



NATIONAL  
WEATHER SERVICE  
CENTRAL REGION



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# Diversity Central

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## Message from the Director's Desk

By: Teri Schwein



**Teri Schwein**

At long last April has arrived, after what seemed to me to be an eternity of ice, snow, and frigid cold. I for one am not a winter person; I love the sun, t-shirt, and flip-flops season. But I have friends that see things from a totally different perspective from me; they appreciate the beauty of snowflakes tumbling through the air and ice crystal art forming on their windows. And then I have family members that point to the

vivid colors of autumn or the rebirth of life in the spring as the most beautiful seasons of the year. Summer is probably always going to be the season I prefer the most, but in sharing in their perspectives and experiences, my friends and family make the entire year more enjoyable and complete by helping me appreciate the beauty of what each season has to offer.

So it is with the diversity that in part defines us as human beings. Each of us brings a different perspective and experience to the human experience, providing the opportunity to learn from each other and experience fuller and richer lives as a result. Similarly in the workplace, the life-saving services we provide are more accurate and useful to

our customers when produced as a collective effort of people with a diverse set of perspectives, experiences, expertise, and talents. There is not one of us that could do this important work alone.

So as we celebrate the arrival of spring, this would be a good time to also recognize and appreciate what each person in your office does to contribute to your office's overall success and quality of work life. Whether meteorologists, hydrologists, HMTs, ETs, administrative staff, technicians, or engineers; each of us has an important role in contributing to collective success of the NWS mission, and in the process, enriching each other's work lives through a diversity of personality, experience, insight, and perspective.

## NWS Grand Rapids Celebrates Hispanic Heritage

By: Ernie Ostuno

On March 12, WFO Grand Rapids held its annual diversity luncheon. The event included a presentation on "The Hispanic Presence in West Michigan". This presentation was part of a series based on the Grand Rapids Public Museum display called "The People of This Place". About ten people attended this year's event, which featured Mexican food from Real Arriero, a local restaurant.

Past years' topics included the history and influence of Native Americans and early patterns of European immigration into west Michigan.



**NWS Grand Rapids Hispanic Heritage Flyer**



(Source: Wikipedia)

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholar Day started within the NWS in the mid-1980s at the Topeka, KS weather forecast office. The La Crosse NWS office participates every year by inviting area high schools to nominate students to spend a day in our office.**



## NWS La Crosse Holds Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar Day

By: Rod Swerman

On Thursday January 23, 2014, WFO La Crosse held its 18<sup>th</sup> annual, and again very successful, Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar Day. We hosted four students from four area high schools this year, three young women and one young man, all interested in potential science careers. One of the young women was particularly interested in meteorology, and plans to attend the University of North Dakota to major in meteorology there.

During their day with us, the students were introduced to the various mission-supporting functions of the NWS. They experienced much of what we do through discussion, demonstration, and hands-on activities. They received exposure to the NWS data acquisition (including Coop and WSR-88D) and electronics programs.



**NWS La Crosse 2014 MLK scholars. From L to R: Rod Swerman (Forecaster, EEO FP), Nich Urich (La Crosse Aquinas HS), Sylvia Lechnir (La Crescent HS), Shelby Zillmer (Onalaska Luther HS), Carrie Urbanek (Cashton HS), Glenn Lussyk (MIC)**



**SH Mike Welvaert covers the hydrology program and river forecasting.**

They learned about our public interface (including NWR, the internet, and social media) and how we work with our partners. They got a good look at our primary forecasting technologies via AWIPS II. A discussion session on science careers was also held near the end of their visit, including information on college course programs, women in science, and time for questions.

We again received very good feedback from the students (and some of their teachers) following their day with us, and we believe our staff benefits as well from having these young people with us for the day. A party-sub lunch with cookies and sodas was held in their honor, providing time for them to relax and socialize with all the staff members.



**ESA Mike Struver talks about the electronics program and NWS La Crosse.**



**SOO Dan Baumgardt discusses how science is used in the forecast process.**

## NWS Hastings Participates in No Shave November

By: Julia Berg

NWS Hastings participated in No Shave November. Several of the guys in the office chose not to shave. At the end of the month, a panel of judges chose Vic Schoenhals as the winner. Vic was able to give over \$100 to his favorite charity.

To celebrate the end of No Shave November, the office held a “lumberjack breakfast” with flap jacks, biscuits and gravy, and a host of other breakfast items. The event was well attended. Each person was invited to dress like a lumberjack.



Vic Before



Vic After



NWS Hastings celebrates Vic's accomplishment

## NWS Hastings Participates in Disability Awareness

By: Julia Berg



Briona Saltzman sporting ear plugs

Briona Saltzman and Marla Doxey graciously agreed to participate in Disability Awareness Days at the NWS in Hastings, Nebraska. Each of the participants chose a day and a disability.

