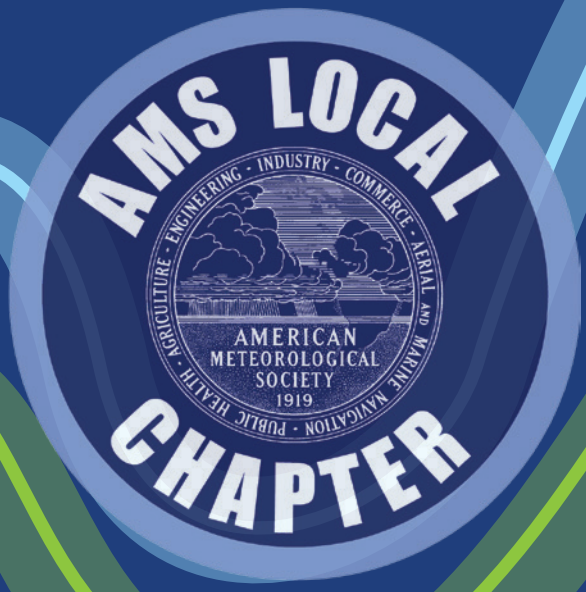


OUTREACH

CROWDSOURCED FROM LOCAL CHAPTERS

AMS LOCAL CHAPTER OUTREACH

As autonomous organizations and each with their own local context, AMS Local Chapters take part in a wide variety of activities, including social events, educational conferences, and youth outreach. This guide presents examples of activities and projects that Local Chapters have pursued in the past. You can pick, choose, discard, or tailor each suggestion however works best for your chapter.

Please note that these suggestions are for general guidance only and the AMS does not advocate or vouch for any of these activities in particular.

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Some chapters have been active without pause for many years and offer a wide variety of programs to their members. Others have gone through cycles of dormancy and activity, and some are just getting started with a brand new chapter.

Whether your chapter is new or established, membership is almost always a big concern. Whether it's keeping your existing members happy, or finding new people to keep your chapter sustainable, it can be a lot of work to keep people engaged. Recognizing this, Local Chapters have recorded some of their ideas and processes for filling the year with lots of exciting chapter content. Consider these questions and start planning:

What Are Your Goals?

> Set clear, achievable goals for your chapter: What impact do you want to have with your programming? How many members you want to recruit? What do you want to accomplish with outreach? How many volunteer projects or fundraisers will you do? Etc., etc.

What Resources Do You Have?

> Resources don't have to just be money. Time, social networks, design skills, etc. are all great resources that can help with your chapter's goals. Make a list of all the resources that you and your members have and then use it to develop the best strategies for your chapter.

How Is Your Chapter Sustainable?

> Make sure that your programming, membership recruitment, and retention efforts are not all dependent on one person. That is a surefire way to ensure that your chapter will be amazingly wonderfully active for a year or two and then fizzle out. Designate ways in which your chapter officers will each take the lead on a portion of programming and membership needs. Encourage your existing members to suggest projects or events and take an active role in identifying and engaging new people. Recruitment of potential new officers should be ongoing so that elections don't come as a surprise and your chapter isn't disrupted in the event that current officers suddenly move away, change careers, etc.

RECRUITMENT

No Such Thing As A Free Lunch

Host a lunch where current members eat for free as long as they bring a non-member friend with them.

For variations, you could partner with a restaurant to offer discounted meals to members or turn this into a potluck and hold a raffle with an extra ticket for everyone that brings a non-member friend.

Phone or Email Campaign

This is a classic approach for a reason. Make a list of prospective members and email or call them one at a time to explain why it's great to be a member of your chapter. Old school, but the personal touch works!

AMS headquarters will also help your chapter once a year with a digital mailing to all members in your area so you can invite a larger group to your meetings.

Networking in the Neighborhood

Invite other clubs, local groups, etc. to a networking event where you can get to know each other and identify common interests, activity opportunities, etc. You can keep this informal and have a happy hour get together or make it more formal, with presentations or joint discussions.

