Aware

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Rhode Island Becomes 5th State to Achieve StormReady Status

*By **Glenn Field**, WCM, NWS Taunton, MA*

In January, Rhode Island became the fifth state to have all its counties or the equivalent, its 39 municipalities, designated StormReady. In New England there is no county government so NWS Taunton worked with each of 39 individual communities within the state.

This achievement was a joint effort carried out by Rhode Island State Exercise Officer Stephen Conard and NWS Taunton Warning Coordination Meteorologist Glenn Field. This team carried out of the vision of Governor Gina Raimondo and RI Emergency Management (EM) Agency Director Peter Gaynor.

At a ceremony held February 2 at the State House, NWS Director Louis Uccellini discussed how StormReady promotes a proactive approach that helps local decision makers prepare for and respond to hazardous weather. He noted that StormReady dovetails with the provision of Impact-Based Decision Support Services (DSS), which connects forecasts and warnings to decision makers in the spirit of the Weather Act of 2017. Uccellini highlighted major hurricanes, devastating floods and blizzards that have impacted Rhode Island and how collaboration between the NWS and EMs has saved lives and property.

The StormReady recognition ceremony concluded with a dramatic photo session that featured representatives from all 39 communities holding their new StormReady signs.

NWS Eastern Region Director Jason Tuell emphasized the enormity of the state's accomplishment and how its success was due to the close partnership between RIEMA and NWS Taunton. Tuell harked back to his roots as a Tiverton, RI, native that gave him personal knowledge about the state's hazardous weather challenges and the important role of local EMs. NWS Taunton Meteorologist in Charge Bob Thompson described the state's investment in the program, which included purchasing four lightning detectors and four NOAA Weather Radios for each township, along with giving the townships a reimbursable grant incentive for further weather/outreach related purchases. He commented that being StormReady doesn't storm proof a community, but it demonstrates its commitment to being prepared for a weather emergency.

The other StormReady states are Delaware, Florida, Hawaii (also TsunamiReady) and South Carolina. Guam and the Northern Marianas are also StormReady and TsunamiReady and Puerto Rico is completely TsunamiReady.

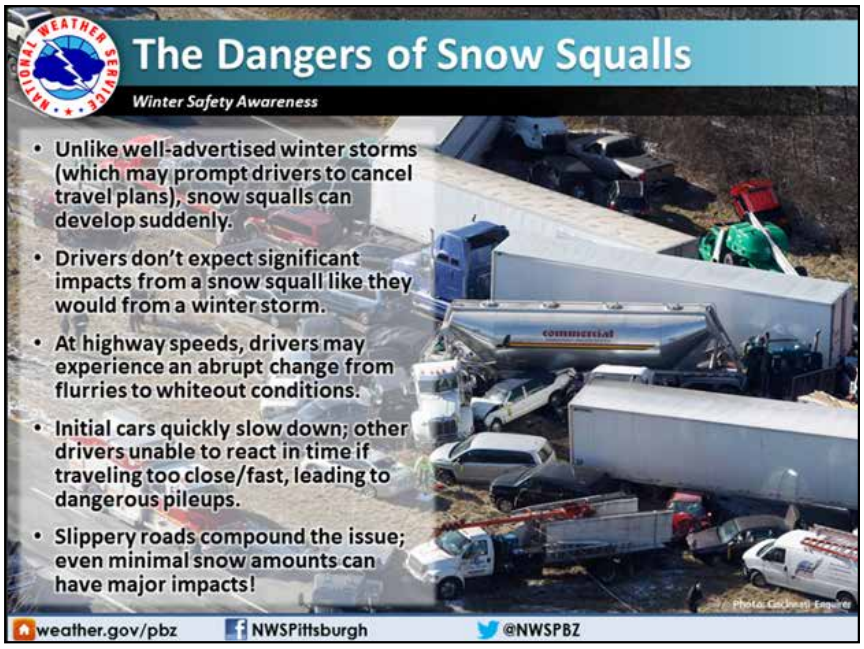
NWS Proposes New Snow Squall Warning

*By **David Soroka**, NWS Winter Weather Program Lead, Silver Spring, MD*

Sudden snow squalls, often associated with strong cold fronts, are a key wintertime weather hazard. Such squalls can cause localized extreme impacts to the traveling public and to commerce for brief periods of time. Unfortunately,

there is a long history of deadly accidents associated with snow squalls. Although snow accumulations are typically an inch or less, the combination of gusty winds and falling temperatures can cause extremely dangerous conditions for motorists.

