

Announcing the WRN Marine Ambassador Network

By: Douglas Hilderbrand, Aware Editor

NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation (WRN) Ambassador program is pleased to announce the launch of a dedicated WRN Marine Ambassador network geared toward increasing preparedness/resilience of the marine community through NWS engagement. Whether for recreational boaters, commercial fishing vessels, cruise ships, oil tankers, or transoceanic ships, weather awareness is critical for the protection of life and safety at sea. According to the Global Investigative Journalism Network, there are over 180,000 vessels tracked on a daily basis across the world's oceans. Over 90,000 ships make up the world's commercial fleet, and 226 million containers are shipped annually. This exemplifies the importance of the marine economy and the need for building marine resilience to nature's extremes.

In order to increase weather awareness and safety at sea, the NWS Marine Program, Regions, Ocean Prediction Center, and National Hurricane Center have collaborated to develop the WRN Marine Ambassador network to serve the marine community. Like the parent WRN Ambassador program, WRN Marine Ambassador network recognizes marine organizations that are improving the nation's readiness, responsiveness, and resilience to marine-related weather hazards. There are already nearly 150 current marine-related ambassadors identified among the current WRN Ambassadors. The WRN Ambassador Marine network includes a toolkit to introduce the marine community to NWS marine products and services, marine weather training videos, and safety messaging information for reducing risk to lives and property at sea. The network's goals are to share best practices among the marine/coastal community ambassadors, better communicate improvements of marine-related NWS products and services, and work with the organizations to strengthen preparedness, improve marine resilience, and protect life and safety at sea to build a "Marine Weather-Ready Nation!" It is an opportunity for WRN Marine Ambassadors to be able to influence other maritime organizations and individual commercial and recreational mariners to be better informed and prepared. More information on the WRN Marine Ambassadors can be found [here](#).



Current WRN Ambassadors identified as Marine Ambassadors

If your organization is already a WRN Ambassador and you are interested in joining the Marine Ambassador Network, please send an email to wrn.feedback@noaa.gov expressing your interest.

If your organization is interested but not yet a WRN Ambassador, you can apply to be an Ambassador online through the standard WRN Ambassador [sign-up form](#). The sign-up process now includes a maritime/marine organization option to help identify your interest in becoming a WRN Marine Ambassador.

NWS Offers NEXRAD Radar Website for Low Bandwidth Users

By: Maureen O'Leary, Deputy Director of Public Affairs

In response to feedback from emergency managers and others, the National Weather Service (NWS) has made changes to how it provides weather radar data to the public. In addition to significant performance improvements to

the [Enhanced Radar GIS-based website](#) for seasoned users who want dozens of radar products, the NWS developed a simplified fast loading radar website called [Local Standard Radar](#).

Local Standard Radar provides low bandwidth users a reliable, fast loading website for radar images, radar loops, and warning polygons in effect (Tornado, Severe Thunderstorm, Flash Flood, and Snow Squall Warnings). The new site offers base reflectivity only and defaults to the most recent loop (10 frames; last 45 minutes) from any individual WSR-88D radar. Radar loops and images are automatically updated every five minutes.

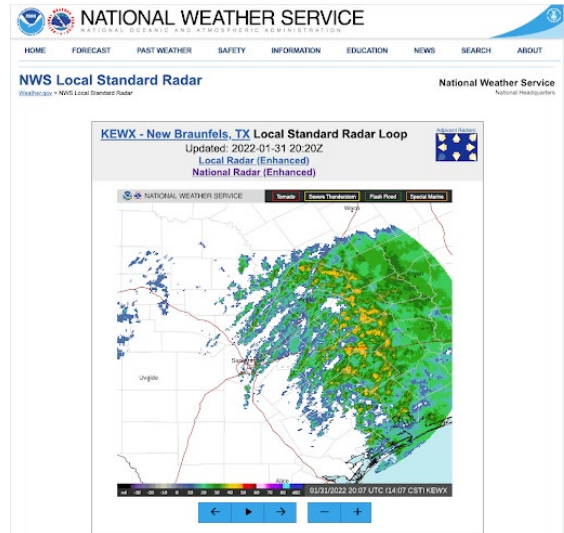
This new radar option looks and feels similar to the NWS's radar website that was discontinued in December 2020. It is important to note that the Enhanced Radar (GIS) website has 24/7 monitoring and support, while the Local Standard Radar websites are dependent on local forecast office resources to maintain operational availability.

How to access your local radar:

- Go to <https://www.weather.gov/radarlite/loop?radarid=KLWX>. Each radar webpage has the same web address minus the last 3 letters. Enter your radar ID in place of the last 3 letters in the URL. If you don't know your radar's ID, you can find it [here](#).
- Alternatively, use the [national and regional standard radar](#), click on your location, then bookmark it.

Providing our partners and the public on low bandwidth networks with access to timely weather radar is part of our commitment to building a Weather-Ready Nation.

If you have questions, please contact nws.radarfeedback@noaa.gov.



