

# Instructions for Web Graphicasts (Weather-at-a-Glance)

You may have noticed a new look to the front page of our website. Rather than showing the local point and click map right at the top, the graphicast is now highlighted. Unlike previous graphicasts, which were a single map graphic that was linked as a Weather Story, primarily for the short term (today and/or tonight), the new graphicast is more flexible. We eventually plan to provide continuous updates, as the weather situation dictates, day and night.

## Why Change?

In 2008, the NWS field office serving the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex experimented with a new method to show end users surfing to their web site a quick glance at the weather. The National Weather Service in Norman, Oklahoma had also been experimenting with multiple graphics, as well as banner headlines, for several years. In each case, customer feedback was overwhelmingly positive. While the point and click forecast and hazards map remains a very important aspect for providing detailed, 7 day forecast information, the feedback indicated that a quick glance at the most critical weather for the day, week, weekend, etc., was helpful to provide an overview of the situation without having to initially sift through 7 days of icons and text.

## What's New

Figure 1 is a screen capture of the front page, with instructions on how to retrieve more information. For a quick glance at upcoming weather conditions, click on any blue tab. Each graphic will be titled appropriately. We will provide at least two graphics every day. Typically, these will be "Today" and "Tonight" or "Tonight" and "Next Day (named)". Often, we will provide additional graphics, such as weekend outlooks starting around midweek, holiday outlooks, and special situations (such as rainfall, cold, thunderstorm, local tropical cyclones, etc.). There may also be times when we choose to animate several graphics to tell a story for an upcoming weather event.

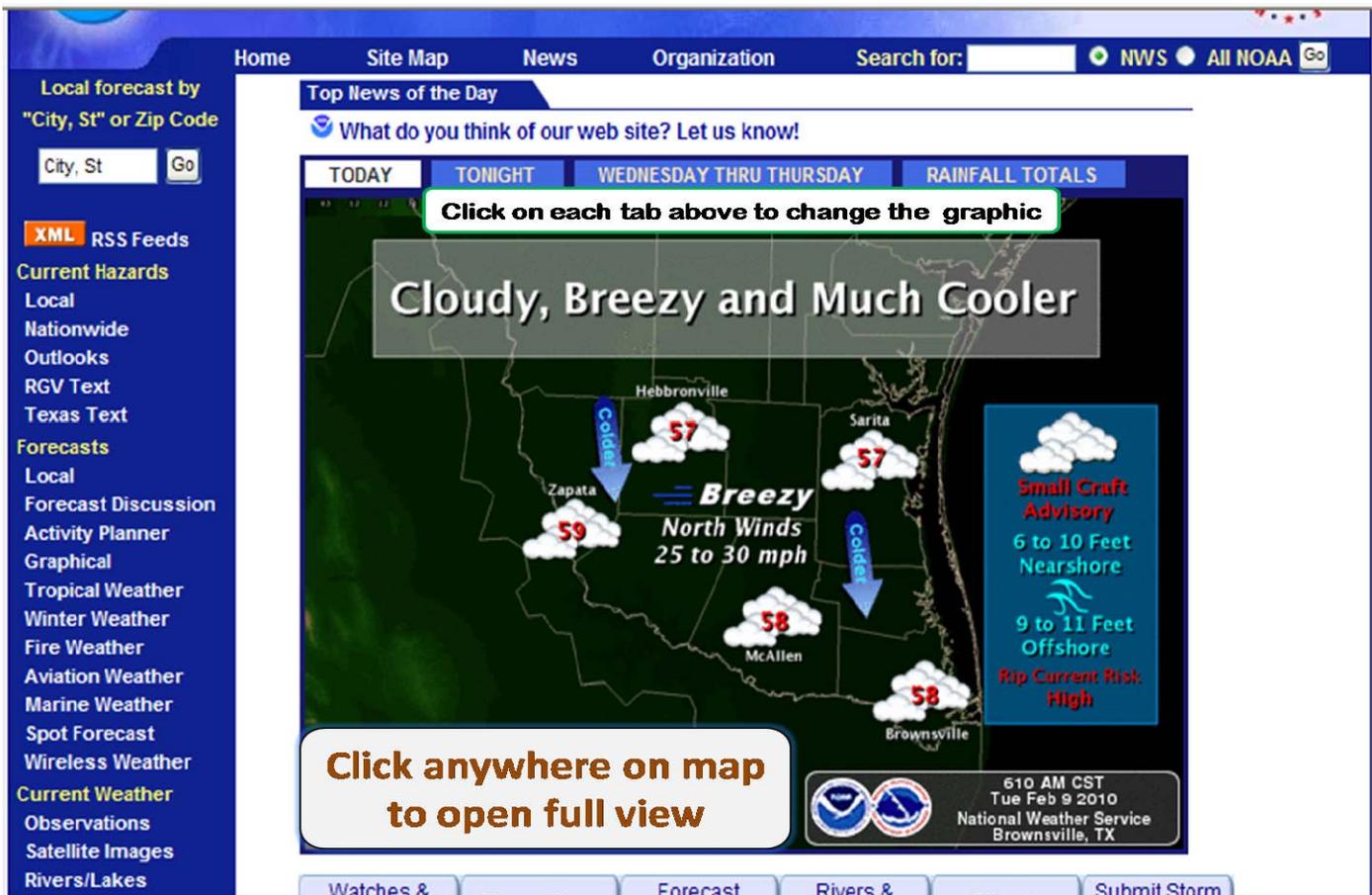


Figure 1. Screen Capture of the New NWS Brownsville home page, with graphicasts highlighted.

