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 2017

Help NWS Improve Winter and Flood Alerts

*By **Eli Jacks**, Chief, NWS Forecast Services Division*

NWS is requesting comments through May 31, 2017, on a proposal to reduce the number of and reformat winter- and flood-based Watches, Warnings and Advisories (WWA). The proposed changes are based on feedback from surveys NWS conducted fall of 2016 and on the results of social science research. The surveys and research show users are sometimes confused by the large number of hazard messages, "products," NWS currently issues.

Users also have told NWS they would prefer a consistent product formatting approach to communicate expected hazards and related impacts. A listing of the specific proposals, along with examples of the proposed consolidated and reformatted messages, are contained in the Product Description Document (PDD). You can find the surveys at the following links through May 31, 2017:

- Proposed winter product changes survey
- Proposed flood product changes survey

Based on your feedback, NWS may implement some or all of these proposals this fall. NWS may also consider reformatting and consolidating other hazard types in 2018. More information about this project is online at the Hazard Simplification website.

New Tsunami.gov Website Represents Major Warning Advances

*By **Mike Angove** and Christa Rabenold, Tsunami Service Program, Silver Spring, MD*

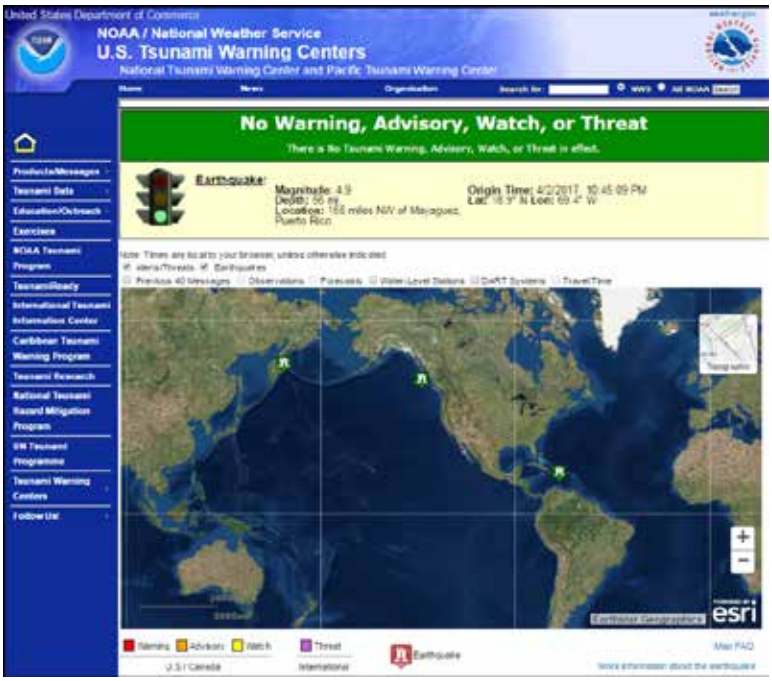
NOAA's NWS tsunami warning capabilities have greatly improved since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and continue to evolve to better meet the needs of our domestic and international partners. As part of this ongoing work, the NWS National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) and Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC), in collaboration with the NWS's Tsunami Service Program, have made a fundamental change in how they provide information.

In March, the centers completed the transition of all warning center products to Tsunami.gov, which is now the official website for both warning centers. This consolidated portal eliminates potential confusion by using a single GIS-enabled map to display all warning center products. The site is intended as a one-stop shop for NWS operational tsunami products and related information and represents one of the most significant steps toward consistent operations and messaging taken by the NWS to date. The design of the new site is based largely on the previous NTWC site, which has been updated and modified to include PTWC products and information. Tsunami.gov introduces a new cross-center level of sophistication that allows for tsunami products to be consistently coded and more easily rendered.

In conjunction with this change, responsibility for issuing U.S. domestic tsunami products for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands has been shifted from NTWC to PTWC. This change in designated service areas improves the consistency of services for the Caribbean, consolidating Caribbean responsibilities under one warning center. Since 2005, PTWC has served as the primary international forecast center for countries in the Caribbean.

NWS encourages U.S. Tsunami Warning Center product users to change all links and bookmarks to http://tsunami.gov/ to maintain functionality and ensure continuity of product delivery.

