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IO Staff Changes

Building a Weather Ready Region

This newsletter is produced by the National Weather Service office in Dodge City, KS. Comments & suggestions can be sent to: w-ddc.webmaster@noaa.gov



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2016 SEVERE WEATHER SUMMARY

By Jeff Hutton, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

2016 started out warm and dry with temperatures much above normal for January through March. In fact, it was the 10th warmest start to the year at Dodge City based on 141 years of record keeping! Some locations across the area on February 18th warmed into

and rapidly advance towards Medicine Lodge. Luckily a cold front followed and pushed the fire southeast as the fire reached the edge of town. Nearly 400,000 acres of land burned before the fire was finally out. As much as four inches of snow fell on the fire area early on Easter Sunday and helped in efforts to completely contain the fire.

the lower 90s. This warm and dry weather set the stage for potential very active fire growth across the



change in the weather pattern brought active weather to Kanas in April. Widespread heavy

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parched south central and the southwest part of Kansas. Unfortunately, the worst-case scenario was realized on March 22 and 23. A fire started in northern Oklahoma late on the 22nd and the fire spread rapidly into Comanche and Barber Counties during the night. During the following day a dry line with very strong west winds movedthrough causing the fire to shift rainfall occurred, especially on April 16 & 17th with many locations receiving more than four inches of rain. Parts of Ellis County received as much as nine inches of rain from this event. The impact of the excessive rainfall across a large area of Kansas was extremely great in that the rains resulted in heavy vegetation growth and subsequent evapotranspiration that favored

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2016 SEVERE WEATHER SUMMARY CONTINUED

continuation of precipitation through the summer season. This moisture also saved the winter wheat crop in western Kansas. Yields were greater than ever reported in many areas! A total of 8.08 inches of rain fell in Dodge City in April. This was the wettest April on record and broke the previous record by 1.82 inches! Unfortunately, there was flooding at many locations but this might have been a small price to pay.

The first tornadoes of the year occurred on 15 April when a supercell moved from the Oklahoma Panhandle into Morton County and produced an EF1 tornado northeast of Elkhart and an EF0 tornado northwest of Rolla.

A total of 34 tornadoes occurred on 24 May, including five EF3 tornadoes. One tornado that moved just west of Dodge City was observed by a research team using "Doppler On Wheels", and wind speeds of just over 200 mph were measured with brief spin-ups in the tornado vortex!

Dodge City was extremely fortunate in that many of these potentially violent tornadoes skirted the city to the west and north! There was still significant damage in the area with two injuries reported.

In addition, an unusual tornado during this outbreak was an anticyclonic EF2 tornado that occurred in Edwards County. That tornado tracked over five miles.

In July, of all months, another tornadic event unfolded in far western Kansas. On 15 July, an unusually strong tornado occurred east of Syracuse. Although it did only EF1 damage, it visually appeared to be much, much stronger. This tornado was well documented by a storm chaser and was a significant tornado from a large supercell thunderstorm for a summer month.



The upper level flow during the summer favored southwest winds aloft with frequent invasions of high level tropical plumes originating in the south Pacific. Widespread heavy rainfall returned in July, when Dodge City received 5.3 inches of rain. Although this was not a record, it was 2.22 inches above average for the month. Above average rainfall continued through August, but September, October, and November were dry. The exception was along I-70 where rains continued into September. Very heavy rainfall early on September 4th resulted in considerable flooding in northern Ellis County.

Anomalous warmth returned in October. The average temperature for October was seven degrees above climatology, and October was the fourth warmest on record at Dodge City. The temperature rose to 101 in Dodge City and 100 in Garden City on October 17th. This was the only day on record in October during which the temperature reached or exceeded 100 degrees at both sites. The max temperature broke the previous record high for the month of October. Records in Dodge City extend back to 1874. Ashland reached a record high of 102 which was the

warmest temperature observed so late in the season for any location in the state of Kansas.

