



# 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.

December 2015

---

## NWS Offers New Experimental Winter Weather Products

By [Louis Uccellini](#), NWS Director

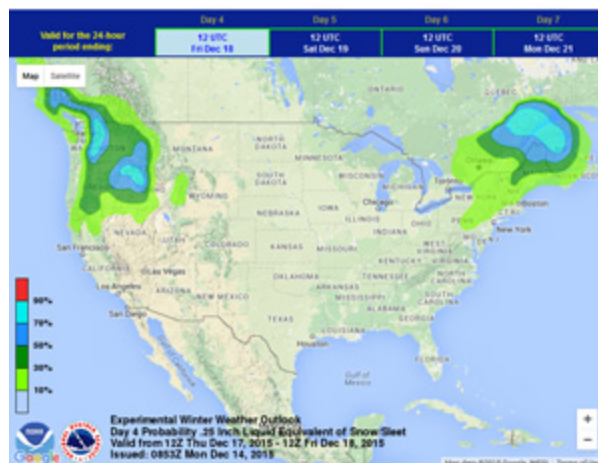
December 1 is the day meteorologists stop saying “winter is coming” and start saying “winter is here.” With the arrival of meteorological winter, I am proud to announce several products that will help our partners and the public make more informed decisions about winter weather and help spread the word about winter weather safety.

Numerical weather prediction guidance has advanced to the point where we can provide partners a heads-up of hazardous winter weather as much as a week in advance. After 3 years of testing and refinement, based on feedback from partners and NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs), the NWS Weather Prediction Center made the experimental [Days 4-7 Winter Weather Outlook](#) available to the public. This product shows the probability for accumulating snow for the contiguous United States in the medium range time frame and will serve as the basis for collaboration among NWS forecast offices and National Centers. This product will also give emergency managers (EMs), the media, and the public a better idea of what to expect from upcoming winter storms and more information with which to plan how to mitigate issues that may arise from hazardous wintry conditions.

The NWS also added 14 additional WFOs to the [Experimental Probabilistic Storm Total Snow Products experiment](#). These offices will produce probabilistic storm total snow products ahead of anticipated winter storms. Last year, WFOs Baltimore, MD/Washington, DC; Mt. Holly, NJ; New York, NY; and Taunton, MA, produced these maps and received positive feedback from local EMs and other partners. This year, in addition to increasing the number of offices in the mid-Atlantic and New England areas, NWS is adding WFOs in the Midwest and northern Plains. The NWS Peachtree City, GA, WFO Office also will produce these maps to support the Atlanta metro area.

A forecast can be incredibly accurate, but have no value at all if partners and the public don't know what to do with that information. As part of building a Weather-Ready Nation, we must ensure we are providing top-notch Impact-Based Decision Support Services for partners and spreading safety and preparedness messages to accompany the accurate forecasts and warnings our forecast offices provide.

The [NWS Winter Safety Campaign](#) launched December 1 and includes a wealth of materials to help protect lives, property and stimulate the national economy.



[NWS Days 4-7 Winter Weather Outlook](#)

---

## oneNWS Network Increases Vital Bandwidth to Local Offices

By [Louis Uccellini](#), NWS Director

NWS works in an environment where access to an ever-increasing amount of data is crucial to our ability to provide timely and accurate forecasts, watches, warnings and decision support services. This is why the Integrated Dissemination Program's (IDP) oneNWS network and dissemination infrastructure, at the NOAA Center for Weather and Climate Prediction in College Park, MD, and the David Skaggs Research Center in Boulder, CO, is essential to our forecasters and partners.

We established the Integrated Dissemination Program to transform the agency's dissemination capabilities from a collection of independent stovepipes to an integrated, enterprise-wide dissemination service. Early in 2014, NCEP Central Operations moved the IDP infrastructure to operational, bringing onboard a variety of dissemination applications. Along with this integration, the upgrade to the oneNWS network will help support the ingest and dissemination of higher-resolution data, including GOES-R data and numerical models.

We heard you and we are completing the Internet upgrades across the NWS field offices in December. The oneNWS network also provides real time access to key platforms like the Multi-Radar/Multi-Sensor system and the Meteorological Assimilation Data Ingest System. A list of [IDP data platforms](#) is online.

In addition, the redundant, geographically-diverse IDP system in Boulder— scheduled for completion by FY16—will ensure 100 percent backup of dissemination applications, including the receipt and dissemination of critical data and products to support the NWS mission.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the IDP project. For our partners, this means a more reliable and efficient infrastructure to ensure they have the guidance they need to produce and disseminate life-saving products when it matters the most.

