



# 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.*

**April 2015**

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## NWS Headquarters Reorganization

By [Louis Uccellini](#), NWS Director

Building a Weather-Ready Nation requires more than talk and planning—it takes action and a willingness to change, sometimes at the organizational level. To help better position the agency to fulfill its critically-important mission for the nation, the National Weather Service has restructured its budget and realigned its headquarters organizational structure and associated governance framework to ensure sound and transparent budget planning and execution directed at our mission of saving lives and property. This allows headquarters to better support the NWS field offices in providing environmental intelligence and associated services, and also enables headquarters to work better with external partners in the weather, water and climate enterprise.

Stemming from a recommendation in the 2013 National Academy of Public Administration Report: *Forecast for the Future: Assuring the Capacity of the National Weather Service*, the NWS Headquarters reorganization improves efficiency and effectiveness by addressing gaps and needs, such as within communications, planning and training. The reorganization allows us to better support and enable mission operations, such as improving our ability to prioritize and manage resources and improve the consistency of NWS products and services.

We have also established five new headquarters offices focused on the forecast process and supporting field operations and services:

- ◆ Observations
- ◆ Central processing
- ◆ Analyze, forecast, and support
- ◆ Dissemination
- ◆ Science and technology integration and facilities.

This realignment of our headquarters office functions makes us better able to work with our field offices and more nimble in supporting you, our valued partners. As NWS continues to evolve as an agency, I assure you that we will remain steadfast in our commitment to providing our partners with the products, services and support needed to work together— as a community—in realizing the goal of building a Weather-Ready Nation.



*Louis Uccellini,  
NWS Director*

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## Register Now for NOAA Weather Wire Change Webinar on April 27

By [Greg Zwicker](#) NWWS Dissemination Program Manager

NWS is holding a Partners' Meeting via webinar on April 27, from 1 pm to 2:30 pm EDT, to discuss NOAA Weather Wire Service (NWWS) changes since the April 1, 2015, rollout (see March edition of [Aware](#)). [Register now to take part in the webinar.](#)

NWWS staff will email additional information, an agenda and briefing slides to partners before the meeting. For more information please contact [Greg Zwicker](#).



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## Consistent Social Media Messaging Takes Focus of IWT Meeting

By [Jeff Garmon](#), MIC, NWS Cheyenne, WY

In February 2015, NWS Cheyenne, WY, conducted its first Integrated Warning Team (IWT) meeting with government, non-profit and weather enterprise partners. Most of the meeting was spent discussing local Emergency Alert System issues, the latest Weather-Ready Nation and StormReady initiatives, warning services for regional road-weather management efforts, and the vital role of consistent social media messaging during high impact weather events.

NWS Cheyenne staff members received valuable feedback on current and proposed services. The venue wrapped up with a productive open discussion on where the local weather enterprise should focus its efforts for the remainder of 2015. Participants agreed another IWT meeting should be scheduled for September 2015, and that biannual meetings would help refine weather services for the region served by NWS Cheyenne.

Meeting participants included representatives from several county offices of emergency management, Wyoming's Office of Homeland Security, the Wyoming Department of Transportation, the Nebraska Department of Roads, the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 8 (Denver), local commercial radio broadcast stations, the Wyoming Office of the American Red Cross, Nebraska Office of Homeland Security, DayWeather, Inc., the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wyoming State Parks Division, the U.S. Geological Survey, Laramie County Community College, Laramie County School District 1, High West Energy Corporation, and Cheyenne Fuel, Light and Power Corporation.



*NWS Cheyenne Warning Coordination Meteorologist Chad Hahn and MIC Jeff Garmon discuss local Emergency Alert System issues with NWS Cheyenne Integrated Warning Team on February 2, 2015.*

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## Lessons Learned from Nation's Deadliest Tornado Outbreak



*Storm Prediction Center Lead Forecaster John Hart discusses the Great Tri-State Tornado.*

By [Rick Shanklin](#), WCM, NWS Paducah, KY

It was 90 Years ago but people still remember the Great Tri-State Tornado of March 18, 1925, in Carterville, IL. NWS Paducah, KY, commemorated the event that claimed 695 lives when it tore across parts of three states on that fateful afternoon. NWS Paducah commemorates the tornado event every 5 years.

