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.

May 2016

NWS Begins Operational Migration to Mixed-Case Text Products

By art thomas [sic], NWS Meteorologist, Silver Spring, MD

On May 11, 2016, all NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFO) will begin issuing the Area Forecast Discussion (AFD), local Public Information Statement (PNS), and Regional Weather Summary (RWS) products using mixed-case text characters and the standard 95 printable ASCII character set. Currently these products are offered in all uppercase text with limited punctuation.

The NWS began providing mixed-case text and expanded punctuation messages in 2010: starting with the national PNS, followed by select local WFO issuing AFDs, PNSs, RWSs and select Storm Prediction Center (SPC) and National Hurricane Center (NHC) products. Since January 2015, all long-fused hydrologic warning products have used mixed case, which represent a significant portion of key public hydrologic products.

Feedback from partners and users has been overwhelmingly positive, leading to operational implementation of mixed-case text products. These mixed-case products will be easier to read, offer clickable links and standard punctuation as well as respond to readers complaints that NWS routinely is "SHOUTING" at users. NWS will continue to use all caps for phrases requiring immediate response, e.g., TORNADO EMERGENCY. TAKE COVER NOW!

After NWS begins the initial operational implementation of the AFD, local PNS and RWS in May 2016, NWS will transition additional groups of products to mixed case and expanded punctuation later in 2016. NWS tentatively plans to transtion short duration Watch, Warning and Advisory (WWA) products (e.g., Tornado Warning (TOR), Severe Thunderstorm Warning (SVR), Flash Flood Warning (FFW), etc.) in the July- August 2016 time frame and long duration products (e.g., Winter Storm Warning (WSW), Non-Precipitation Weather Watch Warning and Advisory product (NPW), Marine Weather Statement (MWS), etc.) in the December 2016 time frame.

NWS will issue Service Change Notices at least 30 days before each implementation detailing the exact implementation day and Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS) product ID numbers in each grouping.

This is one of many initiatives NWS is taking to increase public weather awareness and enhance a Weather-Ready Nation (WRN).

```
WFUS51 KLWX 271414
EWWLWX
VAC091-WVC071-271515-
/O.NEW.KLWX.EW.W.0001.160427T1414Z-

BULLETIN - EAS ACTIVATION REQUESTEI
EXTREME WIND WARNING
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE BALTIMORE
1012 AM EDT WED APR 27 2016

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN STE

* EXTREME WIND WARNING FOR...
  NORTH CENTRAL HIGHLAND COUNTY IN
  SOUTHWESTERN PENDLETON COUNTY IN
```

```
WFUS51 KLWX 271414
EWWLWX
VAC091-WVC071-271515-
/O.NEW.KLWX.EW.W.0001.160427T1414Z-

BULLETIN - EAS ACTIVATION REQUESTEI
Extreme Wind Warning
National Weather Service Baltimore
1012 AM EDT Wed Apr 27 2016

The National Weather Service in Ste

* Extreme Wind Warning for...
  North central Highland County in
  Southwestern Pendleton County in
```

Sample of all capitals format, top, and mixed-case format, bottom.

Integrated Warning Team Holds an Out-of-Role Scenario Exercise

By Rick Shanklin, WCM, NWS Paducah, KY

A brainstorming session with the Integrated Warning Teams (IWT) for western Kentucky developed an innovative plan to challenge IWT team members, an out-of-role exercise. IWT attendees were divided by major groups (media, emergency management and NWS), each of which would take part in the exercise as a member of a profession other than their own.

The objective of the exercise, which included 15 problem statements, was to foster greater understanding of the operational environment and related challenges of each profession during severe weather. The goal was to improve team performance during an actual severe weather event.

Caption: Participants of the Out-of-Role Exercise were briefed via an NWS conference call and graphics to kick off the exercise.

The 2-hour exercise required extensive logistical preparations given the exercise was conducted in four different rooms, including the general session room. In addition, each of the three major IWT components required an array of A/V communication between the rooms to simulate as closely as possible an actual severe weather operational environment.

Each IWT room was led by two primary experts, along with several other event workers, to coordinate the exercise and communicate information between the groups. Midway into the exercise, participants moved to their other out-of-role room to maximize their exposure to a work environment outside of their own profession.

Following several meetings to develop and refine the plan, the team conducted a dry run followed by the formal exercise at NWS Paducah annual Severe Weather Workshop on March 18. The workshop drew 85 participants. Feedback from the workshop was strongly positive with numerous comments on how the workshop revealed false assumptions and generated much improved understanding and empathy for each of the IWT operational components.

Partnering to Save Lives – NOAA Weather Radio Programming Days

By Michael Lewis, WCM, NWS Northern Indiana

The NWS Northern Indiana partnership with local television station WANE-TV in Fort Wayne, IN, is now entering a fourth year. This program has been well received and with the support of Midland Radio, several local drug/department stores also benefitted. Starting at 4 pm, in time for the evening news, nearly 50 people lined up to have their older radios checked out and reprogrammed. The stores also prominently offered new weather radios and batteries. The programming day drew more than 100 store customers to the NWS table for free programming.

