

NOAA's NWS Partners' Workshop – Silver Spring, MD
June 23, 2005 – Notes and Actions

Dennis McCarthy (Director, NWS OCWWS) – Opening:

- This is your meeting. We want to listen to your concerns.

John Jones (NWS DAA):

- We want to reach out to you to better understand problems and work with you to solve them.
- NOAA is enhancing its protection of the public from tsunamis.
- We are here to listen to you.

Ed Johnson (NWS OSP) – Implementation of NOAA Partnership Policy:

- Policy has garnered much mistrust and fear.
- Details – Policy now fully in place:
 - 4 main policy directives -1-10 (umbrella policy), 2 instructions – 1-1001, 1-1002, and Policy 10-102.

1-1001 – designed to make it easier to keep track of information service changes in NWS

1-1002 – termination – provides partners with procedures to raise concerns

Fears:

- NOAA will use policy to begin an era of frank competition with the private sector. NWS has no ulterior motive. We are not competing with you.
- Competition we face is other federal budget priorities. Policy recognizes private sector role. NOAA recognizes the diversity of the private sector.
- Many things have gone unchanged from the past. It is just now in writing. Policy does not change a single NOAA product.
 - It did change NOAA's approach to managing conflicts.
- Vision of policy is founded on better communication which should lead to better working relationship and better service to the public. Sets a very high standard to the NWS. This is a challenge.
- Importance of Private Sector:
 - NWS has accepted responsibility for health and growth of the private sector. NWS' job to make that happen. Private sector provides services beyond the capacity and capability the government can provide. NWS creates the market for weather information.
- Ways NWS can help make the enterprise better:
 - Globalweatherpages.com – basic yellow pages of private sector companies by category. Replaced a list that NWS maintained on SP website.
- Fire weather services:
 - NWS provide spot forecasts only when a fire is out of control, or when controlled burn follows under Interagency MOU, or when a public official certifies it is essential for public safety.
 - States are having trouble finding private sector fire weather service providers. Will become a category on the globalweatherpages site.

- Spirit of policy requires NOAA to coordinate with the private sector much earlier in the advances of science and technology – opening up new opportunities.

Margaret Fowke (NWS OSP) - Environment and Human Health:

- Scientific advances bring environmental information and human health together.
- Opportunities where we can all support human health – Education, Decision support/Expert assistance, R&D, Information services.
- Weather education in medical community – most misunderstandings – need your help!
 - Rip Currents – undertow and rip tides are same as rip currents, don't know how to escape, don't know can occur in lakes.
 - Space Weather – don't know origin, greatest hazards, geomagnetic storms, solar flares, radio blackouts.
 - Lightning – don't know basic safety rules (e.g., 30/30 rule).
 - UV – suntan is healthy, wearing sunscreen protects you so you can sunbathe much longer.
 - Hurricanes – don't understand cone of uncertainty, how people most die from hurricanes, relationship between strength and size.
 - Wind Chill – possible to get frostbite if temp is above freezing but wind chill is below freezing.
 - Air Quality – ozone/particle pollution affects.
 - Seafood Safety – don't understand methylmercury, fish sticks unsafe to eat.
 - Fire Weather – believe NWS picks prescribed burn locations, safety if trapped in smoky environment (wet vs. dry cloths)
 - Heat – crack the window helps ventilating, and will provide hyperthermia. It will not!

Listening Session:

Johnson: 15% of GDP spent on health care.

Jim Giraytys – Shenair Institute at James Madison – air quality institute – work with NWS in air quality areas. Partnership with U VA, Fairfax Comm. College. Valley Air Now – outreach program they are developing. Develop decision support tools to make decisions related to health care.

Joel Martin (U of OK) – read high level statement – NEXRAD Level II data reliability. To be discussed further at FOS meeting in afternoon.

Clay Anderson (WRC4 – TV, Washington, DC) – Air and seaborne illnesses – is NWS/NOAA working with private sector to develop information for the public related to homeland security concerns? Need to look into this.

Ian Miller (TWC) – Frustration with pace of completion of projects (VTEC). Is a process going to be put in place to assign resources more effectively to finish projects on time?

