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Service Change Notice 23-74
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
120 PM EDT Thu Jun 29 2023

To: Subscribers:
 -NOAA Weather Wire Service
 -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network
 -NOAAPort
 Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From: Stephen W. Bieda III, Ph.D.,
 Chief, Severe, Fire, Public and Winter Weather Services Branch

Subject: Changes to Public Forecast Zones for WFO Rapid City, SD:
Effective September 19, 2023

Effective Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 3:00 PM Mountain Daylight Time, 2100 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), the NWS Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Rapid City, SD (UNR) will complete changes to several Public Weather Forecast Zones and add four additional Public Weather Zones in Custer, Fall River, Lawrence, Meade, Oglala Lakota, Pennington and Perkins Counties in western South Dakota and Crook and Weston Counties in northeastern Wyoming. These changes will provide more accurate headlines for winter and non-precipitation hazards.

Thirteen current zones will be converted into seventeen separate zones. The new zone boundaries will be more accurate in respect to topography, climate, and hazardous weather. After this change, all forecasts and related products will use the zone numbers and names shown in Table 2 below.

If September 19, 2023 is declared a Critical Weather Day, this implementation will be postponed to September 21, 2023 at 2100 UTC.

Table 1: Universal Geographic Codes (UGCs): Current Public Forecast Zone Name

SDZ002: Perkins County
SDZ024: Northern Black Hills
SDZ025: Northern Foot Hills
SDZ027: Southern Foot Hills
SDZ028: Central Black Hills
SDZ029: Southern Black Hills
SDZ041: Fall River
SDZ042: Oglala Lakota
SDZ043: Jackson
SDZ072: Sturgis-Piedmont Foot Hills
WYZ056: Western Crook
WYZ057: Wyoming Black Hills
WYZ058: Weston
WYZ071: Northern Crook

Table 2: UGC: New Public Forecast Zone Name

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SDZ002: Northern Perkins
SDZ078: Southern Perkins
SDZ024: Northern Black Hills
SDZ025: Northern Foothills
SDZ027: Southern Foothills
SDZ028: Central Black Hills
SDZ029: Southern Black Hills
SDZ041: Western Fall River
SDZ075: Eastern Fall River
SDZ042: Northern Oglala Lakota
SDZ076: Southern Oglala Lakota
SDZ043: Northern Jackson
SDZ077: Southern Jackson
SDZ072: Sturgis-Piedmont Foothills
WYZ056: Western Crook
WYZ057: Wyoming Black Hills
WYZ058: Weston County Plains
WYZ059: Newcastle
WYZ060: Northeastern Crook

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Table 3: NWS Products affected by the WFO Rapid City, SD Public Weather Forecast Zone Changes

Product Name -----	WMO Heading -----	AWIPS ID -----
Air Quality Alert	AEUS76 KUNR	AQAUNR
Area Forecast Discussion	FXUS62 KUNR	AFDUNR
Fire Danger Statement	FNUS62 KUNR	RFDUNR
Flood Watch	WGUS62 KUNR	FFAUNR
Hazardous Weather Outlook	FLUS42 KUNR	HWOUNR
Non-Precipitation Weather Message	WWUS72 KUNR	NPWUNR
Point Forecast Matrices	FOUS52 KUNR	PFMUNR
Public Information Statement	NOUS42 KUNR	PNSUNR
Special Weather Statement	WWUS82 KUNR	SPSUNR
Winter Weather Message	WWUS42 KUNR	WSWUNR
Zone Forecast	FPUS52 KUNR	ZFPUNR
Watch County Notification	WWUS63 KUNR	WCNUNR
Short Term Forecast	FPUS73 KUNR	NOWURN

NWS partners and users will need to make necessary changes to their communications systems to accommodate these weather forecast zone changes. WFO UNR has coordinated with partners to keep many of the old zone numbers instead of creating all new zone numbers. Not using new zone numbers when the geographical zone boundaries have been changed will cause discrepancies of long-term climatological record in Storm Data for long-fused (zone) warning verification databases. As a result, our partners will likely need to execute additional programming for their respective databases and analyses.

Preliminary shapefiles for public forecast zones are available online at:
<https://www.weather.gov/gis/PublicZones>
<https://www.weather.gov/gis/Counties>

Final versions of these shapefiles will be available on or around Tuesday, July 18, 2023.

A graphical depiction of these changes is online at:
https://www.weather.gov/unr/Public_Zone_Change2023

For more information, please contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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