The warm weather continued into November. The average temperature for November was 6.7 degrees above climatology, making Novem[.] ber the third warmest on record. The temperature reached 87 in Dodge City on 16 November and broke the previous record by eight degrees. This was the warmest temperature observed so late in the season. As such, the year 2016 has the distinction of having the warmest high temperature so early on record and the warmest high temperature so late in the season. For the first eleven months of the year, 2016 was the sixth warmest on record.

The grand finale occurred Christmas Day when an unprecedented six tornadoes occurred across the local area. The early morning started with a VERY high amount of surface moisture as dew point temperatures rose to around 60 degrees. This is unheard of for late December in southwest Kansas! A line of thunderstorms marched across the area during the mid-morning hours and along the leading edge there were brief spin-ups. Five of the tornadoes caused minor damage!



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2016 SEVERE WEATHER SUMMARY CONTINUED

Even though the end of 2016 was generally very dry, some areas (thanks to heavy spring and summer rains) ended up with a yearly precipitation total that was nearly double what is normal! A small area in southern Gray County had nearly 45 inches! It was so wet and humid that corn was rotting in the husk before it could be harvested!

The precipitation map for 2016 shows that some areas were excessively wet, while other locations that were fairly close by actually had below normal rainfall!



NWS Dodge City Needs YOUR Help!

Community Collaberative Rain, Hail and Snow Network

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CoCoRaHS is a unique opportunity for you to get involved in a non-profit, community based network of volunteers working together to provide precipitation

measurements (rain, hail and snow). Through training and education, use of low-cost measuring tools, and utilizing an interactive website you can provide daily precipitation measurements direct to your local NWS. Accurate high-quality precipitation data is used by a plethora of national and local agencies for situations ranging from water resource analyses, severe storm warnings, and simple comparison. http://www.cocorahs.org

Become a Storm Spotter!

The National Weather Service in Dodge City is always looking to add storm spotters to our spotter network. A spotter's job is easy! During or after a storm leaves the area

that your home is located, we may call you to verify weather conditions. Weather condition examples include the size of hail, wind speed estimation, or if you received any damage. To sign up, we just need your name, address and home phone number. You pick the timeframe which we can call your home. Your personal information is never shared with outside parties. Sign up today with any NWS employee, or by calling 1-800-824-9943 or 620-225-6514. *

UNDERSTANDING WHEN SEVERE WEATHER OCCURS

Severe weather season is upon us here—a time of year that most of us associate with spring and early summer. The National Weather Service defines severe thunderstorms as storms that are capable of producing hail that is an inch or larger, or wind gusts of 58 mph or more. Of course, a thunderstorm is automatically classified as severe if it produces a tornado. But exactly when does severe weather season spike in our region? And when could we expect, say, a hail event vs. a tornado event? One of our meteorologists, Jonathan Finch, took the time to figure out some of these answers.

Jonathan plotted days with hail 1.75" or greater from 1955-2012 AND days with tornadoes at least EF2 rating from 1877-2012 to get a climatological look at when, and how often, hail and tornado events occur in our region. While the threshold for a severe storm starts



at 1" size hail and EF0 tornadoes, this study still provides a good look at severe climatology for Southwest Kansas. His results are graphed below. Following are highlights of his study.

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

- The potential for severe thunderstorms increases in late March/Early April.
- Tornado occurrences peak from early to late May.
- After May, the occurrence of hail storms increases until mid-June.
- Tornado and hail events start to decrease in late June.
- Late June through September, SW Kansas can get hail storms, but the chances of tornadoes occurring are low.
- There are typically very few severe thunderstorms in Southwest Kansas from late November through early March. \Rightarrow



Days with hail 1.75" or greater (1955-2012) & Days with Tornadoes at least F2 (1877-2012)

PREPARING FOR SEVERE WEATHER

Have a plan! Fill out this page and place on your fridge or other highly visible area

Severe Weather Safety Worksheet



Take shelter immediately if a Tornado Warning is issued for your area. The safest places in your home are underground and under a sturdy object, like the stairwell. If you don't have a basement, go to a bathroom or small closet on the lowest floor and as far away from windows and outside walls as possible. If you are in a mobile home, evacuate to a substantial structure. The designated tornado shelter for our home is:

Conduct a Tornado Drill

Pick a day each year that you and your family will remember and conduct a drill. It's easy and only takes a few minutes. What day will you conduct your annual tornado drill?

