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Public Information Statement Updated
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From: William Bauman
 Chief, Aviation and Space Weather Services Branch

Subject: Updated: Implementation of the Experimental Graphical
Forecasts for Aviation: Comment Period Extended to June 11, 2016

Updated to Extend Comment Period to June 11, 2016.

Effective June 11, 2016, at 2100 Coordinated Universal Time
(UTC), the NWS Aviation Weather Center (AWC) in Kansas City, MO,
will begin issuing the Experimental Graphical Forecasts for
Aviation at: <http://new.aviationweather.gov/areafcst>.

The Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation are designed
to provide meteorological information equivalent to the textual
Area Forecast (FA) in a graphical format, as requested by the
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This product includes
observations and forecasts valid for the continental United
States that provide data critical for aviation safety, overlaid
on high-resolution basemaps. FAs for Hawaii, Alaska, the
Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico will not be affected at this time.

Observational data in the Experimental Graphical Forecasts for
Aviation are time synchronized and available by the hour for the
current time and the previous 6 hours. Hourly model data is
available up to 15 hours in the future. Wind, icing and
turbulence forecasts are available in 3,000 ft. increments from
the surface up to 18,000 ft. mean sea level (MSL), and in 6,000
ft. increments from 18,000 MSL to FL420 (42,000 ft. MSL).
Turbulence forecasts are also broken into LO (below 18,000 MSL)
and HI (above 18,000 MSL) graphics. A maximum icing graphic and
maximum wind velocity graphic (regardless of altitude) are also
available.

Data including Observations/Warnings, Thunderstorms, Clouds, Flight Category (Ceiling and Visibility), Precipitation, Icing, Turbulence, and Winds are available in this product. These data are combined into categories that the user can select from the top level "Weather" menu. Details of each category can be found in the Product Description Document (PDD):

http://products.weather.gov/PDD/GFA_PDD.pdf

The Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation were created in response to a formal request by the FAA to discontinue production of the textual Area Forecasts (FAs). Requirements for the underlying meteorological information in the FA have not changed. The FAA recognizes that given modern advances within NWS, the legacy text FA is no longer the best source of enroute flight planning weather information. The FAA, pursuant to Title 49 United States Code Section 44720, established requirements for this weather information and service, which is necessary for the safe and efficient conduct of operations in the National Airspace System (NAS).

Based on comments received by FAA and NWS on this proposed change, NWS plans to discontinue production of FAs once the Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation product is approved as operational and when all concerns identified within submitted comments have been addressed. Formal public notification will be provided in advance of the action to discontinue the FAs.

Additional information on the Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation can be found at:

<http://new.aviationweather.gov/areafcst/>

Comments will be accepted through June 11, 2016 on proposed operational implementation of the Graphical Forecasts for Aviation as a replacement for existing text FAs, via the following electronic survey:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/survey/nws-survey.php?code=GRAFS>

If you have any questions regarding the experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation, contact:

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National Public Information Statements are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/archive>

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