



## NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

February 29, 2008

### REGION DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

**Black History Month** (by Johnnie Powell, WFO Sacramento): Americans have been recognizing Black History since February 1926. Dr. Carter G. Woodson launched black history week at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to bring a respectable presence about African Americans to the history books. Dr. Woodson enrolled in high school at age 20 and graduated two years later, then went on to earn his PhD from Harvard University.

Dr. Woodson established a journal to write about Black history and the contributions by African Americans throughout American history. He chose the second week in February because it marks the birthdays of two men who greatly influenced African Americans in the United States, **Abraham Lincoln** and **Fredrick Douglass**. Black History Week was expanded to Black History Month in 1976, to celebrate the nation's bicentennial. The Black History Month theme for 2008 is "Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism". We can all grow as a nation from multiculturalism and an understanding of different American heritages.

Here is a short list of recent firsts by African Americans:

1. First Black Miss America (Vanessa Williams) - 1984
2. First Black Governor, Virginia (Douglas Wilder) - 1990
3. First Black Masters golf tournament Champion (Tiger Woods) - 1997
4. First U.S. Secretary of State (General Collin Powell) - 2001
5. Two Black billionaires reside in the United States: Robert Johnson (Founder of Black Entertainment Television) – 2001, and Oprah Winfrey (Talk Show Host) - 2003

### METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, WFO Boise participated in the 2008 Science and Engineering Expo hosted by Northwestern Nazarene University (NNU). This is the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that WFO Boise has partnered with the Idaho National Laboratory, and NNU to bring weather, water, and climate science to over 200 middle school age students in an exciting way. This year Dawn Fishler and Jay Breidenbach teamed up to present a game of "Weather Jeopardy" to the students with 5 categories of answers and questions including, Weather Observations, The Atmosphere, Climatology, Weather Safety, and Severe Weather. The game sparked excellent discussion about various topics and provided opportunities to perform several interactive demonstrations including the construction of a "Human Hair Hydrometer" and a "Tornado Machine". The students really enjoyed the demonstration showing the effect of atmospheric pressure which totally crushed a soda can.

**Customer Orientation Tour:** WFO Seattle hosted a customer orientation tour of the forecast office on January 31st. Seventeen people participated in the tour from the cities of Everett, Kirkland and Bothell emergency management, Washington State Emergency Management, King county emergency management and sheriff's department, the city of Shoreline Police Chief, as well as Nick Allard of NW Cable News Weather and a reporter from a city of Anacortes newspaper. WCM Ted Buehner led the



*The group of partners visiting WFO Seattle*

tour that included a demonstration of AWIPS and how to obtain and use NWS information via NWR and our web site.

## **HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION**

### **Northwest RFC Hosting Webinars to Discuss Latest Water Supply Forecasts and**

**Conditions:** In January the NWRFC hosted their inaugural GoTo Webinar briefing following the release of the monthly final water supply forecast. The first inaugural call was an overwhelming success totaling 79 attendees from a wide spectrum of users. The 30-minute call included a 15-minute question and answer session that reviewed the latest water supply forecast.

**Monterey Incorporating 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Radar Data into FFMP Advanced:** WFO Monterey continues testing FFMP Advanced and is having success incorporating multiple and third party radar data (KPIX) into the FFMP Advanced Analysis. Multiple comparisons to rain gage data have been made and they are working with NSSL to develop a gage bias corrected rainfall estimate for the KPIX radar.

**Phoenix SSH develops Riverpro Articulate Training Presentation:** Phoenix Senior Service Hydrologist Mike McLane recently developed an Articulate training presentation to help forecasters make better use of the Riverpro Software. Please contact Mike for more details.

**Phoenix WCM Busy with GIS Activities at Annual AMS Meeting:** Phoenix WCM Ken Waters made a presentation at the annual AMS meeting in New Orleans, chaired the GIS IIPS session, and interfaced with customers both inside and outside NOAA regarding dissemination and use of Google Earth and GIS within NOAA.