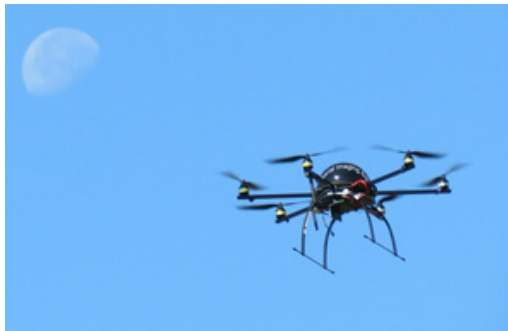


*NWS Director Louis Uccellini*

---

## Aviation Enthusiasts Assist with Damage Assessments

By [Mike Sporer](#), Meteorologist NWS Blacksburg



In November, NWS Blacksburg, VA, in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership, conducted the 2015 Hobbyist Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) workshop and simulcast webinar at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. NWS offered the workshop to provide hobbyist UAV operators with current FAA guidelines and to explain how aerial imagery from hobbyists can help NWS assess storm damage.

Aerial imagery of storm damage provided by safe and responsible hobbyist operators is an example of citizen science in action: aviation enthusiasts providing data to help the NWS accomplish its science mission. Some 26 knowledgeable hobbyists attended the workshop in person and another 16 attended via webinar. NWS Blacksburg is looking forward to integrating hobbyist UAV operators into an already extensive network of storm spotters to use their aerial imagery to

enhance post storm damage surveys.

---

## NWS Seeks Better Ways to Serve Indian Nations

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

With a little more than 27,000 square miles, the Navajo Nation is the largest U.S. reservation. Its land area is larger than West Virginia. The Navajo Nation faces unique challenges during the winter. The land area is extremely rural. Approximately 85 percent of all roads are unpaved. Snow and rain turn these unpaved dirt roads into quagmires and leave residents stranded for days or even weeks at a time. Due to poor road conditions, emergency responders are sometimes unable to quickly reach residents who may be in need of help.

Long duration power outages are also common during and after severe winter weather events. Because of these outages, it is vital for residents to stock up on food, clothing and alternate sources of heating, such as wood and coal, to survive.



*NWS, AZ DEMA, FEMA, BIA and Navajo Nation Emergency Services work to improve preparedness.*

In response, the Navajo Nation hosted a winter preparedness meeting in Window Rock, AZ, to discuss the upcoming winter forecast along with preparedness, recovery and response activities planned for severe winter weather.

Presenters at the meeting included representatives from NWS Flagstaff and Western Region HQ, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), FEMA, Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (AZ DEMA), and Navajo Nation Emergency Services. The meeting drew representatives from the Navajo Division of Transportation, Chapter House Police Departments, the Navajo Dept. of Health, and the Pinon Community Emergency Response Team.

NWS Flagstaff WCM Tony Merriman commented, “This was a great opportunity to work with our core partners to prepare the Navajo Nation for this coming winter. Past strong El Niño episodes had huge impacts across the Navajo Nation. We took this opportunity to remind folks of those episodes and impacts to enhance our message of preparedness. It is our goal to build community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather; building a Weather-Ready Navajo Nation.”

---

## El Niño Winter Forecast Draws Huge Crowds in California

By [Alex Tardy](#), WCM, NWS San Diego, CA

After years of severe drought, California is bracing for a weather change. Since late August, NWS San Diego, CA, has held 80 briefings on El Niño and its likely effects for city, county, state, federal, tribal, military and public audiences. Attendance has ranged from 25 to 300, with the public venues drawing an average of 100 people, including mayors and city council members.

Because flooding is a major concern with an El Niño weather pattern, all agencies have been promoting the Turn Around Don't Drown program and displaying the flood signage at public sessions. San Bernardino County, CA, alone, hosted eight workshops with each having a separate EM meeting followed by a public open house and panel discussion. The panel speakers included Caltrans, the CA Department of Public Works, Sherriff's office, the Office of Emergency Services and NWS San Diego.

Two of the NWS sessions drew more than 300 people and many rooms were at capacity. Congresswoman Norma Torres hosted an open house with more than 100 attendees and a national webinar with nearly 4,000 attendees. Several of the briefings were followed by Table Top Exercises offering hands on experiences. We also created a [YouTube Video with Caltrans](#). Despite this massive effort, NWS has had requests for more public and EM presentations, and has more sessions scheduled in January.



*American Red Cross volunteers fill a room in Santa Ana to watch presentations on El Niño.*

---

## Team Effort Leads to Local Disaster Information and Safety Web Page

By [Vern Preston](#), WCM, NWS Pocatello, ID

After two disastrous fires near the Sun Valley, ID, resort community in less than 6 years, the Blaine County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) decided it needed a situational awareness page to better prepare residents and visitors.

NWS Pocatello, ID, Information Technology Officer Jeremy Schulz was on the team that developed a resource web page that includes real-time information about current incidents in the county, disaster planning checklists for known hazards, weather forecasts and warnings, a disaster notification system and contacts for more information.

