



National Weather Service



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Diversity Matters

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Welcome Message

By: Dave Rowell

On behalf of the NWS Diversity Council and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management (OEODM), welcome to the inaugural issue of the Diversity Matters quarterly newsletter. This newsletter represents a working partnership between the Council and OEODM, as well as Diversity Focal Points in the

field, regions, and headquarters offices. Diversity Matters? – of course it does. It matters to all of us. It matters enough to celebrate, inform, and educate. This newsletter is a means to attend to each of those. Primarily, it is a means to make diversity a topic of conversation, and in doing so make diversity a more active and beneficial entity within all NWS offices.

National Diversity Newsletter Naming Contest Winners

By: Ursula Jones



WFO Newport/Morehead City (Source: NWS Newport/Morehead City)

The winners of the National Weather Service Diversity Council newsletter naming contest have been selected! The winners are Kris White, Lead Forecaster and Chelly Amin, General Forecaster of WFO Huntsville and Lara Pagano, Meteorologist at WFO Newport/Morehead City.

When asked why he selected Diversity Matters for his entry, Kris said, “I immediately liked the phrase ‘diversity matters’ because of its potential dual meaning. The term ‘matters’ could refer to something of consequence, as in, there is consequence or importance in diversity.” Lara stated, “I thought the title *Diversity Matters* best illustrated the two important meanings behind the newsletter. One in which would be described as a verb: diversity does matter in our organization. The other as a noun:

matters dealing with diversity which would be enclosed in the newsletter itself.”

The response to the contest was incredible with the Council receiving over 100 entries. Ursula Jones stated, “The judges were thrilled when we saw the amount of interest this contest generated. I was amazed that so many entries were received – each very diverse. This was exactly the kind of response the Council was hoping for.”

Each submission was distinct, showing how truly diverse we can be. The Council offers warm congratulations to the finalists and a special note of thanks to all the contest participants. We also express sincere appreciation to our judges – Ursula Jones, Dave Rowell, Margi Garner, Sabrina Johnson, and Monique Royal, for their commitment and dedication to diversity.



NWS Huntsville CWA (Source: NWS Huntsville)

Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services

By: Hope Hasberry and Dave Rowell



NWS Deputy Director Laura Furgione and Ambassador Pamela Hamamoto
(Source: Eric Bridliers)

November 5-7, 2014 Laura Furgione, the NWS Deputy Director, participated in the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services in Geneva, Switzerland. The goal of the conference was to raise awareness and showcase good practices and concrete actions to empower women – as well as men – to produce, acquire, and use such services to make more informed decisions in the weather and climate-sensitive areas of food security, disaster risk reduction, water resource management, and public health.

Empowerment of women is important both to improve the effectiveness of weather and climate services and to build climate resilience. Our Deputy Director, in the distinguished role of being the U.S. Permanent Representative with the WMO, had multiple roles in the conference including: Panelist in a High Level Plenary on Weather, Climate, Gender, and Health; Moderator for a Working Session on Weather, Climate, Gender, and Health; and a Moderator of a Lunch-time Forum on Women and Careers.

Ms. Furgione's role of Working Session Moderator also included making a presentation to the WMO assembled body. In her presentation, Ms. Furgione talked about how NOAA and the NWS are already taking steps to consider gender differences -- and those of other underserved communities -- in all activities when planning, developing, and implementing products and services. The NWS is deeply focused on ensuring that gender-centered social science education is addressed across the disciplines of health, weather, and climate.

It is important that women be included in the decision-making process, but we cannot overlook that women are also needed in data-gathering and information dissemination processes because of the gender difference in communication styles and reception.

In the lunch session, Ms. Furgione joined other speakers in discussing key items that affected their choice of career, work / life balance, and contributing factors toward their success

and lessons learned along the way. This dialogue explored some of the issues faced by women during their careers supporting weather, water, and climate activities, and focused on recruiting women in science.

Ms. Furgione's message and participation was well received by the body of Meteorologists, climate scientists, national and international women's rights advocates, as well as UN agencies, academic institutions, and NGOs working in climate change, gender equality, food security, disaster risk reduction, water resource management, and public health in attendance.



