



Under the Big Sky e-Letter May 6, 2009

Valley County and Glasgow StormReady Ceremony:

Today we declared Valley County StormReady for the first time, and also renewed the City of Glasgow for the 3rd time! Sheriff Glen Meier and Valley County DES Coordinator Rick Seiler were also recognized for their efforts in the June 16, 2007 hailstorm to evacuate nearly 900 people from the fairgrounds and the Red Bottom Celebration. Shown in the above photo are NWS Glasgow Meteorologist in Charge Steve Apfel, Sheriff Glen Meier and DES Coordinator Rick Seiler. Montana now has 17 counties, 32 towns, 2 Indian Nations and 3 StormReady supporters!

Shown below are: Valley County Commissioners Dave Reinhardt, Dave Pippin, Glasgow Mayor Dan Carney, Commissioner Bruce Peterson and MIC Steve Apfel with their StormReady signs.



NWS Glasgow receives NOAA Unit Citation: Another good thing happened today as well! Mark Tew, the Deputy Director of the Western Region of the NWS came to our office and presented our staff with a NOAA Unit Citation for the efforts our staff made leading up to, during and after the June 16, 2007 hailstorm. Below Mark Tew presents the award to Steve Apfel, and the staff cuts into a cake to celebrate the occasion.



First Severe Storms of the Season: Last night, a thunderstorm came through Lewistown and produced wind gusts to 63 mph. NWS Great Falls issued the first severe thunderstorm warning of the season in Montana, and as it moved east, NWS Glasgow got to issue its first warnings for Petroleum and Garfield Counties. Many other areas came close to hitting the 58 mph severe wind criteria, but many were in the 45 to 55 mph range. The final hurrah for the system was over Sidney, where although the storm had really died out on radar, those final outflow winds produced a wind gust of 68 mph there. Thankfully, there was only minor damage reported there. A great example of where reports from our weather spotters are very helpful!



Carol and State of MT DES District IV representative Norm Parrent in discussion at one of our conferences.

DES Retirement: In the last issue of the newsletter we introduced a new DES coordinator, but in this one we announce the retirement of another. Carol Hellyer has been the DES Coordinator for Garfield County for many years, and is retiring this June. She has helped the community with preparedness in many ways, including helping set the path for the NOAA Weather Radio transmitter in Jordan, helping us find weather spotters in the county, and arranging the Skywarn spotter classes. She's been great to work with, and the only thing I have left to say, is your name isn't coming off our weather spotters list. You can't retire from that! ☺ Best wishes Carol!

Railroads and Weather – A Historical Look: I was recently sent a weblink to a history of how weather has impacted the railroad lines. As I opened it to read it, the Empire Builder was the first historical recollection listed. I thought some of you weather and railroad enthusiasts would enjoy reading this: <http://www.islandnet.com/~see/weather/history/tornadotrains.htm>

NWS Glasgow happenings:

We had about 50 students and chaperones from the Scobey School tour the office last week. They rode the train from Wolf Point to Glasgow.

I attended the Valley County 911/LEPC meeting and did a presentation reminding people of weather safety actions as we move into the severe weather season.

We held Skywarn training in Plentywood and in Jordan. Thanks to all who attended! It's great to see familiar faces, and recruit new weather spotters to our program. On the way to Plentywood, we experienced our first thunderstorm of the season. As we got to Richland, the rains came down harder and about 10 miles east of there we started getting pea size hail and gusty winds to 45 mph. I felt it was safer to slow down and we finally pulled off the road for a few minutes. As we stopped to take a photo of the hail covering the ground, lightning struck across the highway from us in a field. It was a quick flash of purple followed by the heart

stopping “BOOM.” My travel companion and I, both weather geeks that we are, gave one another a high “5” and were grateful to have been safe in the vehicle when that occurred!

Upcoming Skywarn Training:

Date	Location	Time	Where
April 13	Sidney	2-4 pm and a repeat from 6-8 pm	USDA ARS Facility Conference Room
April 27	Plentywood	6-8 pm	Jubilee Room at the County Building
May 5	Jordan	6-8 pm	USDA Services Center
May 13	Fort Peck	6-8 pm	Fort Peck Interpretive Center
May 18	Wibaux	6-8 pm	Wibaux Fire Department
May 20	Glasgow	6-8 pm	Cottonwood Inn
May 21	Glendive	6-8 pm	Most likely in the Courthouse Basement

NOAA News:

La Nina is finally finished...this season: The Climate Prediction Center will be announcing tomorrow that the La Niña event (colder than normal equatorial Pacific Ocean temperatures) we’ve had this winter is gone, and that we’ve gone back to neutral conditions for temperatures in the Pacific. La Niña developed during December 2008 and strengthened in January 2009, before gradually weakening until its demise during April 2009.

