

Metro Atlanta AMS/NWA Meeting – 2/08/2007  
GA Tech

Business:

- We need to nominate officers – nomination forms going around now. Stephanie Klipfel, this year’s President-Elect, will be President next year, so we need to nominate President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer for 2007-2008.
- We also need to think about the annual awards (Chandler and Excellence awards) and the scholarships. Contact Stephanie for information on the scholarship. We’ll vote for officers at our next meeting, and awards/new officers will be announced at the banquet in April.
- We have a quorum tonight – we’d like to be able to vote by proxy so that we can still have a quorum even if not all are present. (Current bylaws require secret ballot → this would allow that in the event we don’t have a quorum we could bring secret ballots into the meeting.)
  - Randy made a motion that we allow proxy voting in all chapter-related elections. Lans seconded. The quorum present voted unanimously in favor of the motion – motion passed. Constitution and bylaws will be adjusted accordingly and approved next meeting.
- Next meeting
  - May be held at CBS46, but the person in charge of the Weather Van has been deployed to Iraq, so this tour may be delayed
- Rain gage report – last four months have been dry; October was the only month above average.
- Treasurer’s report: \$2,157.38.
  - A little over \$100 collected since last meeting, spent \$125 (\$100 was for AMS coffee mugs).
- Regarding the Student of the Year Award, we will be accepting nominations through March, and then the Executive Committee will decide on a winner from each school (GA Tech and UGA). Officers discussed raising the scholarship amount (up from the current \$150, probably no more than \$500).
- Chip announced that we have “greatness amongst us” – Lans Rothfusz, (Peachtree City NWS MIC) was just elected Vice President of the National NWA.

Presentation

- This meeting is the second in a two-part series on the 2 January 2006 tornadoes. Last month we reviewed the meteorology at the NWS office in Peachtree City. This meeting we’ll hear from the people who react to the event.
- Pete Nelms – Fayette County EMA Director
  - January 2 was a holiday – he was taking a rare (and coveted) nap, but woke up for the afternoon Live Weather briefing that the NWS office was planning to do. Noticed “red” on the radar and from training received from the WCM, recalled that “red” is bad.
  - Duty chief saw the funnel cloud and debris
  - Very little advanced warning

- Over \$3M in damage – tornado hit a very upscale neighborhood (one home had \$1M alone)
- Storm missed manufactured housing park with 400 residents by half a mile
- Lessons:
  - Value of Storm Spotter program!
  - Just because you don't get a 911 call doesn't mean there's no damage (they did not receive call from upscale neighborhood)
  - Value of being StormReady!!! (multiple ways to receive warning)
  - Warnings don't always come
- Had this event gone beyond local capabilities → GEMA → FEMA
- **Receiving the warnings comes down to personal responsibility**
- Sheri Russo – GEMA
  - First they determine if there have been any injuries or fatalities
  - Have to have ~\$9.9M of uninsured damage to be considered for public declaration (state/federal disaster)
  - Difficult to get declaration in Metro Atlanta since most are insured
- Lans Rothfusz – NWS
  - StormReady!!!
    - Community needs to be prepared, especially if warning isn't issued in the most timely manner
  - We try to get word out ASAP
    - If it's a trusted observer and the signature is corroborated on radar, then we feel confident, but national policies prevent us from calling it a tornado
  - Send out survey team ASAP
    - To determine (E)F-scale rating
- Randy Skov – CWSU/FAA
  - As a note...the storm that produced the tornado in southern Fulton/northern Fayette counties was originally headed toward Hartsfield, until it took on more classic supercellular characteristics and turned more to the right of the mean wind. So...what if it had hit the airport?
  - Tries to keep in constant contact with TMU, TRACON, ATC tower
  - With the line of storms coming in, a hold would already be in place
  - Would keep more planes from coming in
  - Any planes in the approach airspace (25-30nm) would be dispersed
  - Some planes might still take off (to get them off the runway)
  - Main thing is to try to get planes out of the airspace
  - Taxiway planes – no place for them to go. Best thing to do is to put on the brakes, lock down and ride it out. Problem is – planes are built to fly!!
    - Overall, can't really help the planes on the ground
  - At a gate, probably would try to move people out of the plane and get them underground (where the trains run between terminals).
  - If the airport was hit...the economic impact would be staggering, would probably be shut down for weeks.
- Stephanie Klipfel – Delta

- Each airport management comes up with their own severe weather plan
- Move people away from windows
- **Note: It takes 15 minutes to unload a plane** – *even with the best lead time for a tornado warning, it likely wouldn't be enough for an airport of ATL's size.*
- Even hail from the core of the supercell can be a huge issue.
- Would not want to just let people go either – no, keep them in the airport, letting them go just lets them out on the streets and causes mass chaos.
- Ken Cook – Fox 5
  - This event was definitely atypical for Georgia – more like a Plains outbreak with classic, high-based supercells with beautiful presentations on radar.
  - They have an agreement with station managers regarding when they break into programming – basically it is a matter of public safety and they *will* break in. However, during major TV events (e.g., American Idol final), they might break in once and scroll afterwards.
  - It is sometimes difficult to see what the NWS is seeing. Sometimes they'll see a strong storm and wonder where the warning is, and sometimes they'll see a storm with a warning and wonder why a warning was issued.