Conference Group Photo (Source: WMO)

NWS Bismarck and Grand Forks Foster Innovation through Diversity

By: Tony Merriman

North Dakota is a state of weather extremes. The all-time record high of 121°F and all-time record low of -60°F for the state both occurred five months apart in the same year (1936). In addition to the extreme temperatures, severe thunderstorms are always a threat during the summer, as well as brutal winter storms and blizzards during the winter. Just to add to the extreme weather of North Dakota, very windy conditions are always a threat year-round.

In an effort to improve decision support services for our North Dakota state partners, NWS Bismarck spearheaded the effort to develop an effective planning tool that would highlight the forecast weather threats across the entire state for the next seven days. The NWS Bismarck office worked with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services (NDDDES) to develop operational thresholds for different weather threats. A color-coded scheme that best communicated different weather threat levels was developed and agreed upon. A PowerPoint briefing of a “weather threat matrix” along with state-view maps of where the weather threat(s) was (were) forecast to occur was then developed and operationally implemented. After collaborating with NWS Grand Forks, NWS Bismarck emailed the PowerPoint to NDDDES every Monday morning to support the planning operations of NDDDES.

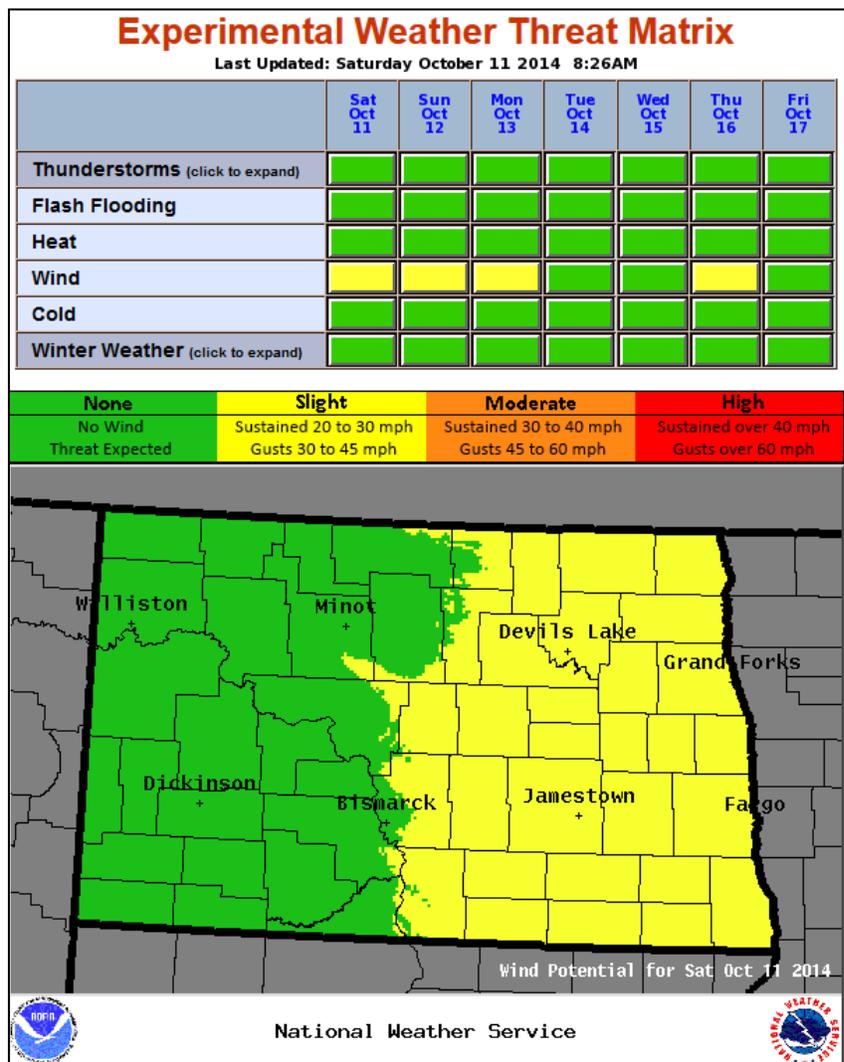
Even though this product was effective at first, the obvious limitation was that this briefing became stale quite quickly as the forecast changed. It became apparent that an automated and dynamically updating version of this product needed to be developed.

