



disaster preparedness report

April 1980

National Weather Service

WEATHER AND FLOOD WARNINGS COORDINATION STAFF REPORT

REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS HELD A MEETING IN FEBRUARY AT NWS HEADQUARTERS. The enthusiasm produced by the attendees indicates the reason for their productivity in the many areas that disaster preparedness necessitates.

A list of action items was drawn up as a result of these proceedings. A discussion of new publication needs and updates of the most popular visuals was most informative. Although many regions share some of the same concerns during related severe weather threats, other regions have individual needs. The continuing overview is that only by alerting the public to the fact that no area is safe from severe weather and preparing them to take action should such weather occur, can better citizen safety be assured.

THE STATISTICS COMPILED after hurricanes Frederic and David indicated that these two gentlemen-named phenomena helped produce one of the worst Atlantic Hurricane seasons on record.

In the states, community preparedness procedures were activated. Citizens response accounted for the extremely low number of fatalities.

The death toll in the States could have been extremely high but the civil defense agencies, Hurricane Center, and National Weather Service personnel's hard work conducting preparedness meetings in anticipation of such activity paid off. Which goes to prove once again...

A 'COOPERATIVE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE, PACIFIC SECTION AND THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE FORECAST OFFICE, HONOLULU' was recently signed. This agreement states that the ARE members can volunteer services and equipment during severe weather to the WSFO-Honolulu. This outstanding decision to work together with a contract allows the volunteer to feel more status than he would, perhaps, without such a piece of paper. Methods such as this may be helpful when initiating new Spotter Networks in other areas.

THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION recently installed NWR at 5 tourist information centers. Minnesota has been the first to recognize the integral need for current accurate weather information to insure traveler safety. Hopefully, other states will follow this lead.

ANOTHER INNOVATION IN PROVIDING WEATHER SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC DURING WINTER storms season has been devised by the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Association of American Railroads. Each weekday morning during severe winter weather months a poll of current weather conditions is taken at 27 railroad stations. It is disseminated to a control point in Washington, D.C. If adverse conditions exist necessary precautions are relayed to those areas. This benefits not only railroad workers, but the public.

WESTERN KRAFT PAPER GROUP was recently presented with a Public Service Award. This large paper bag manufacturer began putting public service safety tips on their grocery bags a few years ago. They initially began working with the police departments to develop safety information tips for individuals. The favorable reaction by the public to this program resulted in the company continuing to devise other formats for imprint on grocery bags.

Severe weather in some of their distribution areas suggested they develop severe weather safety rules. Paper bags distributed in many states now include measures for tornado, flash flood and hurricane safety.

Western Kraft Paper Group has recognized this public awareness measure as significant and provides this service at no increase in cost. They absorb the imprint cost - and - provide negatives free to their rival bag manufacturers. (See NOAA news, February 22, 1980, issue).

THE LATEST EDITION of the official Kansas Road Map lists the locations and frequencies of all NWR stations which serve Kansas. This is a cooperative effort between the NWS and the Kansas Department of Transportation. It is increasingly useful as more and more citizens are equipping their autos with NWR's.

GOODLAND, KANSAS, WSO has worked with the telephone company on installation of special devices which can call NWR and receive a direct report from the console. This equipment allows a broadcaster to call in and record the weather for transmission on their radio station. Clever, huh?

HERB GROPER, a long time staff member in Wx5 retired February 29. Those of you who have worked with Herb for the past few years will certainly miss him. Herb has no definite plans -- other than to sleep late a few mornings and not be worried about the weather. We wish Herb good luck.

Any future dealings with the Disaster Preparedness will now mean calling upon Charna Lester who has been on the Staff for almost a year, or Bob Carnahan, new Chief of the Warnings Coordination Staff.

POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI STREET CLEANERS depend upon NWR for area assignments. Supervisors plan their days work assignments based upon current and forecast weather conditions.

MIC-PHIL SHIDELER-WSFO-TOP designed a comprehensive plan for the Tornado Awareness week activities which took place in Kansas this year. The prepared informational packets were individualized for civil defense agencies, police and highway patrols, the media and other cooperating agencies as well as all WSO's and WSFO's in the affected areas.