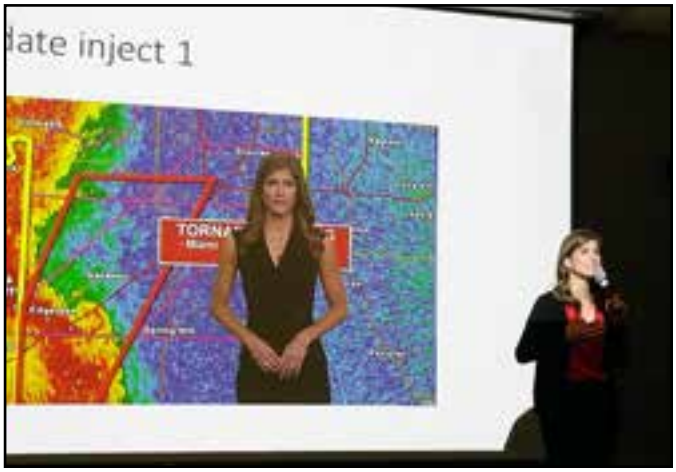
Annual highway fatalities from these events can exceed the number of fatalities from tornadoes. Until now, NWS has issued locally-specific hazard messages for these events via generic Special Weather Statements (SPS). These statements do not include Valid Time Event Codes (VTEC) that computers can easily interpret.



In January 2018, NWS started an operational demonstration. issuing snow squall warning at six of its Weather Forecast Offices. These six offices will issue Snow Squall Warnings with a new SQ.W VTEC code. The warning will be short-fused and polygon-based, enabling improved dissemination for maximum user distribution and more effectively supporting decision support services. This demonstration will support a decision on operational implementation of the new snow squall warnings.

This new snow squall warning will provide critical, highly localized life-saving information in a manner that will allow users to recognize and parse the products at the local level for their customers and the public. The new product, along with the SPS, NWSChat, briefings and social media are part of a longer-fused strategy to give Departments of Transportation time to pre-treat roads and other users more time to prepare for possible hazards.

Adding this new product does not diminish NWS's commitment to hazard simplification and the reduction in the number of Watch, Warning and Advisory (WWA) products. As NWS moves forward with simplifying our WWA system, the Snow Squall Warning will be considered for consolidation into the Winter Weather product suite. Until then, NWS must meet its mission to protect lives and property *now* and address the needs expressed by NWS forecasters and partners.



Lindsey Anderson, KSHB-TV meteorologist, talks about how TV media helped in an exercise simulating a significant tornado event in Kansas City.

IWT Meeting Features New Short Course for New EMs

*By **Jennifer Laflin**, Meteorologist, NWS Pleasant Hills, MO*

The ninth annual Integrated Warning Team (IWT) meeting offered by NWS Pleasant Hills, MO, was held at the NWS Training Center in Kansas City on January 31, 2018. New this year was a "Short Course for New Emergency Managers," hosted by Meteorologist Linda Gilbert. The goal of the course is to help new EMs further new relationships and gain knowledge to successfully execute our IWT mission of protecting lives and property.

Also new was a session on integrating media in simulations/exercises, and a first-look at preliminary results of a national outdoor warning siren policy review.

Highlights of the program included:

- Review of the 2017 severe weather season
- Information on storm reports and when to expect confirmation of tornadoes
- Overview of siren policy
- Collaboration through exercises

The meeting also delved into the March 6, 2017, tornado outbreak across Missouri and record flash flooding on Indian Creek in the Kansas City area. Recent and planned updates in NWS services were also discussed, including the new hazard simplification process for winter weather, the Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador initiative, and the expanding NWS Impact-based Decision Support Services. Feedback for the meeting was overwhelmingly positive, with all participants indicating they either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that the IWT was a valuable experience.

