

NOAA National Weather Service

Building a Weather-Ready Nation

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) provides weather, water, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters, and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS data and products form a national information database and infrastructure that is used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community.

Over the past few years, extreme weather, water, and climate events have hit communities across the country with devastating and tragic results; all the while, forecast accuracy continues to improve. It is clear that more has to be done. NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation (WRN) strategic goal is the agency's response to minimizing the loss of life and disruption of livelihoods.

Building a WRN not only means delivering better forecasts and warnings – timing, intensity, and expected impacts, it is about making the forecasts and warnings easier to understand and actionable for stakeholders such as emergency managers and more broadly for the public. The NWS continues to explore ways to enhance decision support services to enhance the nation's preparedness. NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service are moving new science and technology into operations which will improve forecasts, increase lead times and ultimately increase weather-readiness.

Building a WRN starts with these internal actions, but NOAA and the NWS can't build a WRN alone. It requires the action of a vast nationwide network of partners including government agencies, emergency managers, researchers, the media, insurance industry, non-profits, businesses, and the entire Weather Enterprise.

That is why in early 2014, NOAA launched the WRN Ambassador initiative. This initiative is NOAA's commitment to working with organizations to make our country ready, responsive, and resilient to extreme events. WRN Ambassadors are helping NOAA move the bar even higher whether by using NOAA data to generate and deliver valuable lifesaving information, or from the user side, taking a leadership role within their respective community and engaging their stakeholders to be ready, responsive, and resilient.

A "Weather-Ready Nation" is a strategic outcome where there is effective management of the nation's water supply, full understanding of climate-related risks, enhanced economic productivity, healthy ecosystems, and resilient communities. NOAA's NWS by the Numbers: Nearly 5,000 dedicated people work in 122 weather forecast offices, 13 river forecast centers, 9 national centers, 2 tsunami warning centers, and other support offices around the U.S. and its territories. Each year, NWS collects some 76 billion observations and issues approximately 1.5 million forecasts and 50,000 warnings.