<u>When To Go For Safety</u>

The sooner you know bad weather is coming, the sooner you'll be ready to take action.

- 1. Each morning, check out the day/week's forecasts and note any mention of severe weather potential. (Below we list several ways to look up the weather forecast.)
- 2. Look or listen for follow-up information during the course of the day.
- 3. Use good judgement! If threatening clouds are moving in, it's probably time to prepare for action.

Where to get NWS Forecasts Ahead of Severe Weather





NOAA Weather Radio



mobile.weather.gov or 620-225-6514

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Make Sure You Know the Difference!

The National Weather Service uses the words 'watch" and "warning" to alert you of dangerous weather. Understanding these terms and knowing how to react can be a life saver during severe weather.

Watch

Conditions favorable for severe weather. Issued a few to several hours in advance. Prepare to take action if needed.

Warning

Severe Weather is occurring or immanent. Issued 15-45 minutes in advance. Take action **NOW**!

Where to Receive Weather Warning Information

When disaster strikes, you may have only a short time to make what might be a life or death decision. Therefore, it's crucial that you have multiple ways to receive weather warning information.

- NOAA Weather Radio (NWR): NWR is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. NWR can provide an important back up source of weather warnings when power is out and at night when you may be sleeping.
- **TV and Radio:** They routinely broadcast watches and warnings issued by the NWS.
- Emergency Notification via Mobile Device & Text Alerts: Wireless Emergency Alerts & Text Alerts come directly to your phone to warn you when weather threatens.
- **Outdoor Sirens:** Outdoor sirens are designed to alert individuals who are outdoors.

GREENSBURG TORNADO — 10 YEARS LATER

By Jeff Hutton, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

0n May 4, 2007 an enormous tornado nearly wiped out the entire town of Greensburg, Kan., causing EF5 damage. It was the strongest recorded tornado since the May 3, 1999 Moore/Oklahoma City tornado. Despite a tornado warning with a lead time of 26 minutes, the town of approximately 1500 persons still lost 11 lives. Some of those fatalities were even in basements that unfortunately were filled with a tremendous amount of debris. Remarkably, the tornado took down the town's only water tower, which also stood above the infamous "hand dug" well and meteorite. The tornado also destroyed a dozen homes and a church that were south of town in rural Kiowa County.





The first warning for the tornado that eventually went through Greensburg was issued at 855 PM on that May evening back in 2007. The first warning specifically mentioning the town was issued at 919 PM. The tornado entered the south side of Greensburg at 945 pm and changed the lives and landscape forever. For those that have never been to Greensburg, where most streets were completely tree lined, a few of the images below show how remarkable the damage was:

 Owntown before the tornado



GREENSBURG TORNADO CONTINUED

Two days after the tornado, most of the streets were clear of debris but the devastation was obvious.



Remarkable changes have taken place during this past decade. Considering that around 800,000 cubic yards of debris had to be removed after the devastation and utilities had to be reconstructed, it's amazing what has transformed. Although the year 2016 population of around 800 has not recovered to pre-2007 levels, a large number of residents and new folks to the area took to rebuilding the town. Today there are many state-of-the-art buildings and the city prides itself with the most LEED certified buildings per capita in the world!



Left Image:

Now a landmark, the water tower stands proud and tall overlooking the slowly growing town.

Right Image:

But a stark reminder of what hasn't been rebuilt exists on the northwest side of Greensburg.



Left Image:

This photo was taken the day after the tornado looking across the north side of Greensburg.

Left Image:

Many empty lots remain with even a few stark reminders of the damage as some of the original tree stumps remain.

GREENSBURG TORNADO CONTINUED....