This is a great way to get to know other people in the area and create more content for future meetings by asking other groups to come present.

Gift Giveaway

Everybody likes to win prizes! Put together a gift basket or other items and hold a drawing for every member that recruits a new member. Putting together talking points for members to help recruit new members is a good idea to pair with this. It will help with marketing materials and makes it easier to recruit at any time.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Scheduling Speakers

Asking guest speakers to present at a Local Chapter meeting is a tried and true method for getting great meeting content. Some chapters offer quarterly speaker events; others do annual conferences with several speakers at once. Some chapters open their events to the general public; other chapters only allow their own members to attend.

The timing and number of speakers that you ask to provide content at your meetings will vary depending on your location and membership. It is often easier to get speakers if your chapter is attached to or near a university with a meteorology department and there are professors doing research into relevant topics. Non-local speakers can also be invited to share their research, experience, or ideas digitally via Skype, Google Hangouts, etc.

Sourcing Speakers

In addition to professors, speakers often include local broadcast meteorologists, National Weather Service staff, emergency managers, and also Local Chapter members themselves who are able share their professional or research experiences with the rest of the group.

Other ways to find speakers are to think outside the box. Many chapters partner with geologists, anthropologists, historians, ecologists, or other disciplines to create good discussion opportunities. Weather, climate, atmospheric and meteorological sciences impact basically everything. It can be exciting for both chapter members and the general public to discuss how weather changes trade, migration patterns, economic development, war, plant distribution, etc.

You can also consider partnering with local nonprofits or other social clubs to share content back and forth at meetings or identify volunteer projects for your chapter to take part in.

NETWORKING

Career Events

Local Chapters provide a crucial pathway for all types of people to learn about careers in Meteorology, Hydrology and Atmospheric Sciences. When Local Chapters host career events they help to keep those scientific fields growing and thriving. Career events have included

- Graduate School Panel - invite graduate students to come speak with your chapter about life in graduate school and their pathway to the sciences
- National Weather Service Panel - Many chapters host their local or national weather service staff as a guest speaker or invite multiple speakers to create a panel or career day.
- Tour of National Weather Service Offices - Touring your nearest NWS Office can be a great way to meet new people and learn how best to launch a NWS career.
- Tour a Local TV Station - Many broadcast meteorologists are willing to give local AMS chapters a tour of their studio and discuss television careers with members.

Collaborative Meetings

As a way to increase meeting content and meet new people, some chapters hold joint meetings (annually or regularly) with other professional organizations, social clubs or departments from their universities. This allows them to explore the impact of the atmospheric sciences on a wide variety of disciplines and to keep meeting content enriching. Regular partnerships include

- American Geophysical Union
- American Association of Geographers (or Geography Department)
- United States Geological Survey (or Geology Department)
- NASA
- National Weather Association Local Chapters
- Other AMS Chapters

MENTORING AND SOCIALS

Happy Hours and Ice Cream Socials

Most chapters like to include social events in their yearly programming that are dedicated to getting to know one another and sharing their love of weather and atmospheric science. These events can be paired with educational or outreach content, but are often separate. Examples include

- Ice Cream Social - as a summer event or a welcome back to school social
- Barbecues and Tailgating - many chapters like to host cookouts for their members or tailgate before a sporting event
- Camping or Mountain Excursions - for those chapters near forests and streams, camping is a great way to enjoy some bonding time. If people are lacking equipment they may be able to rent, borrow from a wilderness/adventure club on a college campus, or share items between members.
- Happy Hours - many chapters partner with local restaurants to hold happy hours with discounted drinks or host their own root beer float extravaganzas.

Local and AMS Mentors

Mentorship is an important way to retain members, help with career transitions, and advocate for science. Local Student Chapters often provide mentorship to incoming freshmen. This is a benefit to the university as a whole as well as to the Local Chapter since mentorship has been seen to increase rates of overall student retention as well as with chapter member retention.