In learning what a partial hearing loss was like, Briona wore ear plugs in one or both ears for about 95% of the

day. “I found myself struggling to understand or comprehend certain people. I had to ask people to repeat themselves and felt left out of the conversation at times,” said Briona. She also shied away from answering phones because she knew that she would not be able to understand the person on the other end of the line. Others in the office were also affected by her partial disability. Others had to answer the phone and noticed that talking to Briona took a little more effort to make sure that she understood what was being said. An upside to the exercise was that the normally “noisy” office atmosphere was blocked out, but for a person used to the background noises, “there was an overwhelming sense of silence.”

Marla chose to wear an eye patch. Marla found that judging distance and location was a bit of a challenge. After running into the desk a couple of times, Marla was happy to be able to remove the eye patch.



Marla Doxey with an eye patch

## Annual Conference on Diversity and Inclusion to be held in Kansas City

By: Marie Hoffpauer

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on Diversity and Inclusion “Illumination” will take place on April 23, 2014 for employees in the Kansas City metro area. This conference is sponsored by the NWS Training Center, the Aviation Weather Center, and NWS Central Region Headquarters. Presenters at the conference will host sessions in many areas of diversity to include:

**Family and Work Issues:** A **Discussion Panel** on current family issues and their impact on employees and the organization. It is a fact that what transpires at home and with families affects performance on the job. This session will identify key issues that families (nuclear families, single-parents, extended families, couples without children, etc.) face that do impact an employee's work experience and performance. The goal of the session would not be to simply identify home issues as work issues, but to find solutions to mitigate conflicts. Participants in this session may want to further the discussion in the gender trends session.

**Effective Diversity Programs:** A **Round-table discussion** to share and gather ideas for diversity programs that work well. Largely a brain-storming session, this is a free form session designed for open discussion of means to highlight positive aspects of diversity and inclusion. Discussion will include local ‘marketing of diversity’, diversity, and inclusion awareness activities.

**Talking about my generation:** A **Discussion Panel** about our generational mixed workforce; generational stereotypes, generational traits, and how to leverage them.

**Whiteface Film:** A **Film** that looks at stereotypes and ‘isms’ from a wry perspective; after the film the floor will be open for comments.

**MBTI - A Working Session** that defines MBTI, its use in the workplace, and its place as a diversity issue- and solution

**Gender Armistice:** a **Presentation** concerning the current state of gender ‘parity’ – and shifting the focus of

‘The battle of the sexes’ away from pitting one sex against the other. This presentation will discuss the latest trends in gender issues for both women *and* men. The goal of this session is to raise awareness of the importance of a multi-sided approach to gender issues. Q&A will follow.

**Personal Expression:** A **Discussion Panel** on the topics of body art (piercings, tattoos, hair color, etc.) and attire – and prejudices thereof in the workplace.

**Q&A on GLBTQ/GID:** A **Briefing** on GLBTQ issues (with special emphasis on Gender Identity Disorder) – followed by an open **Q&A** session.

**Communications in Diverse Teams:** A **Working session** on how to improve personal and organizational communication among a diverse workforce. A homogenous work group is an extremely rare commodity, so much so that in all practicality, any group ought to be considered ‘diverse’. This diversity brings into play differences that affect both work performance and work relationships – and one difference in particular – personal communications preferences. The goal of this session is to discuss ways mitigate communications dissonance between team members.

**Recruitment and Retention:** A **Discussion Panel** on recruiting a diverse workforce {and benefit thereof}, blending diverse employees into the organization, and retention. It should be understood that a diverse workforce is the most effective workforce. Organizations should be able to bring the best to our work force, and be reflective (in terms of diversity) of the whole of their pool of qualified potential applicants; and especially the underrepresented (minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.). The goal of the session is two-fold – 1: identify what constitutes a ‘diverse’ appropriate workforce, 2: identify steps to retain the ‘best’ workforce possible.

**Sizing Them Up:** A **Discussion Panel** on body image, weight health, obesity, and body discrimination in the workplace.



## A Strategy for Managing Midnight Shifts

By: Jason Anglin

Having worked midnight shifts for the NWS and previous employment for more than five years now, the main thing I have learned is listen to your body and develop a routine that works for you.

A typical schedule will have at least a day off prior to the start of these overnight shifts. For me, I'm not a fan of staying up all night on days that aren't required, and I like to preserve that day off if possible. I may stay up late the night before starting an overnight, but the more important thing is getting a good night's rest that night before. If I feel like I still need more rest before starting that first shift, I'll also take a several hour nap, just to get refreshed. This strategy doesn't fully eliminate tiredness on that first overnight, but does provide enough rest, and sets up for a good day's sleep after that first shift.

