

Asheville AMS  
Minutes of Meeting  
27 Sept 2007

1. The first meeting for the 2007-08 season of the American Meteorological Society (AMS), Asheville chapter, was held on Thursday, 27 Sept 2007, at the Charlotte Street Grill in Asheville, NC. After a delicious meal the meeting was called to order by the chapter president, Lt Col Paul Roelle. The secretary's and treasurer's report were read with no corrections. There were 23 people in attendance. Lt Col Roelle mentioned the Air Force would host a Climatology Conference on 6-10 Nov at the Federal Building in Asheville. There will also be a NCDC Data Users meeting on 5-6 Nov in the Grove Park Inn, also in Asheville.

2. Lt Col Roelle closed the business meeting and introduced the evening's speaker, Mr Steve Doty. He worked at the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) from 1972 to 2003. Currently, he represents an Asheville initiative called the "Centers for Environmental and Climatic Interaction". Mr Doty stated in 2004 a group of Asheville's civic, academic and business leaders explored the possibility of building a new scientific and entertainment attraction that would provide knowledge about climate, vegetation, and environmental phenomena. The overarching goal was to develop a socially relevant, world class heritage, education, tourism, business, and applied research destination with a significant, lasting economic benefit to western North Carolina and the nation.

3. Mr Doty explained that Asheville has the added benefit of already drawing several million tourists to the area based on the natural scenic beauty and other attractions such as the Biltmore Estates and the Blue Ridge Parkway. The mild climate enhances this potential. An enhancing factor is the world's largest collection of climatic data is already stored in Asheville at NCDC.

4. Currently four major centers of related activity are being considered. The "Center for Business and Technological Applications" is designed to establish the economic, technical, and educational infrastructure that will be essential for developing effective climatic/environmental related business and support for skilled workers.. It will conduct world class research utilizing global databases and process the data for commercial and hazard mitigation use. Finally, it is proposed to create joint private and public organizations collaborations based on existing or planned infrastructure in the Asheville area.



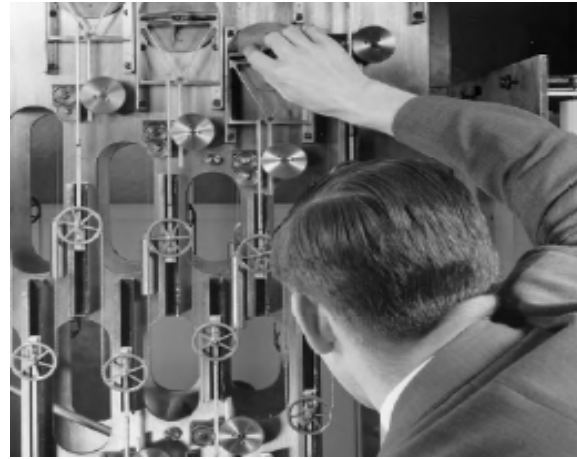
5. The second initiative, the “Center for Applied Visualization” will explore new tools to make weather and other environmental data more interesting and understandable for non-scientists. It will present environment, weather, and climate in clear and striking ways through the use of exciting new visuals. It will also build on the region’s already formidable technical, multimedia and design expertise. Finally, it will enlighten public and policy makers as they strive to strike a balance between environmental protection and economic sustainability.



6. The third initiative, the “Center for Climatic Heritage” will take the visitor back in time to observe the history of climate gathering records. It will have a large display of vintage weather instruments and equipment, and interpretive exhibits to introduce visitors to weather observers from George Washington to the present day. Finally, a Smithsonian affiliation is being researched, which would link the Asheville museum with the largest artistic, scientific, and historic heritage museum in the world. The University of North Carolina – Asheville has initiated a graduate research program for climate in society.



7. The “Center for Public Interaction” will present climate and environmental information in an informal and entertaining way. It will include interactive multimedia exhibits, entertainment venues, workshops, seminars and conventions, expos, summer camps and internships. It will possibly partner with the North Carolina Arboretum and join other current environmental centers in Asheville such as “The Health Adventure” and the “Colburn Earth Science Museum.”



8. Mr Doty then showed the attendees some old weather records and instrumentation he has been obtaining. These, plus other old meteorological equipment that is being stored in a warehouse in Asheville, will provide the seed for the weather museum. He summarized by stating the potential payoff is mind boggling!



9. Lt Col Roelle presented Mr Doty with an AMS coffee mug in appreciation for his talk to our Asheville AMS chapter. Lt Col Roelle then closed the meeting for the evening.

John D. Gray  
Secretary, Asheville AMS