John Jones – we face challenges within the Federal government. FY06 budget - \$50M taken out of NOAA budget to go to DoJ. We do not have a boundless basin of resources. We need your help to find ways to meet these challenges. We are trying to take care of a wide spectrum of products. Dennis – we are frustrated too! Our staff are handling multiple projects and putting out fires.

John – we take a serious look at all our projects and resources based on budget. NWS sustained \$37M cut in FY05 in non-labor. Labor resources will remain unchanged.

Deirdre Jones (OST) – OSIP process – project out resources for new and existing process. Corporate process overseen by John Jones.

Rich Okulski – Is TWC using VTEC? Ian – yes, but implementation has been hard. Look at other options/vehicles like XML. Project has taken so long; we now have better ways to accomplish the project.

John Jones – we need to find better ways to communicate, and take a look at past decisions based on your input. Ed – Most Federal agencies are not agile. NWS considered a best practice federal agency. Since lack of agility and federal budget process, it makes it difficult to work together. Need to find ways to accommodate differences in timescales between us. Difficult to reallocate resources once allocated. Current NWS budget planning is for FY08!

Steve Smith (AccuWeather) – XML gets developed and completed before VTEC. Both ways to disseminate critical information. Why can't we work together on things like this? When is the message from meetings like this going to go to the WFOs? Can we redeploy staff and bend to meet the goals? Ed – we can do better with this. Institute approaches to make objections more visible. Need to have more of a culture of how our decisions and products affect the private sector enterprise. We are not doing a good enough job in looking at strategic decisions. Need to focus as a whole community on what is important. We welcome your challenges of our process and decisions.

Joel Martin – the SP of the NWS doesn't seem to mesh well with the DoC SP.

Steve S. – how do you make the linkage between what we are doing in HQ and meetings like this to the WFO?

Jim G. – Local communities/governments are very important. They are the decision makers on land usage, road decisions, etc. They are critical to the overall weather enterprise. They distribute information. We need some sort of relationship with them. They are currently not part of the weather enterprise. Ed – we do have good relationships with local EM community. We do need to expand relationships with zoning boards, planning commissions, etc. Jim – there are state and private sector resources which can be tapped to help NWS.

Paul Pisano (Fed. Highway Admin.) – Need advancements from public and private sector and work with transportation community to find integrated solutions to highway issues (travel deaths related to weather, etc.).

How does NWS make decisions on priorities? John – highest priorities are those related to our mission of protecting lives and property. Done on a case-by-case basis. Just recently submitted priorities for FY08-12.

Breakout Session Summary:

Glenn Austin – Digital Services:

- More and more folks using our data.
- They want more communication on our future plans.
- Efficiency of the data exchange is an issue. How do customers know when updated information is available? Is NDFD data going to be available via NOAAPort? Have new distribution methods (i.e., Unidata). Will evaluate best means to make available.
- People want GIS vision (action Bob Bunge). XML transition. Will it become operational (action Bob Bunge)

Mike Campbell – Observations/Surface Weather:

- Data quality is a big issue.
- Latency of observations – need higher resolution data.
- Discussion on Ridge radar display. Some suggestions made to make it better.
- Development of ISOS and its tie in the US system and GEOS.
- NERON update given.
- Need augmentation of ASOS data.

Mark Tew – Severe/Watch by County/Dissemination:

- VTEC key milestones were discussed, along with plans for Nov. 1 (9 products to be turned on).
- Strict assessments made. 97.1% for Nov 1 OT&E. Most errors due to post editing.
- Positive feedback on headline standardization.
- Warning by Polygon – we still warn by counties. Polygons are area of maximum threat. Dissemination is big limiting factor (via NWR and text).
- GIS also came up – what is NWS role?

Next Meeting – February 2, 2006 (during AMS meeting in Atlanta). NWS would like to try to nail day down for meetings here in Silver Spring. Open this up for an email discussion (second or third Thursday of June? – Action – John Simensky).

We will be building a website for the Partners. Will be done within the next few days. All meeting notes and presentations will be posted on the site.