Four Hurricane Names Retired: Gustav, Ike, Paloma and Alma are all hurricanes from 2008 that were significant enough in impacts that their names are being retired. To learn more about the specific hurricanes, and the damages they caused, you can read the full article at: http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2009/20090501_names.html

Great Lakes on Google: If you spend any time on the Great Lakes, you may be interested in knowing that NOAA has mapped them out in three dimensions, and put the data on Google Earth. http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2009/20090423_google.html

Weather around the World:

Floods in Brazil – 19 deaths with nearly 200,000 homeless: It’s been unusually wet in northern Brazil and widespread floods are causing mudslides and flooding towns and cities. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30588909/>

Wildfires: The summer fire outlook from the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID highlights four states, with above normal fire seasons including Washington, California, New Mexico and Arizona. Florida will also remain at its current level of above average fire activity. Recent significant fire activity has included South Carolina and just in this morning, Santa Barbara, CA. http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf
Santa Barbara fire: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30594933/>

Lessons Learned 10 years later – The Anniversary of the May 3, 1999 EF-5 Tornado near Oklahoma City: The Oklahoma City area commemorated the 10th Anniversary of the May 3, 1999 tornado outbreak that had 74 tornadoes that day, and killed 46 people. There have only been two EF-5 tornadoes since then, Greensburg, KS two years ago, and Parkersburg, IA last summer. The National Weather Service in Norman, along with the Storm Prediction Center and the National Weather Center on the Oklahoma University Campus commemorated the event and created this website to highlight what happened, and show what was learned, and how

technology has improved in that time.

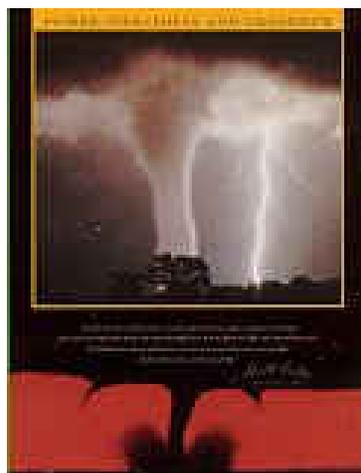
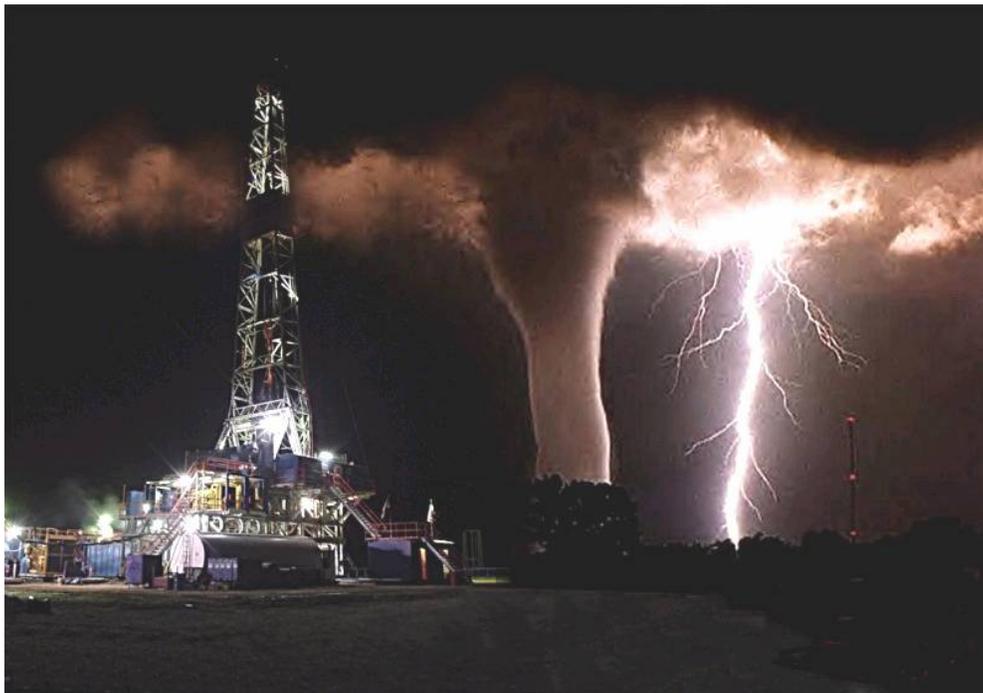
<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/wxevents/19990503/anniversary.php> and

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30560481/>

Humor for the Week: This is not weather related, but it was sent from one of my colleagues in California, and I got a good laugh from it. This is a great way to clean your computer monitor:

<http://www.raincitystory.com/flash/screenclean.swf>

Real or not? I thought I would share this photo with you all since many of you have seen it and emailed it to me. This is actually an altered photo. The tornado is actually from Florida (we have a poster of it in our office, which is how I recognized it was a fake). I must say that it is pretty jaw dropping though, and in my mind, if it means people leave the oil platform during a thunderstorm, than that is fine with me! Safety should come first! ☺



(Small image of the poster we have in our office from The Tornado Project)