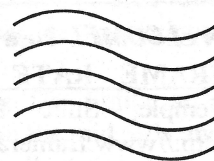




# NEWSLETTER

## National Weather Association



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### ***THE FUTURE OF WEATHER FORECASTING IS NOW***

My year as president is ending, it went extremely fast and was very exciting. Congratulations to the new officers and councilors for 1999. You will find that while it is a privilege to be an NWA officer, it also carries with it a responsibility to maintain the credibility of our Association. As Professor Jim Moore takes over the reins as president, the NWA will be in good hands as we approach the new millennium. Jim brings a wealth of new ideas and enthusiasm to the table.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of you, the members of the NWA, for your support and encouragement during the last 12 months. I especially appreciate the assistance of the Council members, committee chairpersons and members, the *Digest* and Newsletter editors, the home page curators, and the 1998 Annual Meeting Coordinators. I also want to acknowledge Jim Moore and Russ Schneider who edited most of these essays, and most of all Kevin Lavin, the NWA executive director, who does the thousands of things that are necessary to maintain a strong professional organization.

In the first of this series of essays, I noted that "the tools, the scientific credibility, and the necessary infrastructure are all coming into place so that weather forecasts and warnings both truly protect lives and property, and enhance prosperity. There are still some challenges to be met, but we have crossed the frontier of making weather a true industry." Those words are even truer today than they were a year ago.

Today's National Weather Service is much different than the one that existed only last January, and plans are being made for even more dramatic changes in the near future. The Air Force Weather Agency (AFWA), formed just last year as part of the US Air Force Weather reengineering effort, is continuing to improve on a long history of strong, customer-driven, mission-oriented support. AFWA and the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command are now using mesoscale prediction models in support to worldwide military operations and are enthusiastic about future fine-scale developments for increased accuracy and enhanced customer support.

The significant weather events of this past year have underscored the value to electronic media of individuals who are not only good communicators, but also weather professionals. The public's growing awareness of environmental issues is creating new markets for industrial and forensic meteorologists, while a growing number of weather dependent industries are seeing the economic value of having private meteorologists provide forecasts customized to specific needs. The metamorphosis of our profession is continuing.

While this bodes well for the future, we must all remember that the foundation of weather business is service. In times of change, when budgets shrink or resources decrease, service often seems like a laudable goal rather than an essential part of doing business. It is tempting to rely on voice mail systems, e-mail, home pages, and similar technological contrivances to handle the interpersonal communications that are an integral part of our occupation. While this might be expedient, it takes operational meteorologists away from their customers. This year saw an increase in calls to the NWA office from many parts of the country requesting weather forecasts and other weather data. This indicated that more citizens are becoming "weatherwise," but do not know how best to obtain information when they need it. Many callers told us they were referred by directory assistance operators who indicated this was the closest listing to a weather service organization. If customers do not know who provides their weather support services, nor how best to obtain weather information when they need it, they can't be counted on to support, much less help defend, service improvements or budget relief. All NWA members can help in this continual customer education process. Yes, the future of weather forecasting is now, but many of us, as operational meteorologists or in related fields have to earn our place in it daily.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing you at the 1999 Annual Meeting in Biloxi next October.

- Joe Schaefer

### ***Happy New Year!***

The NWA Council and staff send best wishes to all for good health, happiness, prosperity and quality weather support service in the New Year.