Shideler and Gordon Brokow-WPM-TOP have expended much effort to insure success of this program. These materials will be included as a Handbook Chapter for the Warnings and Preparedness Manual in the near future.

A portion of the packet included statistics of former tornadic activity in the state, preparedness methods and safety instructions. He also included a listing of planned meetings with the contact persons name. LARRY SHAFFER, WRCR WP Focal Point expressed that "This material is an example of excellent planning, organization and coordination." We certainly agree.

LEONARD PETERSON-MIC-WSO, Duluth was awarded the Distinguished and Dedicated Service Award the Minnesota Association of Civil Defense Directors. This singular annual award was earned by Peterson for his outstanding support and assistance to Civil Defense Directors.

ROLLIN MANNIE-MIC-Sioux Falls reports that the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company was so impressed by the "Winter Storm" slide set they purchased their own for instructional use for their employees.

NOW READY AND MAILED OUT THIS WEEK IS A NEW AUDIO-VISUAL Slide Set with Tape. This new educational set is entitled "FLASH FLOOD-MYTH AND REALITY." Stress is placed upon the proper do's and don't's to better insure personal safety during flash flood events.

FRED OTSBY, Acting Director National Severe Storms Forecast Center was a participant at the simultaneous Tornado Awareness Preparations during the Tornado Drills during the weeks of March 3-7.

THE TORNADO AWARENESS WEEK PROGRAMS have enlarged greatly since their beginning in the early 70's by only the state of Mississippi.

The 1980 participation was by 23 states:
Oklahoma, Texas, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kentucky, South Carolina, Ohio, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Missouri.

OF THESE SIXTEEN HAVE declared Tornado Drill days. They will drill simultaneously state to state, for tornadoes never seem to be bothered by state boundaries. The civil defense agencies and NWS have spent many man hours putting together this marvelous project. Hopefully, the results of these efforts will pay off in having people pay attention to the safety precautions issued by commercial radio and NWR when an area is under a severe weather threat.

TORNADO SEASON BEGINS AGAIN IN FULL FORCE. The first tornado of the year was in California. Although unusual for both the season and the area - tornado awareness programs are in full swing through out all of the tornado-prone areas.

LARRY LEE - WPM, WSFO-ATLANTA reports that a Media Weather Seminar was held recently to coordinate the "TORNADO PREPAREDNESS WEEK" and the special State-wide tornado drill. Those attending the seminar were from the media, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Department of Education, volunteer radio storm spotters, and state and local civil defense personnel and, of course, National Weather Service.

Included in the session was an informal tour of the Atlanta Forecast Office. There was an informative discussion of the Emergency Broadcast System and NWR and their roles during severe weather.

The entire group received and put forth much needed information to make any future workings during severe weather threats successful.

GEORGE SCHIELEIN-MIC-PITTSBURGH has been prompting the plus efforts of NWS. He has had people dressed as Owlie Skywarn attend preparedness meetings. These people are able to get the attention of the audience (naturally), and allow the speaker to painlessly get preparedness information to the public. The city of ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA has cards in the busses advertising the NWR. These cards cost the city only a nominal amount of money as they were imprinted on the reverse side of already existing advertising materials. The cards were designed by George Schelien and his staff.

And that's not all that's going on in Pittsburgh - there are five billboards advertising the NWR. The Pittsburgh Outdoor Advertising Company is providing the space at no charge, the message is being paid for by Point Park College.

MIC-SCHIELEIN has worked to further develop a preparedness program for handicapped individuals. Originally begun by Jim Wiggins - MIC, Moline, Il. He is having his program done on video-tape. There will be sign language speech and a trailer on the bottom of the TV viewer so that this valuable information can be used by the hard of hearing, or non-English speaking persons. This package will also benefit others having handicaps.

HAWAII ISN'T ONLY A VACATIONLAND. Clarence Lee, MIC-Honolulu has received permission to place posters advertising NOAA Weather Radio on local busses. These car cards look great and will certainly help to spread the word of NWS's increasingly recognized public service.