The following are some interesting facts about the tornado and the recovery efforts:

Facts about the May 4, 2007 Greensburg Tornado	
65 minutes	The tornado began in Comanche Co. at 9:00 PM and ended at 10:05 PM near Greensburg
1.7 miles	Maximum width of the tornado
28.8 miles	Distance the tornado travelled
205 MPH	Approximately the strongest surface wind in parts of town
5	Maximum damage rating on the Enhanced Fujita Scale
11	Deaths that were a direct result from the May 4, 2007 tornado
961	Homes & businesses destroyed
216	Homes & businesses with major damage
307	Homes and businesses with minor damage
800,000	Cubic yards of debris removed from Greensburg
15	Agencies tasked by FEMA for the response and recovery
21	Greensburg residents hired by FEMA to work in recovery positions
7,604	Number of volunteers registered by AmericCorps for the recovery and cleanup
39,172	Meals served by the American Red Cross mobile feeding stations through all of May
57,786	Hours of documented work logged by volunteers
\$2.8 million	Amount of disaster assistance approved under IHP for Kiowa Co and Greensburg applicants
\$12.7 million	Costs paid by FEMA for work assigned to other federal agencies to provide specialized work, technical assistance, personnel, etc. to support the response to the Greensburg disaster
\$23.1 million	Approved funding under FEMA's Public Assistance Program. Projects included emergency response activities. That amount was calculated in late April of 2008
\$30.7 million	Amount of low interest loans provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration to residents and businesses in Kiowa County
SOURCE:	The National Weather Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency – 4/25/2008

In an instant, Greensburg was changed forever. We should never have the notion that "this will never happen to me". Because it can, and in some cases it will. Tragically eleven lives were lost to this tornado. Based on the amount of destruction, that number could have been much higher. No doubt lives were saved from adequate warning, preparation and response.

The National Weather-Service urges YOU to react quickly to warnings and threatening weather situations and take shelter. *

OPERATIVE OBSERVERS

This section is dedicated to information directed towards our Cooperative Observing Program

STATION VISITS

Annual station visits will be made in the spring and the rest in the fall. The outside temperature units will be cleaned and the rain gauges leveled. The automated rain gauges will be summerized during the first week in Upcoming length of service awards: 30 years for Nanc May. If you need any supplies or need equipment moved or worked on give us a call at 1-800-824-9943. Ask for Jesse Lee. If I am not in the office you can leave a message and I will get back to you. My e-mail address Jesse.lee@noaa.gov.

AWARDS PRESENTED IN 2016

Ella Mae Julian was presented with the Thomas Jefferson award in September. This is the highest award that a Cooperative Weather Observer can receive. Ella Mae has been an observer since 1944. Congratulations to Ella Mae for this prestigious award.



Pictured from left to right is Larry Ruthi, Meteorologist in Charge; Ella Mae Julian; and Vaughn Lorenson, Emergency Manager for Stanton County.

A 45 year length of service award was presented to John and Helen Lehman of Coldwater in June. Congratulations to John and Helen for their continued dedication and long service.

Byron Smith of rural western Morton County was presented with a 30 year length of service award in July.

Mike Helmley of Kiowa and Alan Schweitzer of Johnson City were presented with 20 year length of service awards.

Lee & Carolyn Musil of Burdett, Troy Mattheyer at Ce-

dar Bluff Dam, Dan & Vivian Button of Ulysses and Jeff Elliott of Garden City were presented with 15 year length of service awards.

Burns of Meade, W.F. & Paula Greenway of McCracken and Lance & Gloria Morgan of Alexander. 25 years for Darrell Woods of Kalvesta and Chris Lawless in rural southeastern Comanche County. 20 years for Pam Wetzel near Offerle. 15 years for Swede Holmgren of Ellis. 10 years for Russell Oestereich of Sun City and Steve Barker of Satanta.

NEW OBSERVERS IN 2016

Logan Smith in rural western Morton County took over for Byron Smith, his father, and Rachel McJunkin took over for Lee & Carolyn Musil in Burdett. Russ Taylor took over for Brad Hinkle in Liberal. We welcome Logan, Rachel and Russ to the Cooperative Weather Observer Program.

8 INCH STANDARD RAIN GAUGES

Since we are coming up on the spring season, you can go ahead and put the inner tube in and the funnel back on top if you have not already done so.

WXCODER

For those who do not use the weather coder program, you can use it if you have a computer with internet and want to report your weather data every day.