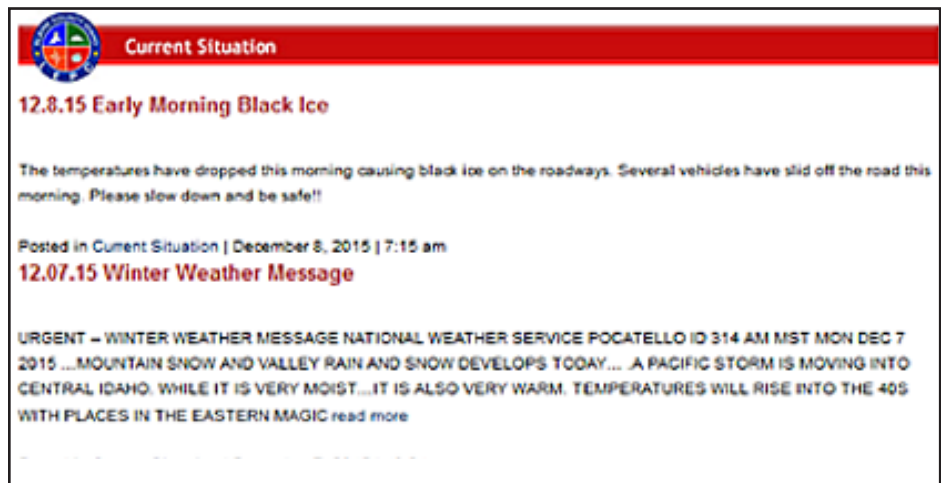
The program's motto is “Working together for a safer community.” The [Blaine County LEPC website](#) is a comprehensive source of accurate and timely emergency and disaster information for use not only during emergencies, but as a resource to better prepare citizens and visitors for possible emergencies and disasters.



Emergency and disaster information for specific situations is provided by local jurisdictions and response agencies.

As you can see in the graphic at right, the site offers real-time NWS information on the LEPC website, which in turn is posted on the Blaine County LEPC Facebook and Twitter feeds.

For contact information email or call LEPC Secretary and Public Information Officer Stacy McLaughlin at [barby-magic@sunvalley.net](mailto:barby-magic@sunvalley.net) or call 208 720-1738.



The screenshot shows a webpage titled "Current Situation" with a red header. It features two main sections: "12.8.15 Early Morning Black Ice" and "12.07.15 Winter Weather Message". The black ice section includes a warning about temperatures dropping and vehicles sliding off roads. The winter weather message is an urgent alert from the National Weather Service Pocatello, Idaho, dated December 7, 2015, regarding mountain snow and valley rain.

## Impact-Based Messaging Draws Crowd to IWT Meeting

By [Dave Nadler](#), WCM, NWS Peachtree City, GA



*North and Central Georgia Integrated Warning Team at GTRI Conference Center, December 7, 2015*

NWS Peachtree City, GA, drew a packed house to its fifth Integrated Warning Team (IWT) workshop at the Georgia Tech Research Institute Conference Center in Atlanta. The session's theme was impact-based messaging and evolving ways to better communicate critical weather hazards and impacts to core decision makers and partners.

Attendees included more than 160 representatives from nearly 75 different local, state and federal agencies as well as staff from NWS forecast offices in Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. In addition to NWS meteorologists, the backbone of this IWT consisted of broadcast media from multiple Designated Market Areas and EMs.

Guest speakers included Georgia EM Director Jim Butterworth, Associate Director of Communication Sciences for the Centers

for Disease Control & Prevention Jana Telfer, and Georgia Department of Transportation State Maintenance Engineer Dale Brantley.

There were also two separate panel discussions involving broadcast meteorologists from three different markets, including Atlanta, and EM directors representing the Georgia World Congress Center, the Atlanta Federal Executive Board, the University of Georgia and Gwinnett County, the second most populated county in Georgia.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. A volunteer with the Fayette county Fire Department said, "excellent workshop. They get better every year." David Chandley, Chief Meteorologist for FOX 5 (WAGA) in Atlanta expressed his appreciation by saying, "Awesome exchange of info and ideas." Participants were excited about the opportunity to meet such a diverse group of people with whom they share similar responsibilities and challenges. Many were encouraged about moving forward and already looking ahead to next year's IWT meeting.

**Aware**

NOAA's National Weather Service, Analyze, Forecast and Support Office  
Managing Editor: [Melody Magnus](#), Editors: [Donna Franklin](#), [Nancy Lee](#)  
Aware online: [www.weather.gov/os/Aware/](http://www.weather.gov/os/Aware/) ISSN 1936-8178  
Subscribe/Unsubscribe [www.weather.gov/os/Aware/awarelist.shtml](http://www.weather.gov/os/Aware/awarelist.shtml)