**Portland Offices Meet with County Commissioner to Improve Flood Forecast Services:** WFO Portland MIC Steve Todd, Senior Service Hydrologist Andy Bryant and NWRFC HIC Harold Opitz met with Columbia County Commissioner Tony Hyde to discuss options for improving flood forecasting for the city of Vernonia, Oregon. Vernonia is located on the Nehalem River which is a small drainage basin of approximately 70 square miles. It has been devastated twice in the past eleven years by major floods. The basin is too flashy for the NWRFC's 6-hourly model, so options such as developing a statistical rainfall/runoff relationship, or the installation of an alert system were discussed. Andy Bryant will be working

with the County Emergency Manager and Mr. Hyde over the next few months to find the best possible solution to improving flood services to the community.

**Medford continues work on implementing the Corps of Engineers HEC Model:** Medford Service Hydrologist Spencer Higginson was recently successful in getting two rain gages installed to support the WFO use of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers HEC Model on the Little Butte Creek. Rainfall data are transmitted via satellite courtesy of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The rainfall data will help with the model calibration.

**Spokane Highlights La Niña and its local impacts for Comcast:** Spokane Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) Kerry Jones did an in-studio interview with Comcast for their News Makers segment (formerly known as Comcast Local Edition). It was a 5-minute segment that highlighted La Niña and the seasonal outlook for the Spokane area. The segment played 3-4 times daily during January.

**Seattle Participates in multiple Flood Meetings:** Seattle Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) Ted Buehner met with the Governor's After Action Report (AAR) resulting from the Hanakkah Eve Storm of 2006. The meeting was blended with an AAR for the early December 2007 storm. Ted gave a storm synopsis for the December event to help kick off the review meeting where 56 people were in attendance, primarily from state agencies such as State Patrol, Department of Transportation, Licensing, National Guard, Fish and Wildlife, Health, Natural Resources and the Governor's Office.

WCM Ted Buehner also participated in two Lewis county post - December 2007 flood community meetings. The meetings were arranged by local state legislative representatives to help obtain local input on future flood mitigation efforts. The WCM led off each meeting with a synopsis of the early December storm that led to the major flooding. Total attendance at the two meetings was close to 175 people. One outcome was interest in the weather spotter program.

WCM Ted Buehner and Senior Service Hydrologist Brent Bower participated in a Mason County After-Action Report meeting in Shelton regarding the early December storm. A brief description of the weather and resulting snow, wind, rain, and flooding were given. The discussion that followed, moderated by Washington Emergency Management, covered initial response, communications, impacts, logistics, and other topics. Action items and recommendations were proposed. Forty people attended, including staff from WSEMD, Public Works, PUD, county DEM, USACE, Community Development, Solid Waste Management, police, multiple fire districts, Shelton EM, Public Health and two county commissioners. There was positive feedback on the GoToMeeting weather briefing that was held prior to the storm, and strong interest in the WFO's web site address and weather spotter program.

Senior Service Hydrologist Brent Bower provided hydrometeorologic information for various customers regarding the record December 2007 floods in western Washington. This information included rainfall totals with estimated precipitation frequencies, information about snow melt, river crests, landslides, etc. Agencies included private engineering and forestry firms, city, county, and state emergency management officials, USACE, FEMA, USGS, and state congressional staff.

## SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

**Kevin Werner promoted to CBRFC SCH:** Kevin Werner has been selected for the Service Coordination Hydrologist (SCH) at the CBRFC (Salt Lake City). Kevin is the first SCH in the NWS. The SCH is a newly established management and leadership position at each of the RFCs.

**New Western Water Supply Web page:** The NWS is pleased to announce the release of new western water supply forecast services on a new and improved web site located at [www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/westernwater](http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/westernwater). The expanded website allows water resource managers to use powerful new interactive forecasting tools to show expected seasonal water volumes at over 500 locations in the Western United States. These new tools will allow users see the probability of a stream producing a given seasonal water volume. The interactive capability allows users to generate future runoff scenarios based on precipitation and temperatures scenarios that occurred in previous years or during an ensemble of previous years. In addition, the skill of forecasts which were made during previous years can be verified on the new website by comparing them to observed values.