After a midnight shift, I like to unwind afterwards for some time. I'll run some errands, get things done at home, or in most cases, relax on the couch. Once I do hit that wall, I'll have a light breakfast. The light breakfast is another personal preference. It's more to eliminate anything that will wake you up, and waking up hungry is one of the worst things in my opinion.

The key to a good daytime sleep is to block as much light as possible. It can be accomplished by hanging special curtains, or just by hanging up a blanket. Either way, a person's body is use to sleeping in darkness, and sleeping during the day after a midnight shift should be no different. Ideally I prefer six to eight hours of sleep at one time. There is always an option for a nap later, but once I am awake I try to stay up and not fall into

a deep sleep again.

The last obstacle for midnight shifts is what to do after the last overnight shift, once all of them have been worked. I'll usually take a 4-hour nap after my last mid. To me that is just enough to get refreshed, but also enough to be tired to fall back asleep that night.

Midnight shifts are generally very manageable if you listen to your body and set up a routine that works best for you.

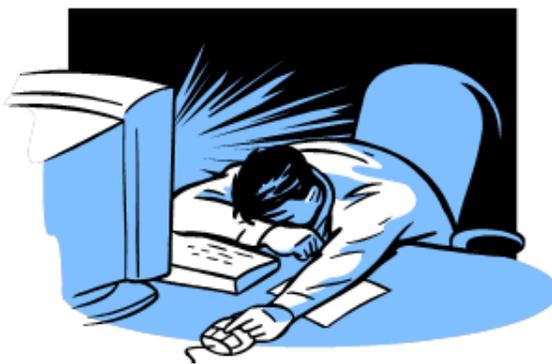


An AWIPS Greeting

## Another Strategy for Managing Midnight Shifts

By: Brad Temeyer

With shift work having far reaching effects into an individual's social and physical health, it is important to know what can be done to reduce or eliminate the harmful effects. In order to help prepare for the transition of one shift to another, there are several things I have personally tried in the past with varying degrees of success.



Initially, I tried taking Melatonin, a natural sleep aid, but my body seemed to develop a tolerance and over time and became less effective. Thereafter, I switched to a combination of regular exercise and taking Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), though I only take the sleep aid when needed. This has seemed to work fairly well for me, but like anything, the success a particular method will vary from person to person.

Research has also suggested various amounts of light and preparation (altering schedules, routines, etc.) can also help reduce the effects of shift work. Given the optimal solution can vary amongst individuals, having flexibility and the ability to try different methods may allow you to discover which recommendation(s) work best for you.



## NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CENTRAL REGION



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**Weather-Ready Nation!**  
Saving Lives and Livelihoods

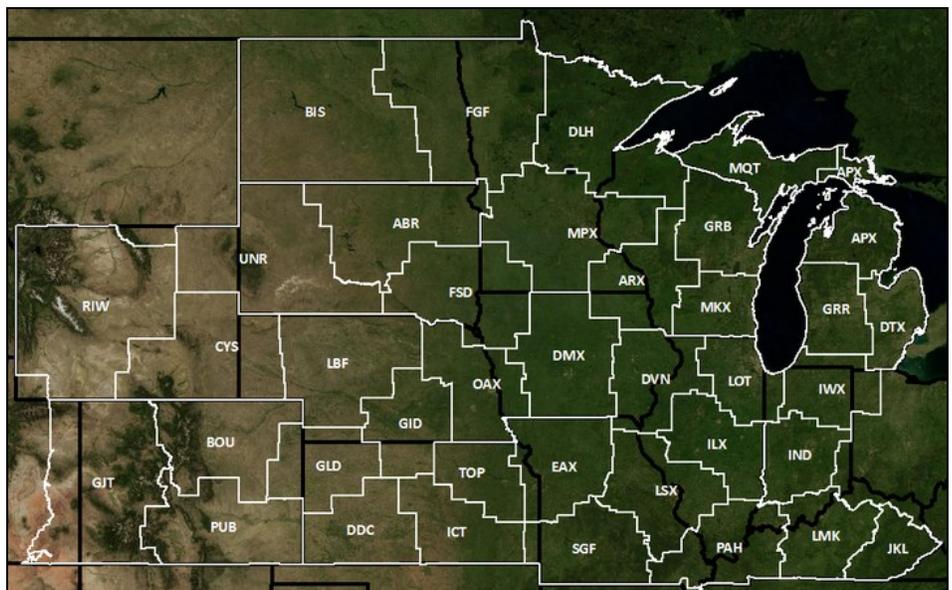
## Building a Weather-Ready Nation

### 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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