO San Diego

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

Statement of the Week: This week's statement serves as a reminder that Winter Storm Warnings must contain at least two significant hazards that will affect people in the warned area. Most Winter Storm Warnings in WR will have wind as the additional hazard to heavy snowfall. WFOs are reminded to make sure the wind hazard…and associated blowing snow, low visibility, and/or drifting snow…is highlighted within the text of the product along with the appropriate wind speeds (at least 25 mph). If only heavy snow is expected with little or no wind, a Heavy Snow Warning should be used. This week's example is a segment from a Winter Storm Warning from WFO Spokane, which does a nice job highlighting the multiple hazards.

IDZ001-WAZ037-130715-
/O.CON.KOTX.WS.W.0003.051113T0700Z-051114T0000Z/
NORTHERN PANHANDLE-NORTHEAST MOUNTAINS-

INCLUDING THE CITIES OF...SANDPOINT...RATHDRUM...BONNERS FERRY... PRIEST RIVER...COLVILLE...DEER PARK...CHEWELAH...NEWPORT...
KETTLE FALLS
302 PM PST SAT NOV 12 2005

...WINTER STORM WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT FROM 11 PM THIS EVENING TO 4 PM PST SUNDAY ABOVE 3000 FEET...

A WINTER STORM WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT FROM 11 PM THIS EVENING TO 4 PM PST SUNDAY.

SNOW WILL DEVELOP LATE TONIGHT...AND PERSIST THROUGH THE DAY ON SUNDAY. EXPECT TOTAL SNOW ACCUMULATIONS OF 6 TO 10 INCHES ABOVE 3000 FEET. SNOW AMOUNTS OF 2 TO 4 INCHES ARE POSSIBLE IN THE VALLEYS BY MIDDAY SUNDAY...ESPECIALLY NEAR SPRINGDALE...NORTHPORT AND PRIEST LAKE. SOUTHWEST WINDS OF 30 TO 40 MPH WILL BE FOUND ON THE RIDGES SUNDAY AFTERNOON...LEADING TO LOCAL BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW.

A WINTER STORM WARNING MEANS SIGNIFICANT WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE IMMINENT OR HIGHLY LIKELY. PEOPLE PLANNING TRAVEL TONIGHT OR EARLY SUNDAY SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR DETERIORATING AND HAZARDOUS DRIVING CONDITIONS....ESPECIALLY AT HIGHER ELEVATIONS.

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Aviation Program: It is important that offices keep up with the schedule for The Impacts of Weather on Air Traffic Management Course. The due date for completion is December 31, 2005. Below is a listing of how each office is progressing with the training (as of November 7)…

Office	% completion		
CWSU Fremont	**100**	WFO Las Vegas	54
WFO Missoula	**100**	WFO Flagstaff	50
WFO Great Falls	93	CWSU Auburn	50
WFO Eureka	83	CWSU Palmdale	50
WFO Pocatello	76	WFO Reno	50
WFO Tucson	71	WFO Salt Lake City	43
WFO Elko	69	WFO Phoenix	40
WFO San Diego	67	WFO San Francisco	33
WFO Portland	67	CWSU Salt Lake City	25
WFO Spokane	65	WFO Glasgow	23
WFO Seattle	64	WR MSD	17
WFO Medford	60	WFO San Joaquin Valley	8
WFO Los Angeles	60	WFO Pendleton	6
WFO Billings	57	WFO Boise	N/A
WFO Sacramento	57		

WFO Salt Lake City Assists Utah Governor in Addressing High Winter Heating Costs: On the heels of Winter Weather Preparedness Week in Utah, Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., launched a plan at a news conference on Monday, November 7 to address the impact of high heating and electrical costs for Utah residents this winter. A coalition comprising Utah state officials, utility Industry representatives, the National Weather Service, and several community action groups participated in the formulation of the plan. Salt Lake City WCM Kevin Barjenbruch assisted the governor's office by providing winter outlook information for Utah and the nation during coalition meetings and also provided quotes and talking points for the news conference. Several interviews focusing on the upcoming winter season followed the news conference.