HAWAII HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP held last fall, was jointly sponsored by NWS and state civil defense agencies. Over 100 persons attended. These participants were from both the public and private sectors. The material was geared to show events which precede hurricane impact: intense winds, floods, high waves and storm surge. Stress was placed upon interpretation of forecaster's language. The preparedness plans were evaluated, input was given on safety measures which could significantly reduce life loss, injury and property damage. The workshop format was impressive. Attendees were put into groups, each having a different focus. All attendees expressed feelings that there was much to be done to make the public aware of personal safety actions during hurricane events. They determined that a good place to begin education would be in schools.

Meetings of this stature take much planning and preparation. But it does pay off, however. Participants are able to go back to their business or service agency and begin to plan with others for the needs of the community.

The new state of Hawaii has taken a significant step forward to insure the safety of its citizens and visitors.

ONCE IN A WHILE SOMEONE TAKES THE TIME TO SAY THANK YOU. Radio station K59, Honolulu sent a letter to "Everyone at the WEATHER BUREAU" thanking them for their assistance in helping keep their listening audience apprised of the weather.

They also took the time to voice appreciation for the cooperative attitude of the staff, especially during hectic weather.

RICHARD A FRANK received a letter from Baltasar Corrada, M.C., Resident Commissioner, Puerto Rico, expressing gratitude for the intense work of the various National Weather Service agencies during Hurricane David. He expressed the view that the forecasts helped alert the citizens of the forthcoming tragic event with enough lead time to prevent extensive life loss, injury and property damage.

MEDIA RELATIONS BY WEATHER SERVICE PERSONNEL are helpful in promoting public awareness. More and more interviews are being conducted by radio and TV and press staffs. Information which can be digested by the public at large about what safety measures should be taken during severe weather threats encourages them to respond appropriately. Good relations between the media and NWS is encouraged.

THE GREATEST WEATHER RELATED DISASTER IN AMERICAN HISTORY occurred in 1900 in Galveston, Texas. State and city officials have recently conducted mass studies of the attitudes of Galveston's citizens to evaluate their attitudes should a hurricane threaten. There is concern that although the population in coastal areas has substantially increased, the heeding of educational procedures is questionable. Hurricane awareness on Galveston Island is especially critical. A recent transportation study done by Texas Transportation Institute indicated that it would take twelve hours for evacuation to be completed. It may not always be possible to give twelve daylight hours of lead time for such an oncoming threat.

SUE TOUZINSKY-WSFO-STL recently participated in a convention held by the Missouri State Teachers Association. She helped spread the word of NOAA Weather Radio to attendees. In addition, she was able to supply information on school safety procedures during severe weather threats.

MISSOURI STATE DISASTER PLANNING AND OPERATIONS OFFICE designated 23 Missouri Counties having ineffective preparedness procedures. Each county was requested to participate in meetings to help bring the concerned areas up-to-date on awareness programs. National Weather Service participated in each one. Those who attended were DAVE HORNER-MIC-WSO-Columbia, GUY GRAY-MIC-WSO, Kansas City, SUE TOUZINSKY-WPM-WSFO, St. Louis, ART VALDEMAR-OIC-WSO, Springfield. There were 650 persons in total attendance at the seminars.

CHUCK STWERTNIK-WPM-WSFO-CHICAGO met with Regional Coordinators for Illinois State Emergency Service and Disaster Agency. He received a congratulatory message from the group telling him that his contribution in the state awareness effort had been extremely beneficial.

RAY WALDMAN-MIC-WSFO, Chicago, has promoted the idea of running winter safety messages in a city that has suffered much damage from severe winter weather. Radio station WBBM (one of the largest in the midwest) devoted much of their public service time during one week to repeating these messages.

THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION has seen the need for installation of NWR throughout the United States. State governors were asked to participate in the funding of these valuable weather informants.

The ideal situation would be to install the radios along the federal highway system at tourist information centers. As with any new idea, this concept is slow to start, however, the enthusiasm expressed by those who have adopted the idea has caused the experiment to grow.

Both the National Park Service and the National Forest Service are considering placing NW Radios in recreational areas for use by campers.

