



Aware

Aware is published by NOAA's National Weather Service to enhance communications between NWS and the Emergency Management Community and other government and Private Sector Partners.

July 2013

Dissemination News

EMWIN Legacy Broadcast Ending in August

Robert Wagner, NWS EMWIN Team

NWS will decommission the GOES-12 satellite on August 16, 2013. GOES-12 was launched on July 23, 2001. The satellite has covered South America at 60°W since May 2010.

The decommissioning will end the broadcast of the Emergency Managers Weather Information Network-I (EMWIN) legacy data stream. This broadcast assisted users in the shift to EMWIN-N on the operational GOES East and West satellites and facilitated manufacturer testing. Legacy users should migrate to EMWIN-N capable systems and use GOES East or West.

If unable to upgrade to newer equipment, GOES 12 EMWIN-I users can continue to receive EMWIN via Internet using the EMWIN ByteBlaster Network.

For additional information, visit the [NWS EMWIN](#) website.

Canada Exploring Wireless Emergency Alerts

Wendy Wu, Senior Program Officer, Industry Canada

Canada is looking at introducing a wireless public alerting system based on the U.S. cell phone alerting program. The Canadian government hosted a workshop in June to present a proposed system for Canada and

to engage cell phone companies and the developers and providers of the technology.

The objective is to put in place a system similar to the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) program in the United States. Towards this goal, Canada invited representatives of the U.S. carrier community, technology providers and federal government decision-making agencies to offer insights into WEA. A functioning system in Canada is still several years away.

NWS will continue to update readers on Canadian developments.

Coming Soon

NWS Partners Meeting Planned for August 5-6

Cindy Woods, Operations and Requirements Division Chief

NWS will hold a Partners Meeting August 5-6 in the NOAA Auditorium in Silver Spring, MD. The robust agenda offers opportunities to share new information and updates and to engage in discussion. The draft agenda includes:

- ◆ Open weather and climate services
- ◆ Weather industry in the Weather-Ready-Nation Initiative
- ◆ NWS intent on Impact-Based Decision Support Services
- ◆ Social media and wireless emergency alerts
- ◆ NOAA Weather Wire Service and Weather Radio Improvement Program updates
- ◆ Social science, service assessments

NWS welcomes additions to the agenda. Let us know what you would like to hear about or what topics you would like to raise with NWS leadership.

We look forward to seeing you in August as we work together to strengthen and improve the Weather Enterprise. Registration is now open at [2013 NWS Annual Summer Partners Meeting](#).

Decision Support

May Oklahoma Tornadoes Spur Innovation

Rick Smith, WCM, NWS Norman, OK

Even by Oklahoma standards, the May 2013 tornadoes were exceptional. Their strength, size and ferocity left permanent scars on the people and landscape of central Oklahoma. The loss of life was horrible, but had it not been for early warnings and the hard work of local emergency management (EM), public safety officials and the media, the death toll would have undoubtedly been much higher.

The NWS Norman, OK, issued warnings and other critical information for the deadly tornadoes on May 19-20 and May 31. Forecasters also provided specialized weather support and information before, during and after the storms.

Quick Response Damage Paths

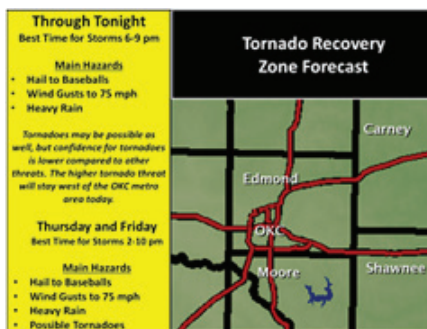
NWS Norman developed new tools to quickly estimate tornado damage paths using high resolution radar data and other information.

On May 20 and 31, NWS Norman immediately sent its preliminary tornado damage path tracks to EMS and other officials in the affected areas, sometimes while the tornado was ongoing.

The track maps gave basic information about areas of potential tornado impacts to help first responders and others dealing with the immediate aftermath of the disaster. Emergency officials used this information to deploy resources, determine where to focus search and rescue efforts, and to analyze impacts to critical infrastructure. FEMA and other agencies who used the maps said they were extremely useful.

Tornado Recovery Zone Forecasts

The weather pattern remained stormy right after the May 19-20 tornadoes. To keep users on top of changes, forecasters at NWS Norman provided specialized forecast and information services to the thousands of FEMA, Red Cross and other relief workers in the impacted communities as well as local residents who are now even more sensitive to thunderstorms and bad weather.

