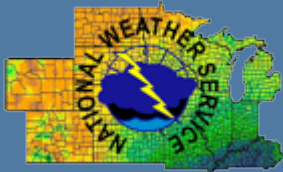




National Weather Service Central Region



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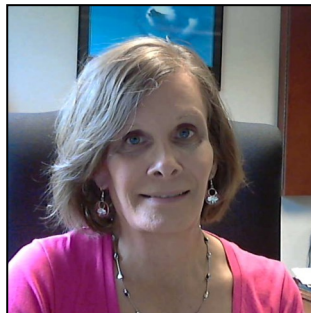
Diversity Central

Fall 2013

Volume 1, Issue 2

Message from the Director's Desk

By: Teri Schwein



(Source: Teri Schwein)

I am pleased to have the opportunity to act as your Regional Director and I look forward to doing my part to help increase awareness of diversity in the NWS family and recognize how valuable our diversity is towards delivering top notch services to our nation.

Our country is unique in that it was formed from the blending of many national-

ities, cultures, and religious beliefs into a diverse society where our freedoms allowed people to learn to live, work, and thrive together. The diversity of America was one of the strengths that make America what it is today. Today our national diversity continues to grow as we recognize the value of each person's contributions and abilities, regardless of their race, color, religion, gender, culture, physical handicap, sexual orientation or expression.

NWS employees with different qualifications, backgrounds, experiences and perspectives are critical to effective problem-solving on the job. Similarly, diversity breeds creativity

and innovation. Our success in meeting the needs of a highly diverse American public and reaching out to them effectively is heavily tied to the diversity of our own workforce.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. We recognize the accomplishments of men and women with disabilities who make significant contributions daily to the NWS and to their communities. These individuals are role models for all of us in overcoming their handicap to achieve both professional and personal successes in their lives. There is much we can learn from our disabled co-workers about personal strength and commitment.

NWS Grand Rapids Holds Annual Diversity Luncheon

By: Ernie Ostuno

The Grand Rapids office holds a diversity luncheon each Fall, usually between Columbus Day and Thanksgiving.

Past topics have included the ethnic composition of western Lower Michigan, Native American history and experience, and the history of European and

African American immigration into the area. Presentations are also based on LMS Diversity Training modules at both the diversity luncheon and at all hands meetings.

The 2013 diversity luncheon will be held in October and will include a presentation on Hispanics in

western Lower Michigan to coincide with National Hispanic Heritage Month, which is from September 15 through October 15.



NWS Bismarck Celebrates Arab-American Heritage Month

By: Tony Merriman

NWS Bismarck celebrated Arab-American Heritage Month in April by having an office luncheon complete with Middle Eastern cuisine. NWS Bismarck SOO Joshua Scheck, General Forecaster Janine Vining, and Meteorological Intern Michael Mathews are of Lebanese descent and graced the staff with authentic Arabic dishes.

The menu consisted of kibbi (lamb), tabouli (salad), labneh (yogurt cheese), samina (bread), hummus, zata oil, and stuffed cabbage. Other food items included pita bread,

stuffed cabbage, white rice, Mediterranean olives, baklava (pastry), and halvah (sweet confection).

After the meal, NWS Bismarck Intern Michael Mathews presented a brief history of Lebanon. He also provided a synopsis of how his family immigrated to the United States from Lebanon and eventually ended up in Kentucky. In addition, NWS Williston Met Tech Jim Assid shared his story of how his family emigrated from Syria to the United States in the early 1900s. His ancestors finally settled on a farm near Mitchell, South Dakota.



NWS Bismarck Met Intern Michael Mathews presenting an overview of Lebanese history
(Source: Tony Merriman)

NWS Riverton Celebrates National Military Appreciation Month

By: Peggy Peterson

Congress designated May as National Military Appreciation Month in 1999 to ensure the Nation was given the opportunity to publically demonstrate their appreciation for the sacrifices and successes made by our service members - past and present. National Military Appreciation Month started as a simple idea; to gather America around its military family to honor, remember, recognize, and appreciate those who have served and those now serving and to know the history behind it all.