THE PUBLIC DOES RECOGNIZE that National Weather Service personnel contribute a great deal in the interest of public safety. PHIL SHIDELER, MIC-TOP was named Topeka's 1979 Federal Civil Servant by the Topeka Federal Business Association. Speaker at the function was Al Pearson, his topic, of course...

STORM SPOTTER networks continue to grow. JOE McCALL-MIC-WSO, CONCORD, NH has established a state network using amateur radio groups. A 'decoder' receiver, tuned to a Concord repeater pipes messages directly into the WSO. These dedicated hams are most effective.

JOHN PURVIS-MIC-WSFO, Columbia, SC, reports that the South Carolina Highway Patrol recognizes the need for indoctrination of recruits to weather and its impact on their operations. As a result NWS teaches a segment on weather precautions and severe weather identification during each training session.

MIC-ROLAND LOFFREDO and his staff have worked extensively with civil defense agencies during the past year. They participated with many local groups to teach preparedness methods and safety techniques -- this paid off handsomely during subsequent severe weather events.

Loffredo received many letters from leaders of these groups specifically citing instances in which designated safety measures enabled citizens to significantly help themselves.

SINCE BECOMING ACTING DIRECTOR OF NSSFC FRED OTSBY has been on the speaking circuit promoting safety programs and techniques which citizens must adapt during severe weather situations. Otsby continues to provide the visibility his predecessor, Allan Pearson began many years ago. Otsby was asked to participate at the Semi-Annual Conference of the Arizona Emergency Services Association, Phoenix, Arizona. His topics were tornado and severe storm forecasting. Clair Jensen, PA-WSFO-PHX is Vice President of this group.

LEGISLATORS HAVE BECOME AWARE OF THE HAZARDS which hit their areas. Congressman Henry Hyde put out a newsletter totally dedicated to the realities of weather. Included are definitions and actions which should be taken during Tornado Watches and Warnings; how to determine possible severe weather events and what to do after the All-Clear. He also is concerned with having Doppler Radar installed in the Chicago area.

SENATOR LEHMAN OF FLORIDA issued a Newsletter which contained Hurricane Warnings information. This publication was sent to 500,000 Florida residents.

STATE SENATOR A.R. (BABE) SCHWARTZ has also gone on the record about his concerns for the state of Texas should hurricane or tornado problems occur.

THE STAFF AT BISMARCK-WSFO worked successfully to help coordinate a 2½ day seminar sponsored by the North Dakota Disaster Emergency Services. Present were law enforcement officials, county coordinators and other local officials. The purpose of this successful meeting was to train County Coordinators in identifications of severe weather, and how to distribute emergency information. FEMA funded the meeting. The group from the Bismark office included MIC-Don Stoltz, Karl Sivlerman, Rich Vaness and Bob Barnicle. FEMA and DES agreed that the seminar was a success.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE received plaudits for their major contribution during the recent Winter Olympics. NWS participants were Gordon Tait-Phil Steve Harned-Raleigh, Jack May-Cleveland. The crew were able to recruit police and safety officers to help set up observing posts in the area. Don Witten Public Affairs NOAA, worked closely with the group and commented that he also did some observing.

WHEN GIVING TALKS DURING TORNADO SEASON, PLEASE STRESS THAT CITIZENS NOT THINK OF AUTOMOBILES AS SAFETY WAGONS. BASED ON 1979 STATISTICS TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE NOT AWARE THAT VEHICLES ARE UNSAFE.

THE WINTER ISSUE OF THE WYOMING CIVIL DEFENSE NEWSLETTER contained statements from the County CD Directors regarding their biggest single problem during 1979. One hundred percent of the counties that reported named a weather event or a period of severe weather as the most significant.

THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PUBLICATIONS AND AUDIO-VISUAL catalog has been updated. It will be ready for distribution in May.

JIM CAMPBELL of Special Services recently appeared on a television program sponsored by the Department of Agriculture. The prime focus was the subject of tornadoes. The interviewer seemed to be fascinated both by the subject matter and Jim's wealth of knowledge of the subject. This type of media exposure works well in keeping the public up-to-date on personal safety measures necessary should a tornado occur.