## How to Use

Once you click on the front page graphic (no matter which tab you choose), a new page will open up (Figure 2). This page will contain all the graphics in the tabs shown on the front page. The main graphic will be that from the tab you clicked on last. Many graphics will show only the most critical text to describe the weather situation at a glance. Additional details, describing the weather story in one or two additional paragraphs, will be provided in the white space below the main graphic. Clicking on the main graphic on this page will provide a full-size image, which can be saved for your own personal use and distribution.

The screenshot shows a web page for Brownsville, TX, with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Home', 'Site Map', 'News', 'Organization', and a search field. A left sidebar lists various weather services like 'Local forecast by City, St or Zip Code', 'XML RSS Feeds', 'Current Hazards', and 'Forecasts'. The main content area features a large weather graphic titled 'Today' with the text 'Cloudy, Breezy and Much Cooler'. This graphic includes a map of the region with temperature readings (e.g., 57, 58) and wind information ('Breezy North Winds 25 to 30 mph'). A blue box on the right of the main graphic contains a 'Small Craft Advisory' with details: '6 to 10 Feet Nearshore' and '9 to 11 Feet Offshore' with a 'Rip Current Risk High'. Below the main graphic is a text box with a red arrow pointing to it, containing the text: 'As forecast, the cold front pushed through deep south Texas and off the lower coast overnight. Now, much cooler temperatures are being ushered into the region on strong north winds. Temperatures will hover in the 50s all day and north winds between 20 and 25 mph will continue through the morning hours before decreasing a bit this afternoon. Skies will remain cloudy but rainfall should remain south of the Rio Grande River, in northern Mexico.' To the right of the main graphic are three smaller weather graphics: 'Today' (Cloudy, Breezy and Much Cooler), 'Tonight' (Cloudy and Cold Tonight), and 'Wednesday thru Thursday' (COLD AND DAMP). At the bottom right is a 'Rainfall Totals' graphic showing a map with rainfall amounts (0.50", 1.00", 1.50"). A white box with a red border and the text 'Click again for full size graphic only' is overlaid on the main graphic. A red arrow points from this box to the text box below. Blue arrows point from the text box to the 'Today', 'Tonight', and 'Wednesday thru Thursday' graphics.

**Click again for full size graphic only**

As forecast, the cold front pushed through deep south Texas and off the lower coast overnight. Now, much cooler temperatures are being ushered into the region on strong north winds. Temperatures will hover in the 50s all day and north winds between 20 and 25 mph will continue through the morning hours before decreasing a bit this afternoon. Skies will remain cloudy but rainfall should remain south of the Rio Grande River, in northern Mexico.

- Descriptive Text "Blog" Type Information
- Clicking graphics at right will replace the graphic above with the one chosen. These also may include descriptive text "blog".

Figure 2. Graphicast ("weather at a glance") web page. This appears when the main graphic is clicked on the front page.

## Where Has Point/Click Map Gone?

Not very far. Figure 3 is a screen capture of the front page, including the point/click and hazard map, now moved below the graphiccast. What if hazardous weather is expected or underway? Not to worry. We will do our best to highlight the area of concern in the graphic, which can lead you to scroll down to the point/click and hazard map, or continue a quick glance at the weather situation by viewing additional graphics and a brief text summary simply by clicking on the graphic.

Local forecast by "City, St" or Zip Code

City, St  Go

XML RSS Feeds

Current Hazards

- Local
- Nationwide
- Outlooks
- RGV Text
- Texas Text

Forecasts

- Local
- Forecast Discussion
- Activity Planner
- Graphical
- Tropical Weather
- Winter Weather
- Fire Weather
- Aviation Weather
- Marine Weather
- Spot Forecast
- Wireless Weather

Current Weather

- Observations
- Satellite Images
- Rivers/Lakes
- Rainfall Estimates
- Map Observations
- RGV Drought
- Graphiccasts
- Data Program

Radar Imagery

- Nationwide
- Brownsville
- Corpus Christi
- Southern Plains
- Experimental

Climate

- Local
- National
- More...

Weather Safety

- Get Prepared
- Weather Radio
- SKYWARN
- Education

Home Site Map News Organization Search for:  NWS All NOAA

Top News of the Day

What do you think of our web site? Let us know!

TODAY TONIGHT WEDNESDAY THRU THURSDAY RAINFALL TOTALS

**Cloudy, Breezy and Much Cooler**

Hebbronville 57

Sarita 57

Zapata 59

McAllen 58

Brownsville 58

**Breezy North Winds 25 to 30 mph**

Small Craft Advisory

- 6 to 10 Feet Nearshore
- 9 to 11 Feet Offshore
- Rip Current Risk High

**Graphiccast**

6:10 AM CST Tue Feb 9 2010 National Weather Service Brownsville, TX

Watches & Warnings Observations Forecast Graphics Rivers & Lakes Climate Submit Storm Report

Click on the map below for the latest forecast.

Read watches, warnings & advisories

Zoom Out

Small Craft Advisory

Special Weather Statement

Hazardous Weather Outlook

**Point/Click and Hazard Map**

Scroll Down As Needed

Figure 3. NWS Brownsville Front page, showing location of point/click and hazard map now moved down the web page. Scrolling may be needed at lower screen resolution to display the point/click and hazard map.

We hope you like our initial offering of graphical weather at a glance for Deep South Texas. In time, we plan to design a number of maps to best suit user needs, but we are welcome to any ideas! Please send your comments to [sr-bro-webmaster@noaa.gov](mailto:sr-bro-webmaster@noaa.gov) and we will do our best to incorporate suggested changes!