Kent, Washington Recognized as StormReady: The city of Kent, Washington was recognized as a StormReady community during a city council meeting on November 1. Kent is the second city in western Washington to become StormReady (following Seattle in 2004). WFO Seattle's WCM gave a presentation to the Kent city council, which was broadcast locally on television. Kent's mayor, Jim White was also presented with a special StormReady certificate, acknowledging his 22 years of support to emergency management as a councilman and mayor.

Photo (L to R): *Ted Buehner (WCM, WFO Seattle), Pat Pawlak (Kent Emergency Management), Councilman Tim Clark, Councilwoman Dr. Deborah Ranniger, Councilman Les Thomas, Councilwoman Deborah Ruplee, Brian Felczak (Kent Emergency Management), Councilwoman Julie Peterson, Councilman Bruce White, Mayor Jim White, and Councilman Ron Harmon*

(L to R) Tom Evans and David Runyon work at the NOAA-NWS booth during the IAEM Conference in Phoenix.

International Association of Emergency Managers Conference: David Runyon (WFO Phoenix WCM) and Tom Evans (WFO Tucson WCM) provided a booth display at the International Association of Emergency Managers conference in Phoenix on November 12-15. They were assisted by several members from NWSH during the long exhibit days. Dave reported that approximately 800 people from almost every state and several other countries attended the event, which included a presentation by Air Force retired Brig. Gen. D.L. Johnson, NWS director. Dave also reported, "There were numerous testimonies by individuals in the audience after General Johnson's presentation voicing support and deep appreciation for ... the dedicated and committed NWS employees in the WFOs and centers during this year's [continuing] severe weather." Many other attendees stopped by the booth and offered their thanks and appreciation as well.

Pendleton Forecaster Recognized: Pendleton's Employee of the Quarter for July-September is Senior Forecaster Zaaron Allen. Zaaron was recognized for his performance as shift leader, particularly with regard to his workload distribution skills and his ability to identify and focus on the "problem of the day." Zaaron is one of Pendleton's most productive staff members, and he is involved in many of the office programs, including public verification and quality control. Additionally, he also served as

Pendleton's Graphical Hazards Generator (GHG) Focal Point during the recent Operational Test and Evaluation period. Congratulations Zaaron!

Snow and Ice Conference in Seattle: WFO Seattle participated in the city of Seattle's annual "Snow and Ice Conference" on November 2. About 70 people were in attendance, including city fire, law enforcement, emergency management personnel, public utility agency representatives, staff from local area transit agencies, school transportation, hospitals, and the Washington State Patrol. The WFO Seattle WCM gave a presentation on the winter season weather outlook and NWS products and services.

HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

NOAA-USGS Debris Flow Project in Southern California: Representatives from NOAA, USGS, and two major Southern California universities met in Burbank on October 31 to tour the "Harvard Burn Area". As part of a joint NOAA-USGS Debris Flow demonstration, this burn area has been selected as the intensive research area for this project. The area will be used to focus on monitoring debris flows this winter to help refine rainfall thresholds related to triggering of debris flows in burned areas. November 1st the group met at UCLA to discuss research opportunities in the burn area and locations for instrumentation, which includes a mobile radar system, wind profiler, water vapor senor, rain gauges and a stream gauge. In addition to the local NWS offices, CNRFC, and USGS, the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL), UCLA, and USC are involved in the project.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

HMT: The first field season for NOAA's HydroMeteorology Test bed **(HMT)** begins December 1 and runs through March 23, 2006. During this period, several NOAA labs will be deploying instrumentation in the American River Basin in California and initiating modeling efforts to improve precipitation estimation and forecasts. Instruments for this year's deployment include two portable doppler radars, increased upper air soundings, additional precipitation gages in the basin, and additional wind profilers. During the field campaign, NOAA researchers will work with NWS forecasters in Sacramento and Reno. HMT will help transition applicable research into NWS operations.