Regular chapter members often provide mentorship to students that aren't as far along in their careers or need advice finding their next steps.

The AMS Career Services Department also connects national members with the Mentoring365 program along with a number of other Earth science organizations. Learn more here.

SCIENCE FAIR JUDGING

Science Fair judging is a traditional way for Local Chapters to engage in their community and to encourage younger folks to become involved with science. Science fair judging allows Local Chapters to promote AMS, gain membership at the local and national level, and promote science in the local community.

One of the main goals of local chapters is to extend the National AMS's reach into the local community. This includes outreach activities that promote Earth science, environment and policy. One of these activities is local science fair judging, where young aspiring scientist show off their talents and local chapters represent the AMS by judging science projects, representing AMS and rewarding those projects that are deemed the best with awards from AMS. However, often overlooked is the opportunity to engage these young students by providing them opportunities to join the local AMS chapter or National AMS.

As an additional award, several chapters have begun providing AMS student memberships to winning projects. This student membership allows the student to continue to learn about science, weather and climate and grow as a budding scientist within a large national organization. Typically the Weatherwise magazine is chosen as part of the membership because it is slightly less technical and appeals to those who have not gone through any college level classes. Also, many chapters have invited high school aged students who live locally to join their chapter free of membership dues. These are two ways to grow membership at the local and national level, and continue to promote the ideals that the AMS so proudly displays

For Example

Three members of the Smoky Mountain Chapter volunteered in operations and judging of the Southern Appalachian Science and Engineering Fair. It is a regional science fair that is held on the University of Tennessee campus each year. It was a great success with many impressive projects in both junior and senior divisions. In total, five awards were given out with three carrying $100 scholarships.

YOUTH OUTREACH

Local Chapters perform a variety of youth outreach and engagement activities with students of all ages - from preschool to high school - by using a variety of hands-on weather experiments and offering science learning opportunities in conjunction with science fairs, guest teaching invitations, Scout Badge trainings, after-school programs, and STEM camps.

Local K-12 schools are great partners for outreach events and may even have their own Local Chapter. Try reaching out to several in order to find one that is interested. The national AMS also has many education resources specifically for K-12 teachers which you may be able to connect local schools to.

Other partners that chapters have worked with include the Scouts of America, local aquaria and science museums, 4H clubs, STEM clubs, Science Bowls, Science Olympiad, after-school programs, summer camps, maker spaces and libraries.

Student chapters will also often host an educational day or fair for K-12 schools on their campuses. Atmospheric and Meteorological Science Departments will usually collaborate with Physics, Geology, Geography, etc. to create a jam packed eventful day for kids to learn about all different types of science.

Some Local Chapters will also fundraise to offer small scholarships to K-12 students that win science fairs or other science related competitions in the local area.

For Example

Jefferson Parks and Recreation After-school Program
UGA AMS members participated in an educational talk with young students in Jefferson, GA. Members talked about the basics of weather, including different types of clouds, precipitation, and severe weather. Members also gave life-saving advice and tips to young students and their caretakers about what to do when severe weather strikes.

Weather and meteorology are seldom discussed in K-12 education in the state of Georgia, so UGA AMS wanted to reach out to the local school system to offer our expertise on atmospheric sciences. Cedar Shoals High School in Athens, GA responded to our outreach and indicated interest in our offer to teach high school students about weather. We chose to focus on ingredients of severe weather and severe weather safety. We prepared a brief lecture highlighting the four ingredients of severe weather (shear, lift, instability, and moisture) and completed a lab using sling psychrometers to find dew point, wet/dry bulb temperatures, and relative humidity. Students were fascinated by the demonstration and information they learned.

The Western Kentucky University Student Chapter conducted the first ever undergraduate student lead weather camp in the nation. The camp was open to kids ages 10-14 and the camp was a commuting camp lasting from 9:00 AM. - 4:00 PM.. each day. We partnered with the National Weather Camps Program. If your chapter is looking at conducting a weather camp, we highly recommend it!

