



# The Central Appalachian & Middle Ohio Valley Weather Review

Winter 2002 Issue

National Weather Service, Charleston WV

## Spring Awareness Campaigns

### West Virginia

West Virginia, Governor Wise has proclaimed March 24-30 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in the State. This year's campaign will focus on flooding, in light of last year's devastating floods in the southern coalfields in May and July. A severe weather drill is planned for Tuesday, March 26 between 10 and 10:15 am. On this date the drill will be announced as an all hazards drill. Agencies are asked to practice for a particular form of hazard that day—it could be a flash flood, severe thunderstorm, tornado, or some other event. A campaign booklet is available from our web site.

### Ohio

The State of Ohio's Committee for Severe Weather Awareness has announced that March 17-23 will be the dates for this year's campaign with a statewide tornado drill on Wednesday, March 20 at 9:50 am. Ohio has conducted statewide campaigns since 1978 educating its citizens about severe weather threats and how to prepare and respond. Participating in the campaign is Ohio Emergency Management Agency, the NWS, American Red Cross, Ohio Departments of Aging, Education, Health, Insurance, and Natural Resources, the Emergency Management Association of Ohio, Ohio Insurance Institute, Ohio News Network and the State Fire Marshall. A campaign booklet is available at: [www.state.oh.us/odps/division/ema](http://www.state.oh.us/odps/division/ema)



### Kentucky

Kentucky's Severe Storms Preparedness Committee in conjunction with the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management has dedicated the entire month of March to severe weather preparedness with the theme this year "Be A Storm Survivor". There will be a statewide tornado drill on Tuesday, March 26 shortly after 10 am. Participating agencies include Kentucky Division of Emergency Management, the NWS, KET, Kentucky State Police,



American Red Cross, State Farm Insurance, KBA, Kentucky Cable Telecommunications Association (KCTA), and Kentucky Press Association (KPA). Kentucky has been conducting statewide campaigns for more than 30 years. A campaign booklet is available from our web site or at: <http://kyem.dma.state.ky.us>

### Virginia

Virginia has a Tornado Preparedness Day. This year the date is March 26 with a statewide tornado drill at 9:45am

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It is extremely important that as many citizens participate as possible, whether it be simply thinking about what you would do in an emergency, to actually participating in the drill and carrying out your plans. This is the perfect opportunity for schools and industries to practice their severe weather emergency plans (for schools that don't have a guide on how to put together such a plan...it's available from us at no cost).

The media can use this opportunity to feature stories on safety rules and procedures for establishing such plans. All media outlets will receive a guide with more ideas.

To make these campaigns successful, everyone must participate in some fashion. Discuss with your family what you would do in an emergency, whether it be weather-related, or anything else for that matter.

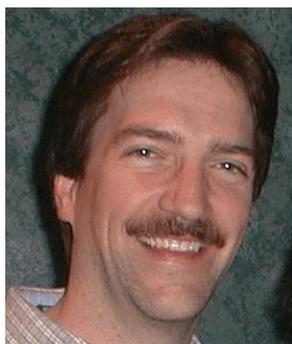
**Once again this year...Will You Be**



*You'll notice a new look to this issue. We're trying to keep the graphics and pictures especially to a minimum so that download time for this document is reduced.*

## Charleston Forecaster Winner Of National Isaac M. Cline Award

Ray Young, a senior forecaster at the Charleston office, is the recipient of the national Isaac M. Cline Award. He had earlier won both the local and regional awards. The awards



are named in honor of Isaac M. Cline, one of the most recognized employees in weather service history. Mr. Cline made numerous contributions to the mission of the Weather Bureau. Most noteworthy of his accomplishments were the actions he took during the Galveston hurricane of 1900, the deadliest weather event in

U.S. history. His understanding of weather conditions, and his heroic forecasts and hurricane warnings saved several thousand lives.

There are only 6 awards handed out nationally each year. Ray was recognized for his contributions in leading the migration of the weather service to a graphical database and providing support to other offices throughout the nation.

Ray has been a member of the Charleston staff for 12 years. Congratulations Ray!



To date we have one StormReady county in our county warning area - Randolph County, certified on 5/17/2001. Tucker County, in Pittsburgh's area of responsibility became certified in October, 2001.

Boyd County, Kentucky, has submitted an application to become StormReady. Their application will be reviewed to make sure it meets all criteria.

**One important change in the StormReady program — recognized counties participating in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) will receive 25 Community Rating Points towards lowering flood insurance rates.** More information on the NFIP and the Community Rating System is at: [www.fema.gov/nfip/crs](http://www.fema.gov/nfip/crs)

## National Weather Service, Charleston WV Spotter Training

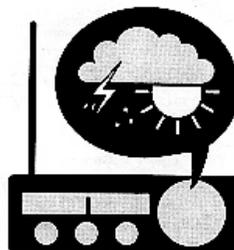


It's that time of year, once again, when spotter training sessions are scheduled in anticipation of severe weather during the spring months. We have two basic classes booked so far with more anticipated.