New Experimental National Precipitation Graphics Suite: A new precipitation graphics suite will go live this week. The graphics were developed by an ad hoc team led by ABRFC that expanded to include all the CONUS regions. The web page mosaics together QPE grids from the 12 CONUS RFCs into a national mosaic. Viewing options include various regional and state domains and temporal accumulations between the most recent 24 hours and the year to date. Data is updated twice per day using RFC quality controlled precipitation. The website may be found at:
http://www.srh.noaa.gov/rfcshare/precip_analysis_new.php

Fire Weather Survey: The NWS Fire Weather Services Program is conducting a survey to evaluate user satisfaction. A link to the survey has been added to each offices web page banner. The survey will begin on Wednesday, November 16 and will run through Monday, December 12, 2005. Questions about the Fire Weather Survey should be sent to Heath Hockenberry at Heath.Hockenberry@noaa.gov.

ISC Filter Modification Note WR05-007 Released: The new ISC filtering capability in the GFE allows offices to filter what data is sent to neighboring offices via ISC by element, explicit start and end times, or select multiple grid intervals. This new capability can dramatically reduce the ISC grid traffic

impact on the sending and receiving AWIPS. This configuration and filter does not impact the content or configuration of the WFOs local grid database, only what is transmitted to neighboring offices. Installation time should be less than 30 minutes. Any technical questions or problems with the installation should be forwarded to either Virgil Middendorf (BYZ - virgil.middendorf@noaa.gov, 406-652-0851) or Kirby Cook (SSD – kirby.cook@noaa.gov, 801-524-5131). Policy questions and comments should be directed to Carl Gorski (MSD – carl.gorski@noaa.gov, 801-524-4000).

Gridded MOS: Kirby Cook (SSD) has been working with MDL to decode and transmit a new version of gridded MOS. Dennis Gettman (Medford) will be evaluating the data and will make a recommendation to the ISST and DMST.

HPC Winter Weather Program Update: HPC's Winter Weather Desk is now experimentally producing 5km renditions of a combined snow/sleet accumulations. Please refer to - http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/wwd/internal/ and scroll down to the menu section generated especially for Intermountain Region WFOs.

These are only available on the WWD internal page (and are intended to serve as a product to enhance collaboration between WFOs and HPC). The Intermountain Region accumulation graphics are available at the same time the preliminary accumulation graphics are available for the eastern 2/3rds of the CONUS (Day 1 by 0500Z/1700Z, Day 2 by 0545/1745Z, and Day 3 by 0615/1815Z). Notification messages are sent on 12 Planet by the HPC WWD forecaster when the images are available.

These 5km renditions are the WWD 40km accumulations downscaled using PRISM data. Please contact Pete Manousos (peter.manousos@noaa.gov) if you need more information concerning these images.

Reminder – Please contact Pete regarding WWD VISIT training for your WFO (as a number of WFOs have already participated in this season).

Training Update

NWSTC Management and Supervision Course Re-scheduled: The NWSTC Management and Supervision Course postponed in early December has been rescheduled for March 13-24, 2006.

WDTB AWOC Update: According to Ed Mahoney (WDTB), the upcoming AWOC winter weather training modules will be ready by the April/May 2006 time period. The current plan will be to require AWOC winter training next summer/fall in preparation for the following winter. More information will be coming as we receive updates.

Recently Released COMET Module: The COMET® Program released a new interactive learning module, "NWS Support During Hazardous Materials Emergencies." Threats such as terrorist incidents and accidental hazardous releases have made atmospheric transport and dispersion modeling an increasingly prominent area of service and support for NOAA's National Weather Service. The new National Response Plan has redefined the National Weather Service role as part of an evolving and increasingly coordinated emergency response system. In addition to providing weather information and meteorological expertise, WFOs are now called upon to support atmospheric transport and dispersion modeling efforts, both within the National Weather Service and in coordinating agencies.