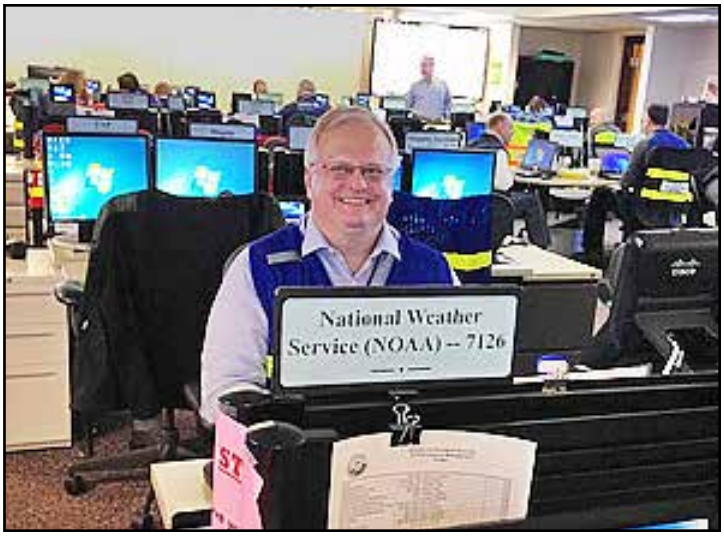
This website is also the NWS's primary source for tsunami information and provides links to other NOAA partners and programs. The original PTWC site will continue to operate in parallel for 6 months to ensure the new site is operating as anticipated. The warning centers and the service program will continue working together to update and enhance the site and respond to user feedback.



Tsunami.gov enhances the consistency of NWS operational tsunami products and consolidates them on one site.

NWS Uses Testing and Education to Prepare People for Tsunamis

*By **Audrey Rubel**, Regional Communications Manager, NWS Alaska Region*



Jeff Osiensky, Regional WCM and Deputy Chief of Environmental and Scientific Services Division, shown at the Alaska State Emergency Operations Center during Tsunami Live code test.

March 27 marked the commemoration of the Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964, the most powerful earthquake in U.S. history and the second most powerful ever recorded.

This earthquake and the ensuing tsunamis claimed the lives of 131 people in Alaska, Oregon and California and led to the creation of an observatory that became the National Tsunami Warning Center.

Every year at this time, Alaskans test their tsunami readiness during Tsunami Preparedness Week. A highlight is a live test of the tsunami warning system. The NWS partners with the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Alaska Broadcasters Association to conduct the test. The Weather Forecast Offices in Anchorage and Juneau activate the Emergency Alert System as if an actual tsunami is occurring. Some communities activate their sirens and practice their emergency

procedures. This year, several NWS staff members were at the State Emergency Operations Center, witnessing the center's call-down protocol first hand.

During Tsunami Preparedness Week, the National Tsunami Warning Center opens its doors to the public. This year's event brought in hundreds of visitors who were interesting in learning about one of the two tsunami warning centers in the nation. Guests met the scientists who stand watch and issue warnings, saw demonstrations about tsunami generation and propagation, and learned about the analysis and decision making behind the warnings.

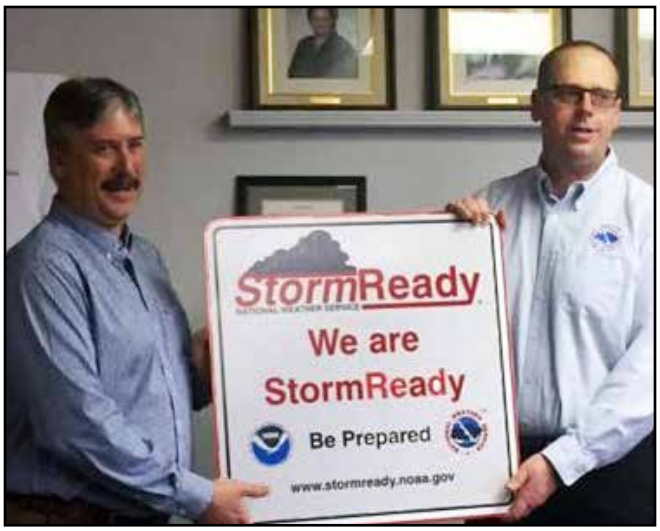
Broadening StormReady to Reach Special Needs Populations

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

NWS offices are reaching out to new types of sites to help ensure they are StormReady. On March 6, NWS Nashville recognized the Tennessee Children's Home Spring Hill Campus and Corporate Offices as StormReady. The site is a residential care facility for boys 13–18 years of age. Boys live in group homes that are family oriented, serving no more than 8 children per house under the guidance of house parents. The Spring Hill Campus consists of 10 buildings, including corporate offices. This is the first such children's facility to achieve StormReady recognition.

NWS Nashville Senior Forecaster Jason B. Wright worked closely with the Tennessee Children's Home Director over the past couple of years to achieve this recognition. Jason provided safety/spotter training to campus officials and worked closely with Tennessee Emergency Management Agency District Coordinator John "Trip" Voss to ensure the site met all StormReady program requirements.

As part of a 3-tier team approach with the StormReady program, NWS Nashville staff continues to approach more traditional locations to join the StormReady program as well as special needs populations such as this one.