This is a website where you can enter your data and it would allow us to incorporate your station data in our daily report. If you are interested in using this program please give me a call and I will set you up with an account. For those who routinely use the program and still mail in their weather forms, you do not have to mail in the form. We can download the form here at the office. At the end of the month when you are done, check over your data to see if you have any missing temperature, precipitation or snow data entries. Please enter those if you have the data that is missing. If it is missing, please enter a M. 🗡

Jesse Lee **Observing Program Leader** National Weather Service Dodge City KS

STAFF CHANGES AT THE DODGE CITY NWS OFFICE

WHO'S NEW?

So JEREMY MIZE - ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN

Jeremy was born and raised in Fort Worth, TX. He joined the United States Air Force in 2010 where he worked as a F-16 Avionics Technician. Jeremy started at the Dodge City office in August 2016. He and his wife have one son and another on the way.



Search Bill Turner → Lead Forecaster

Bill is originally from

Iowa. Born with a passion for weather, he was doing weather science fair projects by the 3rd grade and delivered weather broadcasts to his 5th grade classmates. He received his degree in atmospheric science from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska in 1994. He attended graduate school at



Bill and his wife Tracy have three children, a dog, a cat and a hamster. In his spare time, his passion is feeding and watching birds. He has enjoyed seeing the huge variety of birds as his National Weather Service career path has taken him to Arizona, then Nevada, and now Kansas. Bill is happy to be back in the plains where the weather is always interesting and the people are always friendly.

🗠 LAREN REYNOLDS -- INTERN METEOROLOGIST 🕬

Laren started her career in public relations (PR) where she was the spokesperson & PR contact for the Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association from 2002 to 2009. She moved on to help run a PR and events company in Kansas City for the next 3 years. She finally decided to follow her passion for meteorology, and quit her job to go back to



school full time. After all, she was writing reports for fun on what we now know as the societal impacts of weather at the age of 8. Laren earned an associate's degree in engineering, and then a master's degree in atmospheric science from Creighton University. While working on her graduate degree, she was a teaching assistant, Clare Boothe Luce Fellow, interned at NASA Langley Research Center, and was an intern forecaster at a private weather company. Laren, her husband, and their two dogs are excited about the opportunities, and weather, in Dodge City.

Segreg Tatro - Intern Meteorologist

Greg was born and raised in Kingman, Kansas, and wanted to be a meteorologist since he was 7 years old. Greg started his career at KHAS-TV in Hastings, Nebraska where he worked as a meteorologist and reporter for 4 years. He then moved on to a company called WeatherEye Inc. in St. Paul, Minnesota where he produced and recorded forecasts for the



radio stations his company served for 6 years. He is excited to have a job in the National Weather Service and to be back in Kansas.



WHO'S RETIRED?

FRITZ KRUZE: Frederick, or Fritz as he was called at the office, pursued a bachelor of science in meteorology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He was one of only six people chosen to serve as storm chasers for NOAA/ERL/PROFS in Boulder during testing and evaluation of a prototype Doppler radar and a new forecast and warning workstation. Fritz began his career with the National Weather Service in 1987 when he was hired as a Meteorological Technician at the St. Cloud, MN Weather Service Office (WSO). When the St. Cloud WSO closed, he was transferred to Rochester, MN. After the Rochester WSO closed, he was hired as a General Forecaster at WFO Dodge City in 1994 and subsequently became one of the original Senior Forecasters in 1996. Fritz retired in November 2016.

MIKE BELL: Mike was born in Enid, OK, and enlisted in the United States Navy in 1970. He was honorably discharged in 1974. Mike then earned a bachelor of science in atmospheric science from Oregon State Univer-

STAFF CHANGES CONTINUED...

sity in 1978. He attended the Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, RI, and was commissioned Ensign in the United States Navy in 1981. Mike's National Weather Service career began in 1989 when he was hired as a Meteorological Intern at Weather Forecast Office (WFO) Rockford, IL. He transferred to WFO Moline, IL in June 1993, and came to WFO Dodge City as an Intern in 1994. Mike retired in January 2015.