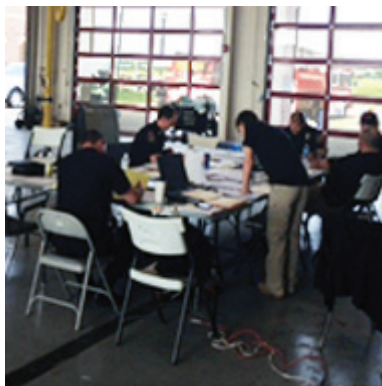


NWS Norman issued special forecasts highlighting potential adverse weather in the tornado recovery zone. These forecasts were posted on the NWS website and broadcast over NOAA Weather Radio.

FEMA Threat Briefings

Forecasters remained focused on the threat of more severe weather

after the May 19-20 tornadoes. Meteorologists at the NWS Southern Region Regional Operations Center in Fort Worth, TX, provided daily threat briefings for the FEMA Joint Field Office in Oklahoma City. These briefings helped ensure partners received a focused, consistent message about upcoming weather threats.



WFO Norman deployed a meteorologist to the Moore Incident Command Post to provide direct weather briefings and decision support.

Onsite Support in Moore

In response to a request from the Moore, OK, city government, WFO Norman sent forecasters to the Moore Incident Command Post to provide direct weather briefings and decision support from May 21-25. The forecasters used a special notebook computer to access weather data on AWIPS 2, allowing them to see most of the same datasets and displays they use at NWS Norman.

NWS Norman forecasters provided decision support information throughout the event, including conference calls/webinars, direct phone and 800 MHz radio briefings, emails to decision makers and public safety officials, web graphics, and dozens of posts on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

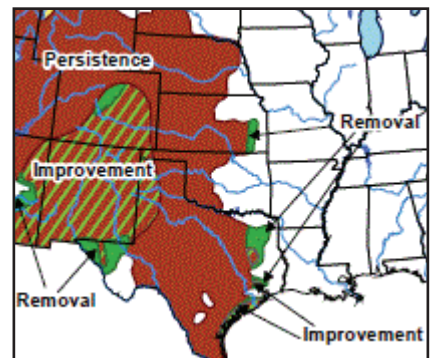
The staff at NWS Norman thanks all the first responders, public safety and EMS for their hard work during this exceptionally trying time.

Drought Forecasts Key to Local Water Management

Barry Goldsmith, WCM, NWS Brownsville, TX

A combination of drought conditions and a growing population are creating a short and long-term crisis for the Texas Rio Grande River Basin and the river's vital reservoirs. By late April 2013, the water level at Amistad International Reservoir near Del Rio dropped to an all-time record low. The level downstream at Falcon International Reservoir, the primary water source for the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), fell below 20 percent of conservation capacity. Levels at Amistad in early June 2013 (36.8%) were half those of early June 2012 (73.9%).

By December 2012, NWS Brownsville started to mention the word "crisis" to agriculture and water



Climate Prediction Center June drought forecast for Texas

management partners, based on the expectation of another warm, windy and rain-free late winter and spring.

Heading into 2013, requests for seasonal and long-term weather and climate information increased dramatically. These requests came from higher level decision-makers and elected officials from the RGV all the way to the U.S. Congress.

Why is this drought important? The population on both sides of the border is projected to more than

double in the next 40 years, reaching more than 6 million people by 2050.

Communicating potential impacts to aid decision-makers is the key to building a Weather-Ready Nation. In 2013, NWS Brownsville/ RGV was instrumental in influencing key partners and decision-makers to start thinking about comprehensive water management strategies. Our office took part in numerous meetings across the region, bringing four key ideas to the table:

- ◆ **Conservation:** Educating a growing population to use less water on a daily basis
- ◆ **Desalination:** Finding ways to extract and retain water from underground aquifers and salt-water sources, including the Laguna Madre and the Gulf of Mexico
- ◆ **Reclamation:** Recycling wastewater for non-potable uses: lawn, garden, and some agriculture
- ◆ **Innovation:** Developing water-saving techniques for irrigation and using better methods to manage the distribution of water from the river for agricultural and municipal use

Thanks to this joint effort, state lawmakers are developing a comprehensive, long term water management strategy. NWS Brownsville will continue working with key partners across its area to mitigate the effects of the ongoing drought and expanded water usage to maximize water resources.