NWS Nashville Senior Forecaster Jason B. Wright presents a StormReady sign to Mike Yuhas, Campus Director, Tennessee Children's Home at its Spring Hill campus.

Aviation Weather Takes Center Stage for IDSS during Super Bowl LI

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

The city of Houston hosted Super Bowl LI (51) on Sunday, February 5. In anticipation of the high air traffic volume and impact to nearby airports, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) designed a new air route plan to maintain safety and efficiency in the days before and following this event.

The NWS Houston Center Weather Service Unit (CWSU) partnered with the NWS Houston/Galveston Weather Forecast Office, NWS Aviation Weather Center offices, and the NWS Southern Region Headquarters to create a single, clear and concise weather message for the FAA and aviation partners. This NWS Aviation Impact-Based Decision Support team collaborated to forecast aviation weather impacts that could affect air travel to and from Super Bowl LI. Initial feedback from our core FAA partners was very

positive. One supervisor from the Houston Terminal Radar Approach Control stated, "The weather products you are delivering are critical for doing our job better."

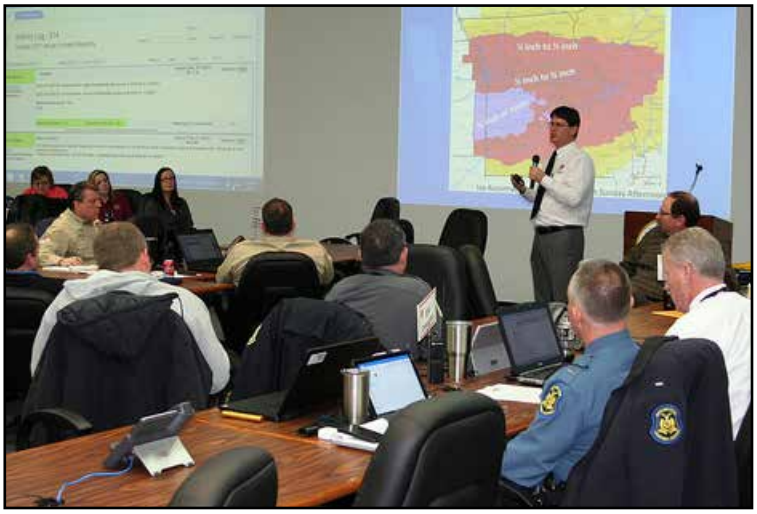
This collaborative service better prepared the FAA and other aviation partners for weather impacts when aviation weather took center stage. Low ceilings and visibilities created aviation impacts throughout the Super Bowl weekend. NWS expertise also gained much attention outside the FAA and the aviation industry, including local, regional and federal decision makers supporting public safety during the event.

The NWS Aviation team contributed to air transportation efficiency and safety across the Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) and supporting facilities during the Super Bowl. On the day after the game, the Houston ARTCC set the record for its highest daily traffic count—7,847 aircraft—in its 52-year history.

NWS Decision Support Helps Emergency Operations Center during Ice Storm

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

From January 12-15, NWS Springfield and St. Louis, MO, Warning Coordination Meteorologists (WCM) James Kramper and Steve Runnels staffed the Missouri State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The goal was to provide weather support for a winter storm forecasted for the Kansas City metropolitan area, where the National Football League (NFL) playoff game was scheduled.



Steve Runnels, WCM Springfield, MO, briefing the Missouri State Emergency Operations Center staff on January 12, 2017.

Recognizing the potential threat to public safety, the State Emergency Management Agency initiated full activation, with all Emergency Support Functions (ESF) staffed. Because Governor Eric Greitens had been sworn in just days before the event, the storm provided a learning experience for newly appointed state employees. NWS staff embedded in the Planning/Intelligence Section worked closely with the Emergency Operations Center Incident Commander and the Public Information Officer Section. The WCMs provided weather information for the report sent to the governor every 4 hours during the storm. The team also gave weather briefings to the entire SEOC staff every 6 hours.

On Friday afternoon, Governor Greitens came to the SEOC for a briefing that included updates from the WCMs. On Saturday, the forecast called for the storm to be at its worst in the Kansas City Metro area from late Saturday night into Sunday morning. This timing was a big concern since the playoff game was scheduled for Sunday at 2 pm and could create major hazards for people heading to the football game.

Based on the NWS forecast, officials moved the game to a 7 pm start time. Because of the concern over the public safety related to travel to the game, the every 4-hour reports continued, with additional specific weather updates for Governor Greitens every 2 hours. NWS staff took part in a video conference call with Governor Greitens and SEOC staff Sunday morning to provide the latest forecast. The decision to change the start time of the game based on the forecast worked out perfectly as temperatures rose to above freezing by late afternoon allowing the ice to melt. The result was very few travel issues for people driving to the game.

Aware

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