Approximately 100 people, including NWS key partners and the public, took part in the half day workshop. Following an overview of the Great Tri-State Tornado by NWS Paducah forecaster Ryan Presley, the program focused on the theme of "What if it Happened Today?" This theme was addressed from many perspectives, including [Storm Prediction Center](#) (SPC) services, NWS Paducah's role, and the vital parts played by emergency management and local TV meteorologists.

One highlight of the event was a panel of TV meteorologists who fielded questions during a Q&A session. Another popular session featured SPC lead forecaster John Hart, who shared SPC research findings, such as extensive community research conducted with local residents. NWS representatives appealed to all participants to become a Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador and help spread the word about severe weather preparedness.

So what has changed in the last 90 years to keep Americans safer?

- ◆ There was no warning system in place in 1925. The first forecast of a tornado was made in 1948. Today NWS Weather Forecasts Offices issue warnings for all areas of the country; SPC now generates outlooks for potential tornadoes up to 8 days in advance.
- ◆ There were no storm spotters in 1925. Today we have tens of thousands of storm spotters across the country sending information via a variety of technologies.
- ◆ Americans have much more efficient ways to get information about tornadoes and other emergencies, such as broadcast media, the Internet, social media, NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radio, and Wireless Emergency Alerts.
- ◆ NWS has vastly improved its technology and now uses a broad array of computers, radar, satellites, numerical weather models and much more.
- ◆ Preparedness education was nearly non-existent in 1925. Today we have a focused preparedness effort via the NWS [Weather-Ready Nation](#) program.

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## Trending Now: Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald

By [NWS Insider Staff](#), Silver Spring, MD

On November 10, 1975, the ship Edmund Fitzgerald sank in eastern Lake Superior with 29 officers and crew members on board. The loss of the Edmund Fitzgerald was the worst marine incident on the Great Lakes in the past 48 years. To mark the 39 years since its sinking, NWS Marquette found a unique way to remember those who lost their lives on that voyage. From November 8-10, NWS Marquette sent a series of messages on Twitter that followed the Edmund Fitzgerald's final voyage from the time it loaded taconite in Superior, Wisconsin, through its sinking and the subsequent search for the ship.

Using the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) accident report and research by Science and Operations Officers Tom Hultquist (NWS Twin Cities) and Michael Dutter (NWS Marquette), information concerning the last voyage of the "Fitz" was disseminated via more than 80 Tweets over a three day period. Most of these tweets were issued at the exact time that the events they depicted occurred 39 years earlier.

"While many people have heard of the Edmund Fitzgerald and its story, what was unique about this Twitter event was the ability to follow along, essentially in real-time, as the event unfolded," said Marquette Forecaster Steven Fleegel. "Being able to see the weather reports come in and forecasts being issued, all while conditions deteriorated on the Edmund Fitzgerald, was fascinating."

The goal of the Twitter event was to retell the story and remember the lives lost on the ship. However, it also proved to be a very successful outreach event for NWS Marquette. NWS Marquette saw an increase of 55 percent in its Twitter followers during the 3 days the event took place. During this same period, 38 of the top 50 government tweets referenced this event. Additionally, the amount of interactions and retweets seen by the office was nearly twice the amount that occurred during the previous 10 months.



Photo by Bob Campbell, Grand Ledge, MI

*On November 10, 1975, the ship Edmund Fitzgerald sank in eastern Lake Superior with 29 officers and crew members on board.*

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## NWS Partners with State EMs to Increase Tsunami Preparedness

By [Audrey Rubel](#), Alaska Region ESSD, Anchorage, AK

On March 28, 2015, the National Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer, AK, partnered with Alaska's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to increase tsunami preparedness through an open house event at the Warning Center. More than 100 people responded to joint outreach efforts that included local calendars and social media posts, such as Facebook.

The event is held annually as part of [Tsunami Preparedness Week](#). The main draws to this year's event included:

- ◆ Meeting the scientists who staff the center and issue warnings
- ◆ Learning about tsunamis and how they propagate
- ◆ Investigating seismic observing equipment
- ◆ Meeting and talking to emergency managers about community risk and preparedness
- ◆ Experiencing a virtual earthquake in a simulator
- ◆ Seeing how a wave tank demonstrated tsunami generation and behavior



*Dr. Yoo Yin Kim demonstrates wave propagation.  
Photo by Paul Whitmore, Director, National Tsunami  
Warning Center*

Are tsunamis a risk to the United States? Find out more about the [history of U.S. tsunamis](#).

**Aware**

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