REAL-WORLD METEOROLOGY

A series of profiles celebrating a half-century of Certified Consulting Meteorologists



Who: John D. Shewchuk

What: Consulting meteorologist

When: CCM since 1993

Where: Matamoras, Pennsylvania

Why: Realized the value of certification as a private meteorologist

How: John Shewchuk became a CCM a year before he retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Lt. Col. after 22 years with the Air Weather Service. While working as a military meteorologist and interacting with the international weather community, he recognized the advantage to those who routinely practiced the professional and ethical standards promoted by the CCM program. These experiences laid the foundation for John's transition into the world of private meteorology.

John's initial years as a private meteorologist were primarily focused on forensic meteorology, where he conducted detailed investigations and testified as an expert witness for legal cases in which weather was a factor. During this period, he began developing the RAOB (RAwinsonde OBservation) program as his personal tool to squeeze every bit of meteorological information out of the atmospheric sounding in support of forensic investigations. Today, his major focus is developing the RAOB program and supporting customers from 62 countries.

Even though John no longer holds a government job, he continues his public service work in two areas. Since 1995, he has participated as an NWS Cooperative Weather Observer, where he mans the Matamoras Station #36-5470 reporting weather conditions at 7 a.m. every morning to the BGM WFO in Binghamton, New York. He recently obtained his Ham Radio license (KB3UME) and is a member of the local Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) communications team, where he also provides Skywarn support

In His Own Words: "My passion is continuing the development of the RAOB program. Although it was originally used as my personal analysis tool, friends asked me to make it available to others. The initial DOS program quickly became popular, and now the Windows version is used by an international community consisting of government, industry, education, hobbyists, and other CCMs. Prior to RAOB's development, available sounding programs were limited to operating on a unique workstation, or would only process information of a particular data format. While user accessibility has improved, the most important advantage is its ability to transform data into information.

"I ensure that the CCM standards of professionalism apply at every stage of RAOB development. Program accuracy is the foremost priority, while program reliability and usability are also sustained. Just as the CCM must maintain the public's trust, I view the RAOB program as an extension of my certification and make every effort to maintain customer trust. I am proud to be a CCM and am honored to serve the meteorological community with the RAOB program."

For more information on the Certified Consulting Meteorologist (CCM) Program, please visit the AMS Web site at www.ametsoc.org/amscert/index.html.