

Aware

Aware is published by NOAA's National Weather Service to enhance communications between NWS and the Emergency Management Community and other government and Private Sector Partners.

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SKYWARN Recognition Day Connects with NWS Spotters in COVID-19 Twist

By [Michael Lewis](#), WCM, NWS Northern Indiana (KG4KJQ) and Mike Corey, Amateur Radio SKYWARN Recognition Day Committee (K11UZ)

SKYWARN Recognition Day celebrates radio amateurs and their long relationship with NWS. This annual event recognizes amateur radio operators for the vital public service they perform during severe weather and strengthens the bond between radio amateurs and their local NWS office. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) co-sponsored this event.

Normally, radio amateurs take part from home stations or from NWS forecast offices. The goal is for these radio operators to make contact with as many NWS forecast offices as possible during the day. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, NWS forecast offices cannot host guests. Rather than abandon this great event, this year, the focus will shift to having radio operator contact as many SKYWARN trained spotters as possible during the event.

For the first time, the Recognition Day will be open to all NWS SKYWARN Spotters.

Additionally, there is a special event [Facebook page](#) that will host a variety of live and recorded segments throughout the day.

If you are an NWS SKYWARN spotter and would like to join the event, please complete the form found on the [SKYWARN Recognition Day 2020 website](#). During the event, amateur radio operators are encouraged to exchange their name, QTH, SRD number, and current weather conditions with other stations. See the event website for the full operating guidelines. Additionally, NWS is encouraging all spotters to take part by sending weather reports, images and attending various live stream events via social media.

SKYWARN Recognition Day 2020 will be held from 0000 UTC to 2400 UTC December 5. To register or learn more, [visit the event website](#).



NWS Charleston Embeds with the West Virginia Fusion Center

By WCM [Tony Edwards](#), NWS Charleston, WV

The mission of the West Virginia Fusion Center (WVFC) is to anticipate, identify, and prevent criminal activity and all other hazards and responsibly distribute that intelligence to its stakeholders. The “all other hazards” part of the mission statement is where NWS Charleston, WV, fits in.

“The WVFC partnership with NWS has proven and continues to be an invaluable resource,” said Steven Patterson, Deputy Director of the West Virginia Intelligence Fusion Center. “This relationship has allowed

us to provide vital information for our stakeholders in their preparations and planning across the state in mitigating risks and hazards for the citizens of West Virginia.”

The NWS partnership with the WVFC evolved from a conversation at a county meeting in 2017. Now, NWS Charleston has a seat at the WVFC weekly meetings, joining Fusion Center Analysts, along with representatives from the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM), multiple state agencies, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security.