Using coding from both NWS Springfield’s (weather.gov/sgf/?n=hwo) and NWS Tulsa’s (weather.gov/tsa/?n=dsp) enhanced hazardous weather outlooks, the NWS Bismarck and Grand Forks

offices developed the first automated state-view weather threat matrix (weather.gov/fgf/?n=main_table). Not only does this product utilize data from the NDFD, but it also integrates products from the WPC and SPC in an effort to maintain consistency between the WFOs and national centers. It has also served as an excellent collaboration tool between WFOs Bismarck and Grand Forks as forecast differences that span thresholds magnify geopolitical CWA boundaries. As a result, GFE color tables that facilitate easier collaboration

efforts between the North Dakota WFOs have been developed and implemented.

The diversity of ideas from the NWS Bismarck, NWS Grand Forks, NWS Springfield, and NWS Tulsa offices, as well as the NDDDES, were all key in developing this simplified, streamlined automated weather threat communication product. This mobile device-friendly service tailors North Dakota weather threats to the needs of our state partners, furthering our efforts to build a Weather-Ready Nation.



Example output from the Weather Threat Matrix at weather.gov/fgf/?n=main_table

NWS San Angelo Leverages Diversity to Develop an Office Sign

By: Dr. Steve Lyons

Within routine office settings, at times, diversity training can begin to dissolve slowly. It has been my observation that by briefly moving that same group of people into a fresh setting with a clear unified goal, new relationships develop that become strong enough to overcome the stresses of mundane day to day work.

Such was the case with our recent idea, plan, construction, and completion of a new office sign at WFO San Angelo, Texas. From the photos showing the empty start of an idea (upper-right), diversity within our office brought out staff skills, personalities and lifestyles we didn't know others had.

From our engineering efforts, voting on designs, cutting of aluminum, welding metal, and constructing frameworks, to sign completion, our office became stronger through our personal diversities.

As you can see in the bottom photo, we were all present for the office sign completion photo. This activity was an excellent exercise in showing how diversity can work in unique ways to bring people together to achieve a common goal.



Framing the sign
(Source: Steve Lyons)



Sign location before build
(Source: Steve Lyons)



Office sign beginning to take shape
(Source: Steve Lyons)



NWS San Angelo Staff and their new sign (Source: Steve Lyons)

Diversity and IT Security

By: Dave Rowell



(Source: Dave Rowell)

I serve in many roles within the National Weather Service - as a Leadership /LINUX Instructor at the NWS Training Center, Vice Chair of the NWS Diversity Council, Diversity Ambassador, and as an IT Security Officer. There have been many discussions about the importance of creating strategic partnerships to attain NWS goals to ultimately support NOAA's mission. Because of my experience in these roles, I began to realize how much Diversity and IT Security initiatives had in common and began to envision how a strategic partnership between them might work. Does this seem like an unlikely partnership? Not from my perspective!

Both IT Security and Diversity initiatives serve the public and, therefore, are equally important. Both initiatives protect assets: IT Security protects IT assets, and Diversity/EEO protects NWS employees, respectively. Still not convinced? Let's dig a little deeper.