EM Forum Features NWS Partners

[NWS News Staff](#), Silver Spring, MD

The ninth NWS Albany, NY, Spring Emergency Managers Forum on June 6 tapped partner expertise to increase value. The meeting drew federal, state, and local EMs from



Ninth NWS Albany, NY, Emergency Managers meeting taps EM expertise.

eastern New York and western New England.

Meteorologist-in-Charge Raymond O’Keefe showed recent examples from the Albany Doppler radar, including [dual-polarization radar](#) signatures of tornadic debris from the [May 29 EF-2 tornado](#) that struck the area.

As [Tropical Storm Andrea](#) approached the region, O’Keefe pointed to the critical importance of collaborative science to address fundamental forecasting issues, such as predecessor rain events and the evolution of rainfall distribution of tropical storms as they transit the Northeast.

NWS partners play a vital role in achieving a Weather-Ready Nation. Gary Wall, from the [U.S. Geological Survey](#), demonstrated a new ice jam monitoring tool to be deployed on the Mohawk River next winter. Mark Olig, from New York Power Authority, explained the engineering and policies involved in issuing a potential dam failure notification during Irene.

NWS Albany Warning Coordination Meteorologist Stephen DiRienzo explained NWS’s capabilities to support HAZMAT incidents. In particular, DiRienzo reviewed the role of NWS Albany in providing incident decision support services to local, state and federal officials during the Ghent, NY, polychlorinated biphenyl plant fire.

“The forum was a very good mix of information...with special kudos

on the high hazard dam presentation,” said Art Snyder, Ulster County, NY, EM.

Outreach Updates

5K Run Kicks off Lightning Awareness Week with Bang

[Dave Nicosia](#), WCM, NWS Binghamton, NY

On June 22, the Moscow, PA, Country Run was back with a new theme: Lightning Safety. The event was organized by the Lightning Awareness Group, an organization formed by lightning survivor Jason Pencek’s family: Kim McHale, Erin



Kids race toward the finish line in the “Thunder Run.”

Pencek and Jenn Kamla. Jason was struck at Pocono Raceway last summer. He and his family are committed to spreading the word on lightning safety in northeast Pennsylvania. They worked with WFO Binghamton, NY, and NWS lightning safety specialist John Jensenius on the technical aspects of lightning and lightning safety.

The event featured a 5K “Lightning Bolt” run through Moscow, PA, in Pennsylvania’s scenic Pocono Mountains, a 1 mile “Shock Walk” and a kid’s “Thunder Run.” More

than 200 people took part in the events. WCM Dave Nicosia started the race and ran the 5K. The race drew crowds from all over northeast Pennsylvania and was featured on local TV, radio, print and Internet news sources.

One of the most repeated messages from this event was “When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors.” In addition, local businesses sponsored lightning safety messages along the entire 5K route.

The race was a big success and is just the beginning for promoting lightning safety in northeast Pennsylvania. Jason and his family, with assistance from WFO Binghamton, NY, continue to spread the word on lightning safety to coaches, golf courses, schools, large venues, camps and other outdoor event organizers.

Major League Team Endorses Lightning Safety

[Glenn Field](#), [Eleanor Vallier-Talbot](#),
NWS Taunton, MA

The Red Sox/Yankees rivalry took a back seat to Mother Nature on June 2 when lightning struck near Yankee Stadium during a rain delay. According to the *Business Insider*, “players were so frightened that several of them made a bee-line [from the dugout] to the clubhouse.”

For years, the NWS Boston forecast office has been interested in conducting lightning safety outreach with the Boston Red Sox. After this event, forecaster and outreach coordinator Eleanor Vallier-Talbot contacted the Red Sox Community Relations Department. She noticed the Sox’ website offered a “Community Home-Stand Program” that helps local non-profit organizations raise awareness for their causes. This option includes government agencies.

Vallier-Talbot jumped at the opportunity and arranged for a NWS Taunton lightning safety booth. The

The booth was set up at Fenway Park a few hours prior to the start of the Red Sox-Blue Jays game on June 28, during Lightning Safety Awareness Week.

Eleanor coordinated with Lightning Safety Program Manager Donna Franklin and Kim Loehr of the Lightning Protection Institute to ensure the booth had the right setup. Kim flew up from Virginia to attend the game and help at the booth. The booth was swamped with interested attendees. We gave out lots of lightning safety materials and even got space on the game billboard. NWS Taunton plans to maintain this type of outreach and to enhance it in the future.



The Boston Red Sox help promote Lightning Safety Week.