ADVERTISING PAYS OFF IN WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF WINTER WEATHER PUBLICATIONS. A small insert in a recent issue of "Weatherwise" announced a series of publications which were available from this office. The resultant requests for this literature was impressive. Letters received from civil defense agencies noted that their use would be for the public handouts to promote awareness programs.

THE NORTHWESTERN BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY viewed "Winter Storms - The Deceptive Killers". The impact was so impressive according to Sioux Falls - MIC Rollin Mannie that Bell purchased the series and have shown it to over 500 of their employees.

MOBILE HOME SAFETY NEEDS MORE STRESS. The Great Plains pre-winter storm which reached across from Colorado, into Kansas, Nebraska and down into Oklahoma and Texas spawned tornadoes. One which struck Newport, Oklahoma killed two people in a mobile home. The twister ran a length of at least twelve miles and created a path $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide - Ardmore, Oklahoma, 2 dead, 2 injured. Wichita, Kansas severe thunderstorm activity causing 3 injuries.

SPECIALLY DESIGNATED WEATHER AND FLOOD WARNING COORDINATION STAFF PERSONNEL

(All FTS numbers unless otherwise indicated)

NWS HEADQUARTERS STAFF

Robert L. Carnahan Chief 427-8090
James B. Jones Deputy Director
Charna Lester Writer/Editor
Barbara Pakenham Program Analyst
Rose Brown Secretary
Helen Rodgers Secretary

Lee Harrison (Focal) New Orleans 682-6891
Alan Moller Fort Worth 334-3401
Larry Eblen Lubbock 738-7362
Brian Peters Memphis 222-3833
George Joyner (Focal) San Juan 809-791-3490**
R. Calvesbert, Flash Flood Hyd. 791-3490**PR

EASTERN REGION HEADQUARTERS, GARDEN CITY, NY

William McKee Executive Officer 665-7028
Albert Kachic Regional Hydrologist 665-8639
Lynn Maximuk Cleveland 293-4949
Jerry Harrison Columbia, SC 677-5501
Tom Fair Boston 223-5688
Vacant Washington 763-8300*

CENTRAL REGION HEADQUARTERS, KANSAS CITY, MO
Laurence Shaffer, Asst.Chief, MSD 758-3239
Ken King, Flash Flood Coord. 758-3229
Charles Stwertnik, Chicago 353-4680
Carl Weinbrecht Des Moines 862-4492
Kenneth Rizzo Ann Arbor 378-2220
Walter Reese Indianapolis 331-6319
Susan L. Touzinsky St. Louis 279-7018
Gordon Brokaw Topeka 752-2630

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOCAL POINTS

Robert Kilpatrick Albany 562-6586
Frank Brody Charleston 924-1405
Jim Allen New York 662-5569
Dave Sisk Pittsburgh 722-2882
Al Gustason Raleigh 672-4436
Tom Dunham Buffalo 437-4800
Thomas Beitel Philadelphia 597-0844
John Rimkunas, Jr. Portland 833-3552

WESTERN REGION HEADQUARTERS, SALT LAKE CITY, UT

Richard Hutcheon, Public Serv. Met. 588-4000
Tom Dietrich, Flash Fl. Coord. 588-5137

ALASKA REGION HEADQUARTERS, ANCHORAGE, AK

Burt Goldenberg, Chief, MSD 271-5127
Seattle Operator 399-0150

SOUTHERN REGION HEADQUARTERS, FORT WORTH, TX

Walter Anderson, Reg. Warnings & Preparedness Met. 334-2812
Atlanta 246-7586
Larry Lee Birmingham 229-1549
Charles Prescott Jackson 490-4639
Steve Rich Little Rock 740-5331
Newton Skiles Oklahoma City 732-4155
Larry Mooney San Antonio 730-5025
Clifford Brock San Antonio 350-5547
Robert Case(focal) Miami

PACIFIC REGION HEADQUARTERS, HONOLULU, HI

Saul Price DFPF/Flash Flood Spec. 836-1831
San Francisco Operator 556-0220
* Unlisted Number
** Dial Washington FTS Operator to get overseas FTS operator (809) 791-3490