On February 28 at 7 pm, there will be a basic class in Greenup County Kentucky, location to be announced on our web site. On March 2 there will be basic class in Perry County Ohio, 11 am at the county airport in New Lexington. Other classes in which the dates have not been finalized will be in Carter County KY and Raleigh County WV.

Just a note that the basic class has been changed again with the addition of more localized events (not huge F5 Plains tornadoes). The class can be tailored to the audience whether it be amateur radio operators, firemen, etc.

The advanced class is undergoing another overhaul with the emphasis now on video incorporating more events common to the area.



## Weather Radio News

A new Weather Radio will be on the air in Randolph County during the month of February.

Located in Monterville, southern Randolph County, this radio will service Randolph, Upshur, and portions of Braxton, Lewis, Barbour and Pocahontas counties. There is a directional antenna at this site to avoid interference with the radio telescope at Green Bank. The radio will operate on a frequency of 162.525 MHz at approximately 275 watts. The station's call sign will be KXI-74. This radio was funded by FEMA's Project Impact and in particular the Randolph-Tucker Partnership for Disaster Mitigation and Recovery.

In other news, the new voice will be implemented during the month of March. There are 2 voices, one a male named Craig, the other a female named Donna. These 2 voices were the overwhelming favorites of the listeners nationwide and are very close to human-like. For your information, the old voice had a name too....Paul (but it often went by other names!)



### CO-OP Corner

Two of our cooperative observers received the John Campanius Holm Award on November 14 and 16, 2001. This award is granted each year to a maximum of 25 observers nationwide to honor them for outstanding accomplishments in

the field of cooperative observers. The observer generally has at least 20 years of service, has taken unusual efforts to maintain continuity of observations as well as accuracy, legibility and quality of the observations, and has maintained the equipment. This individual has also maintained a high level of cooperation with NWS officials and is noted for their activities in the community (civic or religious).

*This award is named for a Lutheran minister who was the first person known to have taken systematic weather observations in the American Colonies in 1644 and 1645.*



George E. Lash of McArthur Ohio, right, receiving his award from Meteorologist In Charge Alan Rezek on November 14



Charles B. Jarrell of Dry Creek WV, left, receiving his award from MIC Rezek on November 16

### Is El Niño Returning?

The evolution towards a warm episode in the tropical Pacific continued during December 2001, as enhanced convection developed over the equatorial central Pacific for the first time since the 1997-98 El Niño episode. In addition, the Tahiti-Darwin SOI (-1.2) and the equatorial SOI (-0.8) were the lowest since early 1998. By early January 2002 equatorial SST anomalies increased to +1°C at the date line.

In recent months, many tropical Pacific atmospheric and oceanic variables have been strongly modulated by intraseasonal (30-60 day) fluctuations, associated with the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO). Low-level wind fluctuations over the central and western tropical Pacific have been consistent with this activity. Significant low-level westerly wind anomalies occurred over the western equatorial Pacific during mid-October. November featured a return to easterly anomalies in this region during the first three weeks, followed by westerly anomalies during late November. December featured significant low-level westerly anomalies over the western equatorial Pacific during the first half of the month and over the west-central equatorial Pacific during the second half of the month, as the period of the MJO appeared to lengthen. This activity generated a strong eastward propagating oceanic Kelvin wave that contributed to the deepening of the oceanic thermocline and an increase in subsurface temperature anomalies in the vicinity of the date line. The magnitude of this Kelvin wave suggests that an increase in SST anomalies, with negative anomalies possibly being replaced by positive anomalies, is likely to occur in the eastern Pacific in late January or early February.

The latest statistical and coupled model predictions show a spread ranging from near-normal to moderate warm episode conditions over the next 3-6 months. All of these prediction techniques have difficulty in making skillful forecasts during ENSO transition periods. Considering the observed oceanic and atmospheric circulation patterns and their recent evolution, it seems most likely that warm-episode conditions will develop in the tropical Pacific during the next 3-6 months.

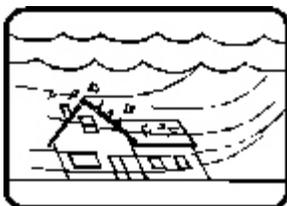
### Reminder

*The primary vehicle for distribution of this newsletter is our web site. If you would like a copy mailed to you, forward the necessary information to us.*

## Severe Weather Log

Events in the Charleston county warning area from October 16, 2001 through January 18, 2002.

**October 24, 2001** - A squall line raced northeast around 40 mph, ahead of a strong autumn cold front. A few thunderstorms bowed out, ahead of the main line. Wind gusts up to 45 mph across the region knocked down trees and downed power lines.



A garage was blown off its foundation in Boone County. An interstate construction sign blew into an approaching vehicle near Marietta, causing minor injuries.