**AWIPS2.0 Java Training:** JAVA training to prepare for AWIPS2.0 continues. Training sessions will be held every Thursday through April 10, 2008, with a laboratory session every Tuesday. The web page for a recording of all sessions can be found at: <http://ww2.wrh.noaa.gov/ssd/javatrain.htm>

### **WR -- Encouraging IM:**

- **Server change:** WR upgraded the regional Instant Messaging (IM) server for improved management of IM security and to align with the IM services across NOAA.net. This upgrade includes moving to a new IM server ([mithril.wrh.noaa.gov](http://mithril.wrh.noaa.gov)) and a new standard IM client (pidgin). Mod Note (WR08-001) contains the detailed information of the upgrade, and the following link has user instructions. <http://ww2.wrh.noaa.gov/sod/Computer/jabber/Pidgin.php>
- **National IM:** Darone Jones (SR) and Mike Doney (SSD) will present a national IM proposal to the corporate board in early March

**Reminder: High Impact Events -- WR POP/QPF Web page -- try it!!** Ken Pomeroy and David Myrick provided a briefing on the new POP/QPF High Impact verification web page to all WR offices (**AWIPS internal web site -- 165.92.200.49:8080**) *With the number of winter storms affecting all of the west, offices are encouraged to examine their recent performance!*

**Reminder: Winter Storm Reconnaissance Program -- ends March 15:** Approximately 140 flight hours (18-20 missions) will be available on the ONR P-3 plane through March 15. The planes will take dropsonde observations in areas identified by the NCEP SDM as the most relevant for improving the forecasts for events requested by the field and NCEP forecasters. The procedure will be very similar to last year. If there is considerable model uncertainty associated with a storm moving across the eastern Pacific, an office can contact WFO Monterey to request a flight.

**Enrollment in FY08 AWOCs - Core, Severe, and Winter Weather:** The FY08 NWS Training Implementation Plan tasked WDTB to update and deliver the Advanced Warning Operations Course (AWOC) Core and Severe Tracks, as well as the Winter Weather Track. This requirement resulted in new training opportunities for staff.

### **AWOC Core and Severe Tracks.**

- **Target Audience:** Note: These are two independent tracks and enrollment can be in either one or both. For the Severe Track, target audience is all NWS meteorologists and hydrologists who use the WSR-88D for decision making and who have not yet completed AWOC Severe Track. Generally these students will be those graduating the WSR-88D Distance Learning Operations Course (DLOC) this Spring; however, there may be additional students. The Core Track is recommended for the same audience, but is also suitable for non-meteorologists/hydrologists who desire a better understanding of the NWS warning process.
  - **Prerequisites for AWOC Core:** Completion of the DLOC or WSR-88D in-residence course is suggested, *but not mandatory*.
  - **Prerequisites for AWOC Severe:** Completion of the Distance Learning Operations Course (DLOC) or the WSR-88D in-residence course *is required*.
  - **Course Length:** 28 - 31 hours of course material for both tracks (depending if the student or course facilitator wants to add the optional modules). Severe track: 14-17 hours; Core Track: 14 hours.
  - **Enrollment:** We will automatically enroll current DLOC FY08 students into AWOC Core and Severe upon completion of the workshop. If you have additional students who wish to enroll in the 2008 version of Core or Severe AWOC tracks contact with their names: [awochelp@wdtb.noaa.gov](mailto:awochelp@wdtb.noaa.gov)

### **AWOC Winter Weather Track**

- For AWOC Winter Weather Track, facilitators can enroll DLOC students if they desire in the 2007 course. A 2008 version containing a new lesson on Ground Weather will be updated in late summer of 2008. Please send names of enrollees to: [awochelp@wdtb.noaa.gov](mailto:awochelp@wdtb.noaa.gov)

**Teletraining Sessions for March:** The teletraining calendar is now at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ecal.asp> Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending an email to: [visit@comet.ucar.edu](mailto:visit@comet.ucar.edu).