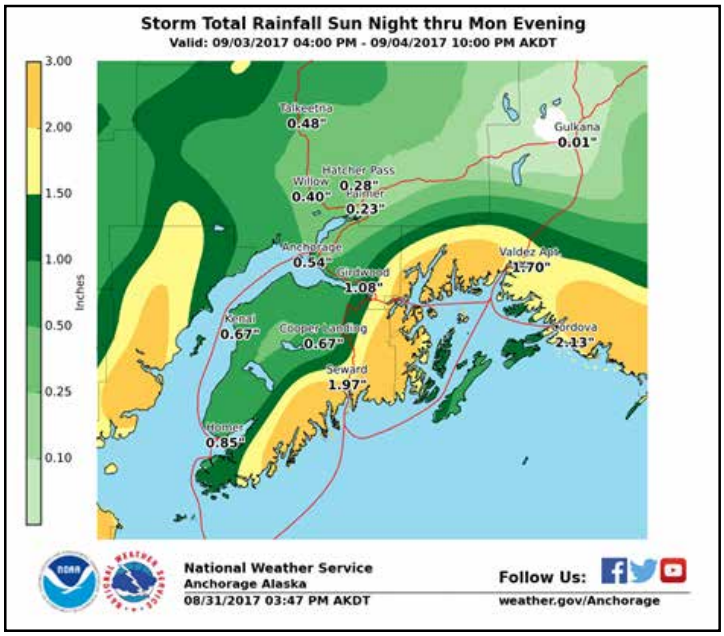
Atmospheric River Shuts Down Local Road

*By **Audrey Rubel**, Physical Scientist, Alaska Region Headquarters, Anchorage, AK*

Atmospheric Rivers are long, narrow bands of moist air inbound from over the Pacific Ocean. This summer and fall, atmospheric rivers contributed to heavy rainfall along the Northern Gulf Coast of Alaska.

There are few main roads in Alaska. After Cordova, AK, Power Creek Road was damaged by several heavy rainfall events, Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center staff, the Anchorage NWS Service Hydrologist, Andy Dixon, and other forecasters teamed with the State Emergency Operations Center personnel and other governmental stakeholders to return it to service. This multi-agency team provided Impact-based Decision Support Services throughout the fall. The NWS routinely provided precipitation timing, severity, and uncertainty as needed.

The combined efforts gave the Cordova team a 1- to 2-day lead time for the heavy precipitation that helped them manage damaged infrastructure, plan repairs, and activate backup power generation. More information about Atmospheric Rivers can be found at http://www.noaa.gov/stories/what-are-atmospheric-rivers.



Rainfall information shared with stakeholders

State Emergency Operations Center Visit Pays Dividends

*By **Rick Shanklin**, WCM, NWS Paducah, KY*

In February, nine members of the NWS Paducah, KY, staff made the long drive to visit the Kentucky State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Frankfort, KY. The tour was provided by three members of the Kentucky EM staff including Deputy Director Col. Wayne Burd. The 26,150 square-foot Kentucky SEOC, completed in late 2013, supports more than 200 personnel during a disaster response, including NWS staff. The visit helped NWS Paducah staff

learn how NWS information and services are integrated into EOC operations at a state level. It also helped serve as an opportunity to get feedback on NWS Decision Support Services for state Emergency Operation Centers.

The nearly 2-hour tour included a detailed explanation of operations at the SEOC with emphasis on the use of NWS weather information and services for hazardous weather events.

Much discussion was generated including ideas for improvement of NWS services and the enhanced sharing of mutual information and tools.

The visit proved so helpful to both NWS and the Kentucky SEOC that NWS Paducah staff plan to visit additional state EOCs in the area in the near future.

NWS Paducah, KY, staff visit the Kentucky State Emergency Operations Center in Frankfort, KY

Story Map Tells Hurricane Irma Story via Radar and Satellite

*By **NWS Communications Staff**, Silver Spring, FL*

The NWS office in Key West, FL, recently released an ArcGIS Story Map of Hurricane Irma. This story map features 13 slides showing GOES-16 satellite and radar imagery, as well as behind-the-scene moments with the NWS Key West staff, and an interactive maps cataloging Irma's impact on the Florida Keys. Irma struck the Florida Keys as a Category 4 hurricane and was part of the devastating 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season that included major hurricane landfalls by Harvey and Maria.

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