"NWS Support During Hazardous Materials Emergencies" will help forecasters develop operational competence with atmospheric dispersion support by teaching the types of weather data inputs required for the short-range dispersion models typically used by emergency managers:

1. What types of weather data inputs are required for the medium- and long-range dispersion models run by outside agencies (that is, not by the emergency managers themselves)
2. What required and supplemental data inputs should or can be supplied to NCEP Central Operations for special HYSPLIT runs
3. The types and scales of events that are appropriate and inappropriate for modeling by NCEP's HYSPLIT model
4. What key uncertainties can cause misleading dispersion model forecasts
5. The processes and limitations of CAMEO/ALOHA and HYSPLIT, the main two dispersion models NWS forecasters will likely have contact with on the job
6. How to read and interpret CAMEO/ALOHA and HYSPLIT output

The module takes 2-3 hours to complete.

The URL for "NWS Support During Hazardous Materials Emergencies" is http://www.meted.ucar.edu/dispersion/disp_ops/. For NOAA employees, it is also available through the NOAA E-Learning system at http://e-learning.doc.gov/noaa/.

If you have any questions please contact Dr. Tim Spangler (tspang@ucar.edu), Dr. Greg Byrd (byrd@comet.ucar.edu), or Dwight Owens (dowens@ucar.edu).

Teletraining Sessions for December: The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) calendar for December is now available. Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: visit@comet.ucar.edu. The teletraining calendar is now at: http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ecal.asp

The teletraining planning calendar with other sessions is at: http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/planning.html

The current sessions planned for December are:

- GOES High Density Winds
  (Basic, Dec 2,12,20).
- Cyclogenesis: Analysis utilizing Geostationary Satellite Imagery
  (Basic, Dec 13).
- Utilizing GOES Imagery within AWIPS to Forecast Winter Storms Part1
  (Intermediate, Dec 1,7).
- Utilizing GOES Imagery within AWIPS to Forecast Winter Storms Part 2
  (Intermediate, Dec 2,8).
- Lake-Effect Snow II
  (Advanced, Dec 5).

- Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential Using GOES Sounder Derived Products (Basic, Dec 6)

The revised GOES Sounder Data and Products session is an introductory-level module that updates the original lesson (Bachmeier et al., 2000) and provides an introduction to the data and products available from the GOES Sounder instrument along with examples of sounder Derived Product Imagery (DPI) and their applications to weather analysis and forecasting. Special attention is given to the recent change to Single Field of View (SFOV) sounder DPI in AWIPS, and the importance of applying an appropriate image enhancement (color table) to the products. These GOES Sounder products are now available on AWIPS. A message will be sent as soon as the session is ready.

Several recorded VISIT session are available via LMS: http://e-learning.doc.gov/coursecatalog/index.cfm. Then, go to NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE COURSES and search on VISIT.

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

New Phone System Upgrades: Steve Keene is finalizing plans for the FY06 phone system and voice mail upgrades. We plan on upgrading one office a month. The upgrades will be done on a weekend in order to limit disruption to operations. Phone system upgrades completed to date are WFO/RFC Sacramento. This year we plan to upgrade: WFO/RFC Salt Lake City, WFO Pocatello, WFO Boise, WFO Elko, WFO Phoenix, WFO Tucson, WFO Flagstaff, WFO Glasgow, WFO Billings, WFO Missoula, and WFO Great Falls. We will target WFO Spokane, WFO/RFC Portland, and WFO Oxnard in Q1 of FY07.

Status on E-Mail Services: Evaluation of the NOAA MOC NEMS is completed and we are in the process of evaluating the costs associated with migrating over to the NOAA E-Mail Server. If the cost analysis works out, then WR will be migrating over to the NOAA E-Mail Server (which would be completed over a weekend). We should have a decision as to whether to continue with the WR E-Mail migration or to move over to NOAA by November 22 at the latest.