IT Security has 3 target resource protections: integrity, confidentiality, and usability. Protecting IT integrity means ensuring that NWS data are true, accurate, and useful, both internally and externally. Diversity initiatives also

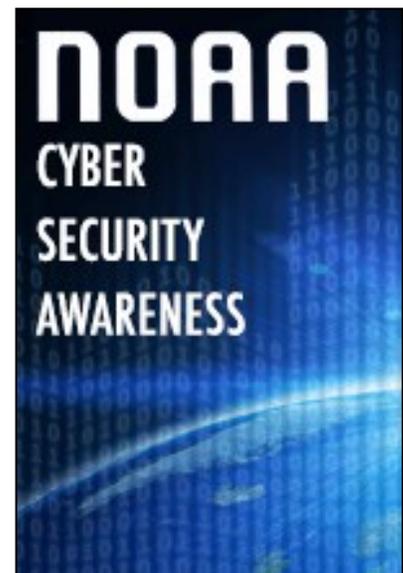
involve the protection, accuracy, and confidentiality of information shared among colleagues and creating the environment in which people can confidently share information, regardless of individual differences. Diversity/EEO communications are protected and high quality because there is no need for restraint in expression. As a result, communications are open and honest, not closed because of suspicion or misunderstanding.

Protecting IT confidentiality means ensuring information disclosure only occurs where warranted. Obviously, NWS information can be sensitive. So, too, is personal information. Whether information is considered Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or personal information trusted to an individual, the prevailing questing guarding release is the "need to know." Everyone does not need all NWS data to perform effectively. Everyone does not need to know everything personal about an employee to perform effectively. Both IT and Diversity/EEO initiatives safeguard personal privacy and provide safe working environments where individuals are free to perform without having privacy compromised. Just like with Diversity/EEO initiatives, compromising IT data files can have serious consequences.

Finally, availability ensures that an IT resource is available to perform its mission. For IT, we mean systems, data, and product availability. For Diversity Management, we mean that employees can bring everything they have to offer—all their knowledge, ideas, skills, and talents in an inclusive environment. Effective Diversity Management ensures that employees are available to perform, as well. Not only do we want employees to feel free to participate fully with all they have to bring to the table, but we want to celebrate their differences. The more variety, the more

diversity we encourage, the greater the ideas, and the greater the solutions. I believe personal availability to perform at the highest level of performance is every bit, or even more, important than the various data sets we acquire and manage.

Finally, employees are not only the ultimate resource, but the ultimate IT system—an entity with value not just in intelligence, information, and performance capacity, but also in the intangible value of their humanity. As a result, we should now refer to Diversity Management and IT Security Management by that most important name—strategic partners.



(Source: NOAA)



Stereotypes

By: Dave Rowell

The human mind is very powerful – and can be very lazy. One of its great abilities is to create mechanisms to simplify things for its own processing. One such mechanism is grouping. In order to make sense of the myriad of diverse people you will encounter, the brain goes about creating ‘groups’ and placing persons within those mind-determined groups. Those groups are based on perceived reality. For example, we could group people based on ethnicity. But it is speculative more so than fact. Even something as seemingly simple as placing a person in a male or female grouping can be incorrect. Yet, doing so, appropriate or not, speeds along the processing of information about a person. Correct or incorrect, it is a human tendency to simplify the world. The fact is that everyone practices grouping (and its ultimate manifestation – stereotyping) almost automatically.

Messages (deserved or not) about groups are put forth by individuals, organizations, media, etc. Those messages get applied to each member our minds have as part of those groups. These messages (true or false) are stereotypes, which get cemented to the

groups. The information stored in one’s mind about the group (from whatever sources, real or imagined) is ascribed to the individual we have assigned to the groups. Stereotyping is another shortcut mechanism. We can simply relay upon the information stored in one’s mind about a group and ascribe it to the individual without having to find out any other truths. We mindlessly ascribe traits to individuals solely from group association. Not all stereotypes are wrong, though a great many are, and not all stereotypes are bad, though a great many are.

Stereotypes are further simplified into labels; another grouping and filtering mechanism to speed associated perceived information along. In turn, the labels themselves become instruments to further stereotypes, to group, or to vilify, to ostracize. Most people (erroneously) believe that labeling something somehow adds understanding to it. If we group and label someone as ‘gay,’ for example, we think we have greater understanding of that person than we do, in truth, have. But, just as often, the information ascribed is product of falsehood and exaggeration. The labeling becomes the nature of the

thing. It sets the mind on a course of thought—even something seemingly as innocuous as ‘geek’. While labels, even in their short-sightedness are not always incorrect, or bad, too often they are used as instruments of hurt!