Play Ball During Lightning Safety Awareness Week

[Mark Strobin](#), WCM NWS Midland, TX

WFO Midland kicked off Lightning Safety Awareness Week on Sunday, June 23, in partnership with the Midland Rockhounds baseball team. The Midland Rockhounds are the Oakland Athletics AA minor league affiliate drawing up to 6,000 fans a game.

Before the game, the team played a lightning Public Service Announcement on the scoreboard. The Rockhounds also posted lightning facts and myths on the scoreboard



NWS WCM Mark Strobin takes his shot at a baseball career.

several times during the game.

Three local TV stations interviewed members of NWS Midland before and during the game. One of the stations also interviewed the Rockhounds Public Relation representative Brian Smith.

NWS Midland highlighted the partnership on its local [Facebook](#) and Twitter pages as did the Rockhounds. I was even invited to throw out the first pitch at the game, but didn’t impress the scouts in attendance!

The event was so successful, WFO Midland and the Midland Rockhounds plan to partner on future weather related awareness weeks.

Media Boost Effectiveness of Emergency Exercise

[Mike Cantin](#), WCM, NWS Honolulu

Each year, the NWS Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) takes part in Hawaii’s annual hurricane exercise, Makani Pahili. CPHC staff members generate a hurricane scenario, serve on the exercise planning committee, and provide daily briefings throughout the exercise. Participants represent a diverse group that includes federal, state, county, local and private interests.

This year CPHC partnered with the Hawaii State Civil Defense (HSCD) to host a media session as part of the statewide exercise. Media reps were invited to CPHC

to take part in a mock hurricane briefing and discussion regarding how information will be disseminated during an actual event.

The event was held in person at CPHC and via the web. Media representatives from print, radio and television attended and featured the event in print and television stories the following day.

HSCD did a tremendous job organizing the exercise and providing an opportunity for participants to drill their necessary core capabilities.

StormAware Offers Easy Tornado Tips

[Jim Kramper](#), WCM, NWS St. Louis, MO

To help increase tornado safety across Missouri, the Missouri Department of Public Safety created the [StormAware](#) website, a one-stop shop for tornado safety information, facts and history, myths, alerting systems and other topics related to tornado safety.

The site features six videos on tornado safety, each focusing on a specific topic:

- ◆ Sirens
- ◆ Home safety
- ◆ School safety
- ◆ Mobile home safety
- ◆ NOAA Weather Radio
- ◆ Church safety

The videos garnered thousands of views and many positive comments. Other state EM offices asked about the production of the videos. Because the videos use generic information, they can be used anywhere in the United States.

The StormAware webpage recently released a seventh video explaining the Impact Based Warning Project currently underway in the NWS Central Region. This newest video is on the [StormAware YouTube](#) site.

Innovative Tornado Shelter Solution

[Ricky Shanklin](#), WCM, NWS Paducah, KY

Following a strong tornado in March 2012, the small community of Bandana, KY, took action. Resident David Kilby thought the underground portion of an abandoned water plant would make a great community tornado shelter. He formed a group to see if he could make the concept a reality.

The group funded the cost of converting the plant to a tornado shelter by selling scrap metal from the upper part of the structure. The recycled metal paid for a stairwell into the underground shelter, along with an extra heavy door, weather radio and TV. Bandana residents donated the labor.



Bandana, KY, a new StormReady community, residents came together to create a community tornado shelter, pictured rear.

The community tornado shelter, which can accommodate 200 people, continues to evolve. Recently, the shelter gained a generator. Future plans include bathroom and shower facilities, as well as air conditioning. Residents already have used the shelter a couple of times.

The tornado shelter also provided the perfect site for the Ballard County, KY, StormReady recognition ceremony on July 9. The Bandana Community Tornado

Shelter is an outstanding example of a community stepping up to make a very tangible difference!

Dual Pol Workshop Taps Media Interviews

[Rick Hluchan](#), Forecaster, NWS Midland, TX

On June 12, NWS Midland hosted a media workshop for local television meteorologists and other media partners to educate potential users about the area's new Dual Pol radar. The workshop included a seminar, Q&A session, and live and recorded interviews.

Thirteen partners attended the workshop, including two meteorologists from major networks of the Midland market. Our primary print media partners, *The Midland Reporter Telegram* and the *Odessa American*, also took part. To ensure the session met partner needs, NWS conducted interviews with these partners and with a representative from KCRS 550 AM, the primary Emergency Alert System station in the WFO Midland area.

Workshop participants discussed warning operations and the use of both social media services and NWSChat. NWS provided a Dual Pol reference manual.

The workshop provided an outstanding opportunity for NWS staff to interact with key partners.

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