On Monday, May 20, 2013, the Weather Forecast Office in Riverton, Wyoming, hosted a half-hour EEO presentation to recognize the veterans who served the United States. Ten out of twenty-three National Weather Service members in Riverton are United States military veterans. They include: Paul H. Skrbac, Ralph A. Estell, Charles M. Baker, Nancy D. Eustice, James T. Fahey, Trevor L. LaVoie, Curtis D. Lutz, Robert L. McFall, Arthur E. Meunier, and Richard A. Miller. We brought in a cake, decorations, and had



(Source: Peggy Peterson)

a brief presentation to honor and thank those who served our country. Each military veteran was presented an individual Certificate of Appreciation, which was signed by the WFO's MIC, Kevin Lynott. Decorations were displayed throughout the month of May in recognition of National Military Appreciation Month.

The Riverton WFO hopes to take the time to honor our veterans each May for National Military Appreciation Month. We feel this is an important way to demonstrate our thankfulness for our military men and women and their families who have sacrificed so much to take care of America.



Left to right: Nancy D. Eustice, Trevor L. LaVoie, Paul H. Skrbac, Curtis D. Lutz, and Robert L. McFall
(Source: Peggy Peterson)

Central Region Hosts a Regional Diversity Workshop

By: Jenifer Bowen

On June 12, 2013, the National Weather Service Training Center hosted the first annual Diversity Workshop in Kansas City. Participants from the National Weather Service, NOAA, and the DOC conducted panel discussions and presentations to discuss pertinent topics such as: family issues, gender biases, and methods to better serve our diverse customers.

Mike Hudson (Chief Operating Officer for NWS Central Region) and I conducted a panel discussion on the benefits and challenges of mentoring across generations. The panel participants included MICs from local offices as well as the senior management

of Central Region who offered their insights and experiences as mentors and mentees. The ultimate goal of the discussion was to develop strategies for an effective office mentoring program.

The second discussion that I conducted with Delyne Kirkham (NWS Elko, Nevada) focused on promoting and celebrating diversity at the local office and in the community. Hosting food drives or open houses to office cultural luncheons were just a few ideas mentioned. At the end of the day, participants were able to return to their respective offices prepared to enhance and challenge the office team.



NWS Instructor Dave Rowell discussing various aspects of diversity

(Source: Cathy Burgdorf)

NWS Des Moines Reaches out to Myanmar Refugees

By: Jim Lee

In August, I had the opportunity to give an outreach talk to a group of female refugees from Myanmar now living in central Iowa. The 20 attendees were members of four different Myanmar minority tribes: the Karen, Chin, Karenni and Kachin. They had spent many years, in some cases their entire lives, in refugee camps along the Myanmar/Thailand border after their families fled political and religious conflict in their homelands.

My presentation was filtered through

four different interpreters because the members of each tribe spoke a different language and none of them spoke English. It presented unique opportunities and challenges. For example, how does one explain NWS products to people who cannot read them? How would we expect these people to receive and interpret our warnings?

Please consider reaching out to the non-English speaking segment of your local population. For me it was a very interesting and rewarding experience.

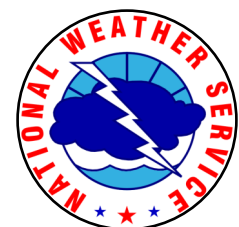


A translator explains NWS products

(Source: Jim Lee)



Group photo (Source: Jim Lee)





Young men checking out career possibilities with the National Weather Service
(Source: Peggy Peterson)



A medical demonstration
(Source: Peggy Peterson)

NWS Riverton to Participate in a Men-In-Science Conference

By: Peggy Peterson

The Riverton WFO has been actively planning our 2013 Men-in-Science conference. Men-in-Science conferences are designed to allow boys and young men in grades 7-12 to learn first-hand about careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) from accomplished professionals in these fields. Studies have shown that students in the United States are among the leaders in STEM courses, but by high school, they are almost last.

Part of the problem is that many students in junior high and high school lose interest in these courses. The goal of the Men-in-Science conference held every other year in October at Central Wyoming College in Riverton is to directly address this problem. These conferences are a cooperative effort

supported by local agencies, schools, and businesses. By providing positive role models in the STEM fields, students are encouraged to pursue higher education degrees and careers.

This year, the Men-in-Science conference is scheduled for Friday, October 11, 2013. The event is expected to host 15-20 various workshops where students can learn about and experience a segment of a STEM career. In past years, there have been nearly 300 students at the event. All participants are able to make connections with men who are accomplished in STEM-related occupations. These events have proven that they are one of the best ways to promote student aspirations and their achievements, showcasing that there are endless opportunities available for young men in the STEM fields.