West Virginia Intelligence Fusion Center

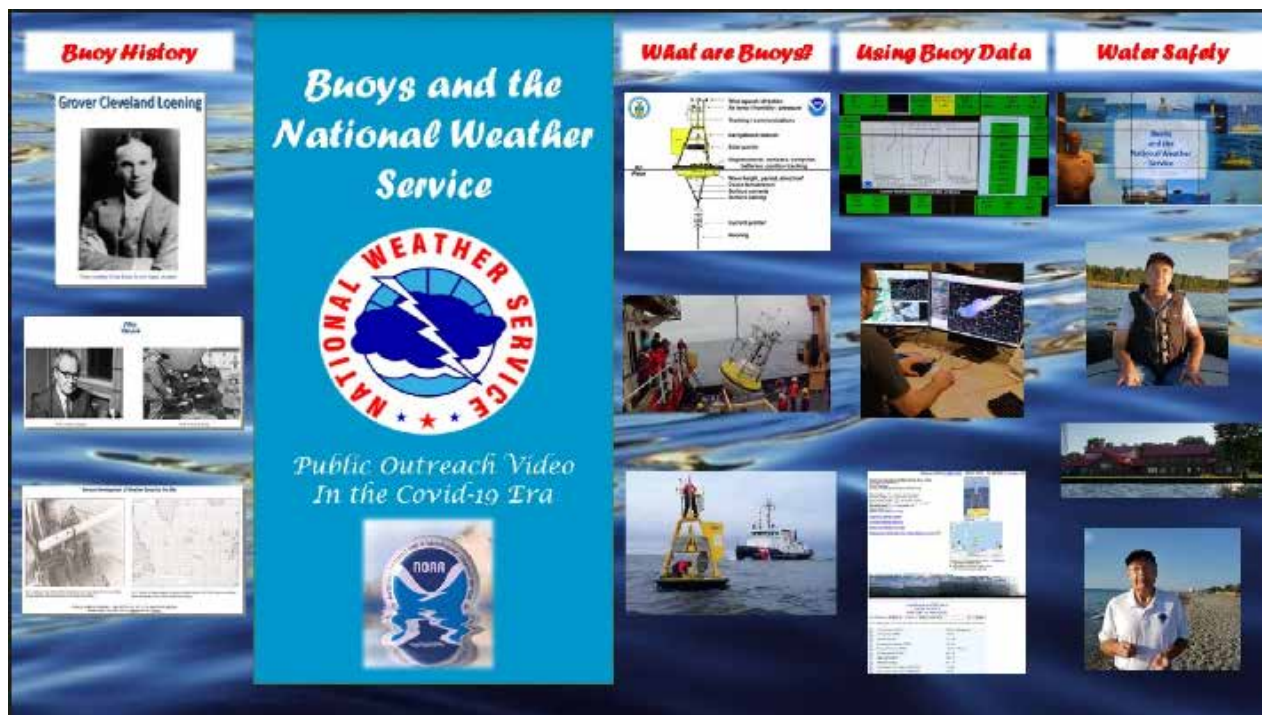
NWS staff brief on potential weather hazards and provide vulnerability analyses for input into Threat Assessment documents. These documents are prepared for various public events throughout the year. As event approaches, WVFC sends Threat Assessments to event organizers and emergency management officials. These emails often lead to requests for more detailed remote or on-site IDSS as the event date approaches.

The partnership has been two way. The WVFC has offered its capabilities for NWS use. WVFC analysts are skilled at conducting real-time open source analysis, which NWS can use to glean storm reports during severe weather events.

Another strength of the WVFC is its statewide network of Fusion Liaison Officers (FLO). FLOs are trained to look for and share actionable intelligence in their local communities. The state has activated these officers to gather severe weather damage

reports and pictures. When major flash floods struck West Virginia in June 2016, FLOs provided near real-time information on the extent of the damage. NWS Charleston then forwarded this information to the state Emergency Management Division and other state officials. NWS Charleston Warning Coordination Meteorologist Tony Edwards became a Fusion Liaison Officer in 2019, after attending the 3-day training course and teaching a class on NWS resources to over 100 FLOs. Having a trained FLO, ensures NWS will be in this great information-sharing loop for future hazardous weather events.

NWS staff embedding with the Fusion Center has helped develop relationships to a level that would not have been possible with just occasional remote support. While the pandemic has temporarily ended our weekly visits to the Fusion Center, NWS staff continue to join weekly WVFC partner calls and provide supporting information to Threat Assessment documents as requested. These relationships have been invaluable when our state, federal, and military partners have come together during State Emergency Operations Center activations and other major events like the 2019 World Scout Jamboree. All 50 states have Fusion Centers. NWS Charleston has found this relationship extremely valuable.



Kirk Lombardy teaches students the history behind buoys and how the NWS uses them to help keep U.S. waters safe.

One Step Farther: NWS Upgrades Educational Buoy Presentations

By [Kirk Lombardy](#), Meteorologist, NWS Cleveland, OH

The pandemic provides interesting and positive challenges for day-to-day operations as well as and outreach challenges and opportunities for NWS. Fortunately, technology has allowed NWS to adapt quickly to change and still provide potentially lifesaving information for the public.

Earlier this year, the Tom Ridge Center in Erie, PA, asked the NWS Cleveland, OH, office to help with an educational project. The center needed PowerPoint slides about buoys for their educational program for teachers and their online classrooms.

Using my knowledge of video production, I opted to instead produce a half hour long video called *Buoys and the National Weather Service*. The video teaches students what buoys are and delves into their history as well as providing information about how NWS meteorologists and community leaders use this information to ensure public safety.

The center really appreciated the video and offered effusive thanks. The video is available on the NWS Cleveland, OH, [YouTube channel](#).

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