- Satellite Interpretation for Various Coastal Effects (Basic, Mar 19,25)
- GOES Low Cloud Base Product (Basic, Mar 7,31)
- Water Vapor Imagery and Potential Vorticity Analysis (Intermediate, Mar 14,21)
- Cyclogenesis: Analysis utilizing Geostationary Satellite Imagery (Basic, Mar 20)
- MODIS Products in AWIPS (Basic, Mar 6,17)
- Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential Using GOES Sounder Derived Products (Basic, Mar 19)
- Basic Satellite Principles (Basic, Mar 10)
- TROWAL Identification (Basic, Feb 14)
- Mesoscale Convective Vortices (Basic, Mar 27)
- Enhanced-V: A Satellite Severe Storm Signature (Basic, Mar 26)

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

**Oxnard Visit:** Joe Lachacz, Electronics Program Manager, visited the Oxnard WFO to assist the electronics technicians with re-aligning the Nexrad Microwave Line of site (MLOS) dish which was moved by a wind storm. The Radar has the option of using a terrestrial circuit or MLOS during bad weather. Joe and Gary Strickland, Electronics Systems Analyst, also worked on SAME alerting issues with the Los Angeles NWR transmitter.

**IT Challenges/Opportunities:** Sean Wink, SOD Branch Chief, and Andy Edman, Chief Scientific Services Division, attended an IT Strategic Planning meeting hosted at Southern Region Headquarters. The focus of the meeting was to address the numerous IT challenges and opportunities the NWS is facing. Several Tactical and Strategic teams were formed to address/support the highest priority issues, including NOAAnet, Web Consolidation, Active Directory, National IM program, IT Security & Governance Model and continued Technology Infusion.

**SAFETY:** In light of the recent major earthquake in NE Nevada, here is a simple list of items that one should have in their emergency preparedness kit.

### Emergency Preparedness Kit (Adult, 3-day)

An Emergency Preparedness, Adult 3-day, is a complete kit, sufficient for one person, to provide essential items an adult will need for at least three days after a disaster and is intended for storage at home, and to be used at home or in a place where someone may go if local authorities ask for an evacuation.

## **Intended Use of the Items in an Emergency Preparedness Kit**

### **Flashlight**

Use the flashlight to find your way if the power is out. Do not use candles or any other open flame for emergency lighting.

### **Battery-powered Radio**

News about the emergency may change rapidly as events unfold. You also will be concerned about family and friends in the area. Radio reports will give information about the areas most affected.

### **Plastic Sheeting and Duct Tape**

Use the plastic sheeting and duct tape for sheltering-in-place verses evacuation.

### **Food**

Enough non-perishable food to sustain you for at least one day (three meals) if close to a workplace with stored food or three day supply if at home or other location, is suggested. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. The following items are suggested:

- Ready-to-eat canned meals, meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices
- High-energy foods (granola bars, energy bars, etc.)

### **Water**

Keep at least one gallon of water available, or more if you are on medications that require water or that increase thirst. Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles.

### **Medications**

Include usual non-prescription medications that you take, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, etc. If you use prescription medications, keep at least a three-day's supply of these medications at your workplace. Consult with your physician or pharmacist how these medications should be stored.

### **First Aid Supplies**

Have the following essentials:

- Absorbent Compress 5x9 Dressing
- Adhesive Bandages (Assorted Sizes)
- Adhesive Cloth Tape 5 yds/1"
- Antibiotic Ointment Packets (approx 1g)

- Antiseptic Wipe Packets
- Packets of Aspirin (162mg)
- Pair of Non-Latex Gloves (Size Large)
- Scissors
- Roller Bandage 3"
- Sterile Gauze Pads 3x3
- First Aid Instruction Information

### **Additional Tools and Supplies**

- Paper plates and cups, plastic utensils
- Non-electric can opener
- Personal hygiene items, including a toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, soap, contact lens supplies, and feminine supplies
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear, including a long sleeved shirt and long pants, as well as closed-toed shoes or boots
- If you wear glasses, keep an extra pair with your workplace disaster supplies.

### **General Information**

- Your kit should be adjusted based on your own personal needs.
- Do not include candles, weapons, toxic chemicals, or controlled drugs unless prescribed by a physician.