Iowa State University Student Chapter creates a variety of programs to appeal to younger scientists. Some are single events and others are ongoing. These activities include

- Weather presentation to elementary students at the Science Center of Iowa with an anemometer craft project
- General and severe weather presentation to the Boone, Iowa 4-H club, including our fun Weather Jeopardy quiz
- Boy Scouts of America Weather Merit Badge presentation, broadcast studio tour, and anemometer project
- Chapter members volunteered to serve as judges at the annual middle school and high school Science Bowl competition in central Iowa
- Science Nights at local elementary schools (Edwards, Sawyer, and Meeker) where chapter members interact with over one hundred children working on science activities
- Weather demonstrations to 3-5 year olds at the Child Development Lab
- Trained students weekly for the upcoming Science Olympiad competition
- Introduced the meteorology major and career path to middle school students at the annual Science Bound event
- Managed a severe weather poster contest for local elementary school students

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At the Southwest Pennsylvania Student Chapter, the Educational Outreach Committee (EOC) organizes visits to school districts in the surrounding communities to teach various Earth Science related lessons to the students. Some presentation topics have included: The Four Seasons, Careers as a Meteorologist, Hollywood: Fact or Fiction, Natural Hazards, and GIS. This year our EOC has visited more the 10 schools, reaching out to hundreds of students. Numerous schools made large "Thank You" cards with their student's signatures expressing their appreciation for the visit.

SEVERE WEATHER OUTREACH

Many AMS Local Chapters provide expertise in severe weather education and preparation for their communities. This can take several different forms in practice, including the following:

Severe Weather Fairs

Chapters have volunteered with the National Weather Service at a variety of Severe Weather Awareness Day events. This includes setting up tables, and performing other organizational duties as well as running a booth with information about Local Chapter activities and events.

Tabling at fairs on college campuses, participating in local WeatherFests or partnering with local Emergency Managers for preparedness fairs or National Night Out is another way that Local Chapters increase awareness of and education about severe weather.

Chapters can also hold their own severe weather preparedness nights or partner with other ongoing public engagement programs at libraries, farmer's markets, etc.

NOAA Weather-Ready Nation

Through this program, Local Chapters can partner with NOAA to increase weather readiness, responsiveness, and resilience to extreme weather events in their area. NOAA offers assistance with messaging and community collaborations as well as a great Weather-Ready badge! Learn more about the program at https://www.weather.gov/wrn/

For Example

The West Central Florida Chapter took part in the Tampa Bay Hurricane Expo at the Museum of Science and Industry. The goal of this expo is to provide the public with information on hurricane safety in Tampa Bay through activities, demonstrations, and displays. Our chapter worked closely with the local National Weather Service office in having a joint booth at the event. Our members contributed by having hands-on weather activities and providing information about hurricane awareness. The chapter invested in this event by giving bottle connectors to children so that they could do their own tornado experiment. To increase our advertising, we included our chapter logo and webpage on the connectors.

The Western Kentucky University Chapter took part in the Severe Weather Awareness Day (S.W.A.D.) at Trevecca Nazarene University. Each year, members from our local chapter travel to Nashville, TN to volunteer our time to help the National Weather Service with this event, as well as having our own booth to tell people about our local chapter and what we do. About 500 people attend S.W.A.D. every year and the goal of S.W.A.D. is get people aware of severe weather by explaining why severe weather happens as well as what to do when severe weather hits.

The chapter also held a Severe Weather Awareness Week Picture Contest to show our support for Severe Weather Awareness Week. Children in grades K-6 were encouraged to draw a picture that represents severe weather safety. At the end of the contest, WKU faculty and students voted for the best picture.

The Iowa State University Student Chapter worked with mobile home communities to develop severe weather evacuation plans in our ongoing Mobile Home Project. We also insulated and winterized homes for low-income families in Ames and worked with local school districts to make schools StormReady.