Such tools of simplification lead to laziness. Most people are simply uninformed on others’ issues and prefer to leap to assumptions than verify ascribed information. Very few people seek to educate themselves in these areas. Consider the example of ‘LGBT’ – what do you know versus what do you assume? Edification and truth becomes the responsibility of ‘them,’ not us. Our assumptions are by default unquestioned and, thus, correct. Perceptions become reality. And in others’ failing our expectations, we judge. All those non-credible perceptions gleaned from all those unreliable sources turn into workplace behaviors – too often discriminatory and prejudicial ones. These erroneous typecasts become too big of a hurdle for many persons to leap, and individuals not even part of the targeted group shy away for fear of guilt by association. In the end, labels have no place in our workplace.

NWS Diversity Council Biography

By: Marie Hoffpauer



Hello! I am Marie Hoffpauer, the Central Region’s Workforce Program Coordinator. I handle all personnel actions for Central Region that includes many programs such as EEO/Diversity and Student Volunteers.

Throughout my career, I have worked in Human Resources for the Department of Defense and now for the National Weather Service. I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota into a large family of 7 children. I spent my childhood and early adulthood traveling the world as an Army Brat and enjoying countries such as Germany, Iran, Panama, and Japan.

In 1984, I enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard and then received a commission in 1986 through the ROTC program at the University of Texas. I served in the U.S. Army Reserves until I retired in 2005 after 21 years of service. I have a B.S. Degree in Home Economics from Texas State University located in San Marcos, Texas.

I am the mother of two wonderful daughters, Kristin and Katherine, and a Rat Terrier Dog named Kaylie, who is undoubtedly the best dog ever! In my spare time, I enjoy traveling, quilting, fishing, camping, and cooking.



National Weather Service



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Building a Weather-Ready Nation

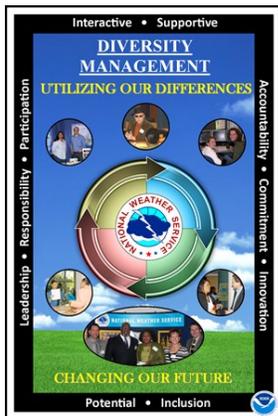
The National Weather Service (NWS) fosters an inclusive work force, building an environment that respects the individual, and offering opportunities for all employees to develop to their full potential. Diversity is the mixture of differences and similarities each employee brings to the workplace to accomplish the goals of the NWS.

Diversity management is a long-term change strategy enabling the NWS to improve its culture to ensure all employees are making maximum contributions to the mission of the NWS. We will foster an inclusive, supportive, open, challenging and innovative work environment to enable employees to be positive, creative and reach their full potential.

Other Diversity Newsletters: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/toolkit/diversity_material_field/commnewsletter.php

NWS Essay Contest on Generational Differences Announcement

By: Hope Hasberry



Are you a Traditionalists (69 – 89 years of age); a Baby Boomer (50 – 68 years of age), a Generation Xer (33 – 49 years of age), or a Millennial (14 – 32 years of age)? What one characteristic about your generation is most misunderstood by those from other generations?

The NWS Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management and the NWS Diversity Council are pleased to announce a diversity essay contest on generational differences.

All NWS employees are encouraged to participate in this new NWS diversity activity. The essay contest allows NWS employees to be creative and/or informative on the topic of generational diversity. The winner will be announced, and the winning essay printed, in an upcoming addition of *Diversity Matters*.

Contest Rules:

1. Participants must write on this topic - "What one characteristic about your generation is most misunderstood by those from other generations?"
2. Only one essay per participant.
3. Each entry must begin with a title page containing: the official topic, writer's name, office, and phone number.
4. Essays must contain at least 500 words but no more than 750 words. This does not include the title, bibliography, or footnotes.
5. Essays must be double-spaced.
6. Properly identify any quotation or copyrighted material. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
7. Submit completed essays to the NWS Diversity Council (email to hope.hasberry@noaa.gov) by January 5, 2015.

