



# Aware

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## Wireless Emergency Alerts Saves Lives in Louisiana

By [Charlie Woodrum](#), WCM, NWS Lakes Shreveport, LA

On Halloween night, Jamie and Donnie Munson were settled into their double-wide mobile home for the night in Trout, LA. Little did they know, their lives were about to change forever. Just after 8 pm, a Tornado Watch was issued until 4 am the next morning. Although it looked like the tornado threat was diminishing, NWS Shreveport Senior Meteorologist Jason Hansford was closely watching a tornado warned discrete cell that had developed in front of the line in Rapides Parish. As the storm neared WFO Shreveport's area, it continued to show strong rotation and even a debris ball on the Fort Polk, LA, radar, prompting Jason to issue a Tornado Warning at 11:51 pm that night.



When NWS issued the warning, Jamie's mobile phone instantly alerted her via a Wireless Emergency Alert. Jamie got online immediately and saw the storm was moving through Pineville and knew given its northeast motion, this movement would put the storm on a path very close to their home. Then Jamie saw a post about the tornado threat from the LaSalle Parish Emergency Manager on social media. This second alert convinced her the threat was real, prompting her and her husband to quickly move to the house of a family member nearby. About 10 minutes after they left, an EF-2 tornado ripped through Trout, LA.

*The remnants of the Munson's mobile home after a tornado destroyed it. The family was safety away thanks to a WEA warning. Photo, NWS Shreveport WCM Charlie Woodrum.*

Jamie and Donnie stayed the night with family. In the morning, they drove home to find their mobile home flipped over and thrown, completely destroyed with all of their life's possessions lying in rubble. All that remained of their home were the stairs to the entrance, now leading to an empty foundation.

It was their quick action after getting the Wireless Emergency Alert that likely saved their lives. Losing all their possessions was hard but they are thankful to still be alive today!

"Weather technology and the alert system has come a long way. We are getting the alerts in time to be able to relay to our people in plenty of time to save lives. The alerts on the storm saved at least 20 lives that I know of in LaSalle Parish. You can't put a price tag on that." Scott Franklin, Sheriff/Emergency Manager, LaSalle Parish, LA.

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## Silver Jackets Group Targets Consistency and Resiliency

By [Brandon Bigelbach](#), Meteorologist, NWS Glasgow, MT

Silver Jackets are a team of federal, state and local government officials and floodplain managers who work together to reduce flood risk and preserve the natural environment of floodplains. In late October, meteorologists from NWS Glasgow, MT, and the NWS Great Falls, MT, Senior Service Hydrologist from took part in the annual Montana Silver Jackets meeting in Helena, MT.



Silver Jackets group meets in Helena, MT, October 2018.

In addition to updating each other on programs, the group examines best practices and approaches for communication of flood risk and community resilience to stakeholders. One area identified for future collaboration was how team members discuss flooding and flood risk. The group felt the terminology was not consistent from one agency to the other, potentially confusing the public.

Another major focus of the meeting was resiliency. The session centered around developing of an application or web page that would let users customize natural hazard risk information for their location. This online option might include recommendations for preparedness and increasing

resiliency for events most likely to prove hazardous to the user’s location.

A third focus revolved around early results from a series of summits held across the state as a part of the Montana Resilient Community Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to identify what community gatekeepers across the state feel are underlying stress factors for their community. This project also seeks to determine what types of hazardous events or shocks are priorities in a community so these events could be addressed to increase the community’s resiliency.

A rather prominent theme this year was post-wildfire debris flows and flooding, and the potential risk posed to Montana communities. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has multiple outreach workshops planned in 2019 for communities across the state to help raise awareness to this ever-increasing threat.

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## NWS Charleston, SC, Tests New Social Media Platforms During Hurricane Florence

By [Robert Bright](#), General Forecaster, [Neil Dixon](#), Senior Forecaster, NWS Charleston, SC; [Christina Speciale](#), Meteorologist Intern, NWS Albany, NY

NWS Charleston, SC, is a test office for Facebook Live and Periscope video applications. These platforms were used several times during Hurricane Florence to provide live briefings and show a weather balloon launch. The office’s two main goals were to explain which impacts were the most concerning and to help control the “message.” Charleston staff conducted the briefings daily from September 11–14 leading up to the start of the hurricane’s impact on the area. To help minimize preparation time, staff modified partner briefings to better suit its social media audience.

There were several positives that resulted from these briefings, including many comments thanking us for taking the time to explain the hazards and potential impacts. Some people also provided useful feedback that helped us improve subsequent briefings. The main challenges we faced were low audio and difficulty accessing Facebook Live on our office iPad compared to the office iPhone. The briefings also required two people to conduct the recordings, one for each platform.

Multiple Weather-Ready Nation Ambassadors™ helped us reach a larger audience by sharing our broadcasts on their social media platforms. The most successful Facebook Live post was viewed 6,500+ times, had a reach of 14,100+ and had 300+ reactions, comments and shares. The most successful Periscope post was viewed ~47,000 times. In total, these posts were viewed more than 86,100 times with a Facebook reach of ~44,000 and ~150,000 Twitter impressions. We hope to be able to provide this service for future significant weather threats.



Screen capture of Hurricane Florence live feed for social media.



As with all programs in the NWS, there are policy directives to ensure the program is being run responsibly and consistently. The following are the directives that drive the forensics program:

- ◆ [NWS Policy Directive 10-20 - Forensic Services](#)
- ◆ [NWS Instruction 10-2003 - Records Retention](#)
- ◆ [NWS Instruction 10-2005 - Handling and Releasing Accident-Related Weather Information](#)
- ◆ [NWS Instruction 10-2006 - The Accident Investigation/Litigation Process](#)
- ◆ [NWS Instruction 10-1603 - Operational Readiness and Significant Event Reporting](#)

The NWS Forensic Services Program is part of the NWS Aviation and Space Weather Services Branch and is led by Lora Wilson.



*Hurricane Michael hit the Florida Panhandle with fierce winds and a 15-foot storm surge, closing ports and pulling objects under the waves. Before navigation could safely resume, the Coast Guard looked to a NOAA Navigation Response Team to identify and chart dangers. Strategically located, NOAA teams are on call for such emergencies. Shown here, team lead James Kirkpatrick, Lt. j.g. Michelle Levano, and NOAA Contractor Howard Meyers at a 261-foot ship ripped from its mooring.*

**Aware**

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