NWS Topeka to Host a Women-In-Science Conference

By: Jenifer Bowen

In October, NWS Topeka will host an annual Women-In-Science event. Local 7th grade girls from around the Topeka area will gather at Washburn University to learn about the varying science careers possible for women to pursue. Chemists, biologists, and even forensic scientists will perform science-related experiments with the

girls in hopes to promote interest in their fields. Labs range from observing solar activity to investigating DNA. Women from the Topeka and Pleasant Hill forecast offices will be hosting a meteorology lab where girls will discover how lightning is generated. In addition, they will learn more about convection currents, fog, and clouds.



Generating Solar Power
(Source: NWS Topeka Website)



Building with Food
(Source: NWS Topeka Website)



Learning about Freshwater Mussels
(Source: NWS Topeka Website)



Tectonic Plate Demonstration
(Source: NWS Topeka Website)

Diversity Focal Point Spotlight

By: Ernie Ostuno



(Source: Ernie Ostuno)

I am originally from Connecticut. I began my NWS career in State College, Pennsylvania.

I was promoted to a Lead Forecaster in Grand Rapids in 1999 and have been the EEO/Diversity Focal Point here since 2002.

In my spare time I like to collect Petoskey stones along the beaches of Lake Michigan. A Petoskey stone is a rock and a fossil that is comprised of a fossilized coral. The stones are a result of glaciation, in which sheets of ice drew stones from the bedrock and grinded off

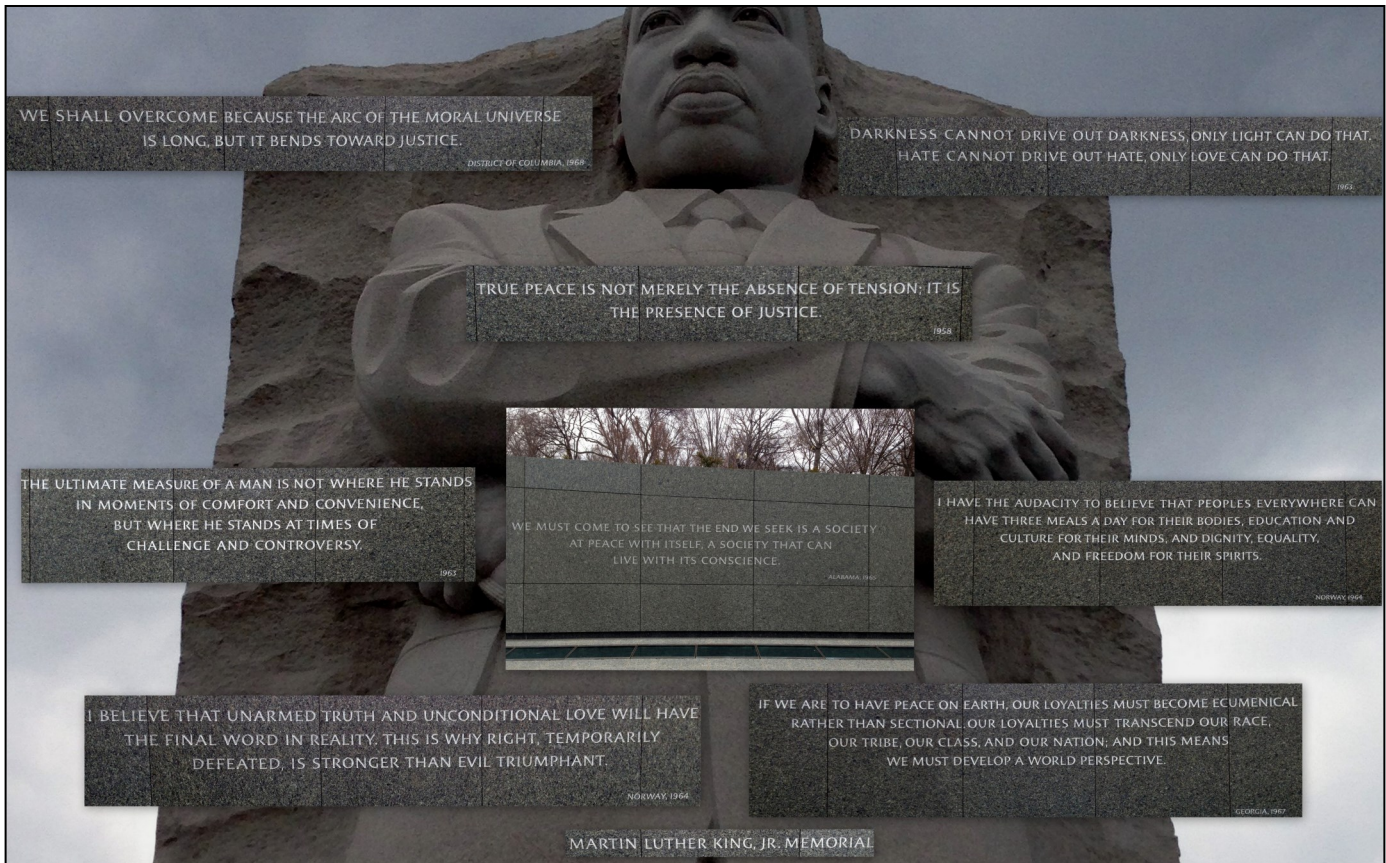
their rough edges. The stones were then deposited in the northwestern portions of Michigan's lower peninsula as the glacier retreated north.