**October 27** - 1 to 2 inches of snow fell at elevations above 2000 feet in Nicholas, Webster, Pocahontas and Randolph counties.

**October** - 4<sup>th</sup> driest October on record in Beckley

**November** - the prolonged stretches of Indian summer caused the autumn fire season to peak.

**November 5** - a brilliant display of the aurora borealis.

**December 1-23** - Indian summer environment lingered across the region with temperatures well above normal. Hamlin recorded 81 degrees on Dec. 5. Madison was right behind at 80 degrees.

**December 14** - a strengthening low pressure storm lifted northeast across the Ohio Valley. When the associated cold front swept across the region, winds gusted to as high as 55 mph. A concrete block wall at a building site in Athens was blown over. A tree fell onto a house in northern Wayne County. 6,000 customers lost power near Huntington.

**January 6-7, 2002** - a heavy wet snow fell across the region ranging from 2 to 6 inches across southeast Ohio, northeast Kentucky and the Ohio Valley counties in West Virginia, to 4-8 inches across remaining lowland areas of WV. The mountains saw snowfall in the 4-9" range...although some higher elevations did report around a foot. It was the heaviest snowfall for the western lowlands since the winter of '95-'96.

## Comings & Goings

Several new employees have joined our staff recently. All are in the position of journeyman forecaster. Eric Seymour comes to us from The Weather Channel. Hunter Coleman previously worked at the NWS office in Dodge City, KS. Kari Schatz worked at the National Center for Atmospheric Research prior to moving to Charleston.

*The Central Appalachian & Middle Ohio Valley Weather Review* - The quarterly newsletter for Skywarn spotters, schools, emergency managers, media and other interested parties across the region served by the NWS office in Charleston WV.

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Comments or questions concerning this publication may be submitted via one of the following ways:



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## West Virginia Awareness Campaign

Each day during the week of the campaign, we will focus on a different theme.

- Sunday, March 24 - Introduction
- Monday, March 25 - Flash Floods
- Tuesday, March 26 - NOAA Weather Radio & Drill
- Wednesday, March 27 - Low Water Crossing
- Thursday, March 28 - Thunderstorms & Lightning
- Friday, March 29 - Lightning Safety Tips
- Saturday, March 30 - Tornadoes

## Logo Contest

On the front page you'll notice that both Ohio and Kentucky have logos (graphics) for their awareness campaigns. It would be nice to add one for West Virginia, but as far as we know, none was ever created.

So...we'd like to have a contest and see if someone could come up with a design for our awareness campaigns. Keep in mind that we have both a Spring campaign for severe weather awareness, and one in the Fall for winter weather. Send any ideas to Dan Bartholf via mail, fax, or e-mail. Prizes have not been decided yet.

## Weather Radio Support To McDowell County

In an effort to improve weather radio reception in Welch and surrounding McDowell County, we have purchased a Computer Automation Technology WX-1000 Weather Receiver which will be installed on the 145.45 amateur radio repeater near Welch. This repeater is operated by the Pocahontas Coalfield Amateur Radio Club in conjunction with WB8SXZ.

Weather radio reception has always been difficult in this area due to the terrain. The WX-1000 will monitor our Gilbert Weather Radio, WXM-75, for any emergency traffic for McDowell County. When it receives the proper SAME code for McDowell, it will broadcast the emergency information (severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings, flash flood warnings, etc.) over the 145.45 repeater. After the initial alert over the repeater, the WX-1000 will periodically key-up the repeater and announce the nature of the alert, until the warning expires.

This is a valuable service to the area. People who are not amateurs can still monitor this frequency on their scanners.

## Flood Watches

An important change took place recently with regard to flood watches. All flood watches...whether they be flash flood or flood...will be issued as a Flood Watch. There will no longer be a product known as the Flash Flood Watch.

**Flash Flood Warnings** will only be issued for the true "wall of water" short-fuse (less than 6 hours) events.

**Flood Warnings** will handle all other situations such as nuisance flooding (urban areas) and gradual rise situations (basically, greater than 6 hours).

## Severe Weather Awareness Days

March 7 and 8 is designated "Severe Weather Awareness Days" at the West Virginia State Capital. On those days we will be setting up a display in the Upper Rotunda between the House and Senate sides of the legislature. Also participating, at this time, will be the American Red Cross, WV Office of Emergency Services, WV Army and Air National Guard units, and amateur radio (Skywarn).

All Skywarn spotters are invited to stop by or even help. If any individuals or groups would like to assist, give Dan a call at the NWS office in Charleston.

Stay tuned to the electronic version of our newsletter and website for further updates.

### FEMA IS Class Available

Emergency Managers - We have a limited number of copies of the CDROM for the FEMA Independent Study Course IS-271 "Anticipating Hazardous Weather and Community Risk" available at this office. Give Dan a call if you would like to take this course. This is an interesting and very worthwhile course.