WMO Certifies New Megafash Lightning Records

By: NWS Staff

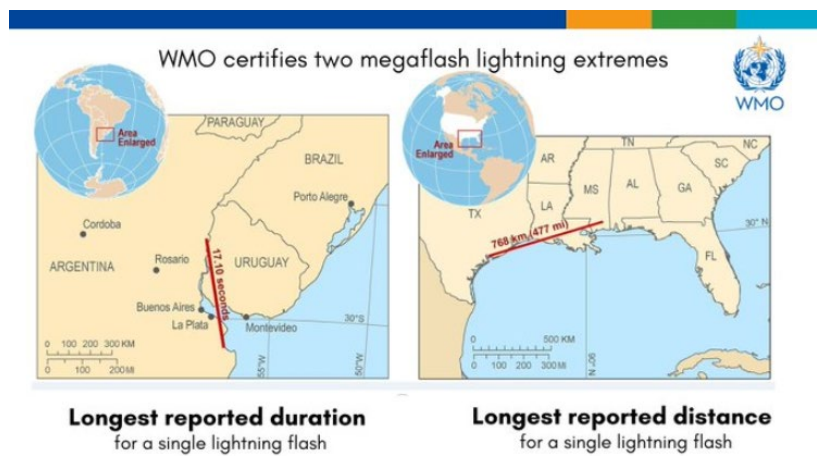
In the first week of February, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) used imagery obtained by [NOAA satellites](#) in 2020 to establish two new world records for megafashes of lightning, one in a North American hotspot and another in South America.

On April 29, 2020, the longest single flash of lightning to cover a horizontal distance of 477.2 +/- 5 miles occurred in the southern United States. The new record for the longest detected megafash distance is about 37 miles more than the previous record, which had a distance of 440.6 +/- 5 mi across parts of southern Brazil in 2018.

The second record occurred on June 18, 2020, when a storm over Uruguay and northern Argentina generated a single lightning flash that had a duration of about 17 seconds. This new record beat out the old one by just .37 seconds.

"Lightning is a major hazard that claims many lives every year. The findings highlight important public lightning safety concerns for electrified clouds where flashes can travel extremely large distances," said WMO Secretary-General Prof. Petteri Taalas.

For more information about the new records, see the press release [here](#).



WSO Pago Pago Issues Tsunami Warning for American Samoa

By: NWS Staff



WSO Pago Pago MIC Elinor Lutu-McMoore goes live on Facebook

On January 14, 2022, just over 500 miles southwest of American Samoa (AS), the Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano erupted, and the rumbling could be heard in American Samoa. The response at WSO Pago Pago was key in informing the public and underscored the value of timely and efficient communication.

The meteorologist on duty at WSO Pago Pago, **Dora Meredith**, contacted the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) in regards to a possible tsunami event for AS after being contacted by a media source on the eruption. After evaluation by PTWC, a tsunami advisory was issued for AS. However, reports of coastal inundation along the coastline of Independent Samoa shared from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), coupled with observations of unusual receding of tides at the Pago Pago Harbor and the continuous rumblings, immediately prompted local action to upgrade to Tsunami Warning for AS.

As the only person on shift that evening, Dora kept in contact with Meteorologist-in-Charge (MIC) **Elinor Lutu-McMoore** for guidance. Verbal approval was then given to upgrade to Tsunami Warning. PTWC was informed of the local alert upgrade through **Liz Vickery** of Pacific Region Regional Operations Center (PR ROC), who was also in contact with Dora. Dora was able to tone the Emergency Alert System (EAS) through the NOAA Weather Radio, inform the EOC through the hotline between EOC and WSO Pago, and post on all WSO Pago social media platforms on the local Tsunami Warning issued. Simultaneously, she also managed to answer non-stop incoming phone calls from the concerned public. Fortunately, MIC Elinor, who was already on her way to the office when the advisory was issued, and PR ROC, assisted with other procedures such as continued contact with PTWC, activate WSO Pago's COOP plan for evacuation (WSO Pago is located in the tsunami danger zone), and contact WFO HFO for backup operations.

When MIC Elinor arrived, she immediately assisted with the overwhelming incoming phone calls from the public and proceeded with the evacuation procedures that included packing equipment needed to manually transmit the hourly surface observations for Meteorological Aerodrome Reports (METARs). Prior to leaving the office to the COOP site (EOC is the COOP site for WSO Pago), MIC Elinor also went on Facebook Live to reiterate the Tsunami Warning issued for all of American Samoa in both the English and Samoan languages.

At the EOC, MIC Elinor and Dora were met by WSO Pago's Administrative Assistant (ASA), Kara **Langkilde**, who also came to assist. Weather briefings were immediately provided to the EOC Director and other local officials. Over-the-phone weather briefings were provided to the Governor and Lt. Governor, as they were at their evacuation zones at the Governor's residence, as well as FEMA's Public Assistance Officer (PAO). Concurrently, weather briefings on live radio broadcasts were provided over the phone to radio stations. On Google chat, **Laura Kong** of the International Tsunami Information Center (ITIC) continued to provide data reports from neighboring island countries. Regional Director **Ray Tanabe** kept in constant contact with the evacuated WSO Pago personnel. Damage reports received at the EOC were gathered and then shared to **Eric Lau** of PR-ROC.

After discussions between MIC Elinor and PTWC (**Chip McCreery** and **Stuart Weinstein**) regarding diminished reports and tide gauge readings at the Pago Pago Harbor, PTWC issued the tsunami cancellation message for American Samoa. Shortly thereafter, EOC issued the "All Clear" message for the evacuated residents.

The highest wave recorded by the only tide gauge in AS showed waves reaching a height of 2 feet. Fortunately, there were no injuries/fatalities and no major impacts to AS as a result of this unusual tsunami event.



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