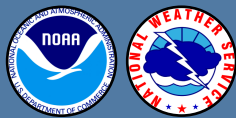
Along with my son (pictured left with me), we also like to visit old growth forest remnants, observe the stars, planets, and meteors.



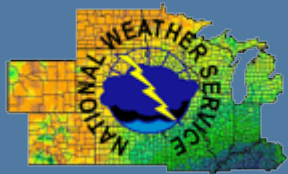
Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Collage

By: John Eise





National Weather Service Central Region



Fall 2013
Diversity Central Team

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Weather-Ready Nation:
Saving Lives and Livelihoods

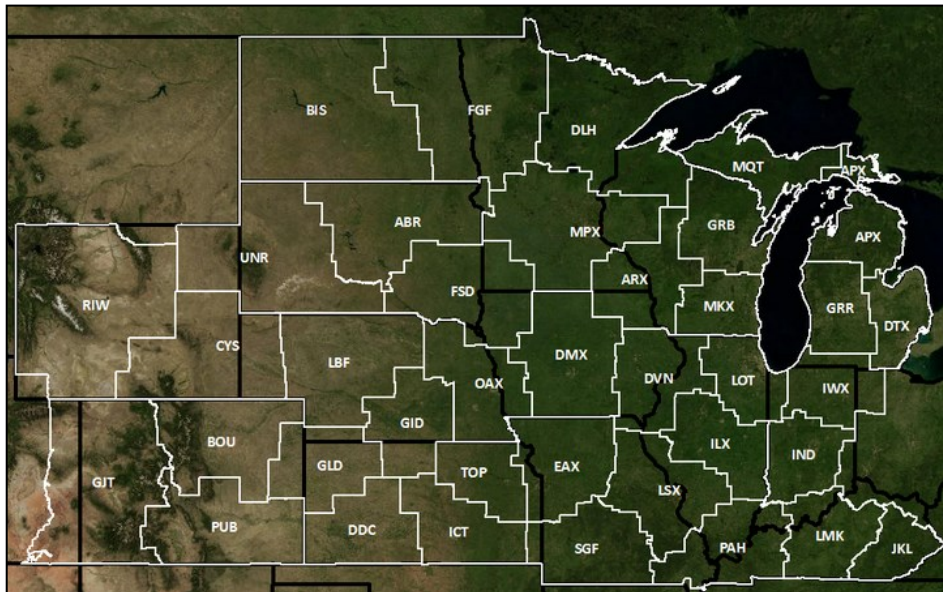
Building a Weather-Ready Nation

National Weather Service Mission Statement:

The National Weather Service (NWS) provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS data and products form a national information database and infrastructure which can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community.

Brief National Weather Service History:

The National Weather Service has its beginnings in the early history of the United States. Weather has always been important to the citizenry of this country, and this was especially true during the 17th and 18th centuries. The beginning of the National Weather Service we know today started on February 9th, 1870, when President Ulysses S. Grant signed a joint resolution of Congress authorizing the Secretary of War to establish a national weather service.



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