Programmers for the event included members of the Fort Wayne Amateur Radio Club, on-air meteorologists, a Midland Radio Representative, the Allen County Homeland Security Deputy Director and NWS staff. WANE-TV ran three live segments during the event and included interviews with team members and the public. The final radio show featured a woman who had wanted to “get a radio for a long time, but was afraid she would not be able to make it work.” Our team walked her through the process; she commented on how easy it was.

The Fort Wayne event was the first of four hosted by WANE-TV. WNDU-TV in South Bend, IN, will be covering 3 additional days, each with five locations. This promises to be a busy season for outreach events featuring NOAA Weather Radio programming. In all, NWS IWX expects to place programmed weather radios in more than 1,000 area homes and businesses this spring.

Columbia City NOAA Weather Radio Programming Day – April 12, 2016: Just a few of the people helping to make the event a huge success. Rob Lydick WANE-TV Meteorologist; Amy Biggs, Whitley County Emergency Management Director; Nicholas Ferreri, WANE-TV Chief Meteorologist; and Joshua Watkins, Columbia City First Responder Volunteer.

The events help the local NWS office as well as the public. It gives NWS staff a chance to connect with partners and to learn more about public concerns. As a result of these events, NWS IWX is making two significant changes to its operations.

First, numerous people commented that the required weekly test of weather radio should be issued twice, once at 11:30 am and again at 6:30 pm, to cover both those at work at those at home. Two people said they were getting the radio for their business and having the alert during the evening would assure that the radio is fully operational for their two major operational shifts.

Second, several weather radio users asked if there was a way for the NWS to trigger an alert for advisories. With the migration to Broadcast Message Handler, NWS IWX will begin exploring ways to make this a reality. Attendees mentioned the need to have the advisory light particularly for Winter Weather Advisories and for some of the Non-Precipitation Weather advisories during this past winter.

Symposium Spotlights Ohio State University StormReady Program

By Brandon Peloquin, WCM, NWS Wilmington, OH

Ohio State University recently became one of the largest universities in the country to join the ranks of StormReady Universities. To spotlight the need for severe weather awareness at a major university, OSU held the recognition ceremony at Ohio State's Annual Severe Weather Symposium. In celebration of the Symposium's 20th Anniversary, all of the speakers were Ohio State graduates, and included presentations from NWS, it's Emergency Management Agency and the media.

During this special anniversary, the symposium offered an excellent opportunity to recognize the university for its efforts in becoming StormReady.

"Ohio State is vulnerable to a variety of hazardous weather. By becoming StormReady, officials at the Ohio State University show a commitment to protecting the lives of the students, faculty and visitors to the University," said Kenneth Haydu, Meteorologist-in-Charge, NWS Wilmington, OH.

OSU's StormReady Recognition Ceremony

The Ohio State University is well prepared for monitoring and responding to hazardous weather and flooding. Its Emergency Management/Department of Public Safety uses automated messaging in the form of text alerts, social media, campus screen and audio messages, and conventional media to alert OSU students, faculty and staff of hazardous weather. The OSU Department of Student Life requires that all large organized meetings on campus have a weather safety plan for monitoring and evacuation before meeting. OSU Emergency Management also partners closely with Franklin County Emergency Management and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency on safety drills and exercises as well as collaborative resources, all with the goal of weather safety for OSU's students, faculty and staff.

"The Department of Public Safety uses a combination of Buckeye Alert Notifications and social media messages to inform all our campuses of severe weather information," said Bob Armstrong, Director of Ohio State's Office of Emergency Management and Fire Prevention. "Due to its size, Ohio State had to meet the same requirements as local counties such as Franklin, Cuyahoga and Hamilton."

Lessons Learned from Prescribed Burn Exercise

*By **NWS News Staff**, Silver Spring, MD*

NWS Huntsville, AL, recently had the chance to observe and assist with a U.S. Forest Service (USFS) prescribed burn exercise at Bankhead National Forest. The two purposes of joining the exercise were to observe decision support services used to plan and perform a 500 acre prescribed burn exercise and to bolster the partner relationship the office has with the local USFS office.

NWS Huntsville assumed full fire weather forecasting responsibility for the Bankhead National Forest on April 5. It was particularly interesting to see the USFS foresters conduct their planning briefing, light a test fire, watch the fire line after the test fire accurately portrayed forecast conditions, and receive immediate feedback on the forecast.

Bankhead National Forest during prescribed burn.

On-site forecasters then tracked the plume downstream to verify the transport winds and mixing height portions of the spot forecast. This was a crucial task as several small communities were downstream of the fire and could have been impacted by smoke and high winds.

The visit also allowed the NWS Type 2 Incident Meteorologist and trainee to apply knowledge learned in the classroom and other environments to the field, including burning techniques, fuel type, topography and localized weather challenges the USFS Bankhead faces.

As a result of this experience, forecasters now have a much better perspective on the decision support services provided by the NWS through the spot forecast. In addition, mutual information exchanged between NWS and USFS has brought about a greater partnership.

Aware

NOAA's National Weather Service Analyze, Forecast and Support Office
Managing Editor: *Melody Magnus,* Editor: ***Nancy Lee***
Aware online: www.weather.gov/os/Aware/ ISSN 1936-8178
Subscribe/Unsubscribe www.weather.gov/os/Aware/awarelist.shtml