



## NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE MELBOURNE RECEIVES COMMERCE DEPARTMENT BRONZE AWARD



The U.S. Department of Commerce awarded its Bronze Medal to the NOAA **National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast Office in Melbourne, FL** for outstanding service to the nation's space program. An agency of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Weather Service has 121 Weather Forecast Offices (WFO) in the U.S. Among those offices, WFO Melbourne has the unique responsibility of providing forecasts critical to the deployment of national space assets.

The office supports both the U.S. Air Force 45th Weather Squadron, which provides forecasts for pre-launch and launch operations; and, the National Weather Service Spaceflight Meteorology Group, which is responsible for forecasts at landing and recovery sites. Since these agencies depend on the office for crucial radar information and technical forecast data, WFO Melbourne has one of the most challenging and critical weather missions in the National Weather Service.

The staff has provided essential "behind-the-scenes" support for every Space Shuttle mission since 1992. At stake, is the safety of the astronauts, the billions of dollars worth of space vehicle and payload hardware and crucial elements of America's national defense - as well as the successful launching of NOAA's Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites (GOES).

The Melbourne office also shelters and supports space weather forecast operations for Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral when those sites are evacuated during hurricane threats.

The award was presented by acting NOAA Administrator Scott Gudes on November 29 in a ceremony at the University of Maryland Conference Center in College Park, Md. The Commerce Department grants the Bronze Medal to National Weather Service offices and employees who have made outstanding or significant contributions in support of the overall departmental goals that serve the nation.