RICK SLOAN: Rick was born in Tonawanda, NY and graduated from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in geography. He subsequently attended the University of Kansas and graduated with a master of science degree in water resources science in 1976. He spent two years as a teaching assistant in the Geography Department at the University of Kansas and one year as a research assistant at the Space Technology Center at the University of Kansas. After working for the Kansas Department of Agriculture and serving as District Manager of the Big Bend Groundwater Management District in St. John, Kansas, Rick became president of Poseidon Research and Testing, Inc. He joined the National Weather Service in 1990 as a Hydrologist at the Arkansas-Red River Basin River Forecast Center, and in 1994 he moved across the hall to become Service Hydrologist at WFO Tulsa, OK. A new Service Hydrologist position opened at WFO Dodge City in 1996, and Rick chose to relocate. Rick retired in May 2014.

TIM BURKE: Tim completed his bachelor of science degree in forestry from North Carolina State University in Raleigh on a ROTC scholarship, and subsequently attended St. Louis University, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in Meteorology. He served as an officer in the United States Air Force until he received a medical discharge in 1986. He began his career with the National Weather Service in Wichita as a Meteorologist Intern in 1987. He subsequently transferred to WFO Des Moines as a General Forecaster in 1991. He was selected to serve as a WSR-88D Hot Line Specialist at



the Radar Operational Support Facility in Norman, OK, in 1994. He served in this position until he relocated to WFO Dodge City as one of the original Senior Forecasters in 1996. Tim retired in January 2015.

DUANE WOLFE: Duane grew up on a farm near Lyons, KS and began his meteorological career with the U.S. Air Force in 1970. He retired from the Air Force in February 1994, and entered the National Weather Service as a Meteorological Technician at the Bridgeport, CT WSO the same year. After working at Newark, NJ and La Guardia, he was selected as a Hydrometeorological Technician and Observing Program Leader at Caribou, ME. Duane relocated to Dodge City as an HMT in August 2006, and retired in February 2016.

WHO'S MOVED?

ANDREW WHITE: Andrew came to the office as a Pathways Intern while attending Purdue University. After graduation in June 2016, he was promoted to a Meteorologist Intern . In January, Andrew transferred to the Indianapolis NWS WFO.

ROCKY WEINMANN: Rocky came to Dodge City as an Electronics Technician in 2009. He moved from Vance Air Force Base in Enid, OK, where he was a Radar Maintainer. In December 2016, Rocky left for Central Region in Kansas City, MO, to become a Regional Maintenance Specialist for the WSR-88D Doppler Weather Radar.





The Weather-Ready Nation (WRN) Ambassador initia-

tive is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) effort to recognize NOAA partners who are improving the nation's readiness, responsiveness, and overall resilience against extreme weather, water and climate events.

As a WRN Ambassador, you commit to working with NOAA and other Ambassadors to strengthen national resilience against extreme weather. In effect,

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

DODGE CITY

104 Airport Rd. Dodge City, KS 67801 620-225-6514

<u>Your</u> National Weather Service 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.



BUILDING A WEATHER READY SOUTHWEST KANSAS CONTINUED

the WRN Ambassador initiative helps unify the efforts across government, non-profits, academia and private industry toward making the nation more ready, responsive, and resilient against extreme environmental hazards.

WRN Ambassadors serve a pivotal role in effecting societal change — helping to build a nation that is ready, responsive, and resilient to the impacts of extreme weather and water events.

We are proud to have 13 Weather Ready Nation Ambassadors.

- Ford County Communications
- Grant County Emergency Management
- Gray County Emergency Management
- Hays Kansas Weather
- Finney County Emergency Management
- Kearney County Emergency Management
- Lane County Emergency Management
- Meade County Emergency Management
- Morton County Emergency Management

- Pratt County Emergency Management
- Seward County Emergency Management
- Stanton County Emergency Management
- Stevens County Emergency Management

Together, they inform and empower communities, businesses and people to make pre-event decisions that can be life-saving and prevent or limit devastating economic losses.

Any organization can become a WRN Ambassador. To learn more about the Weather-Ready Nation initiative or becoming a WRN Ambassador, visit the WRN website at www.noaa.gov/wrn.

