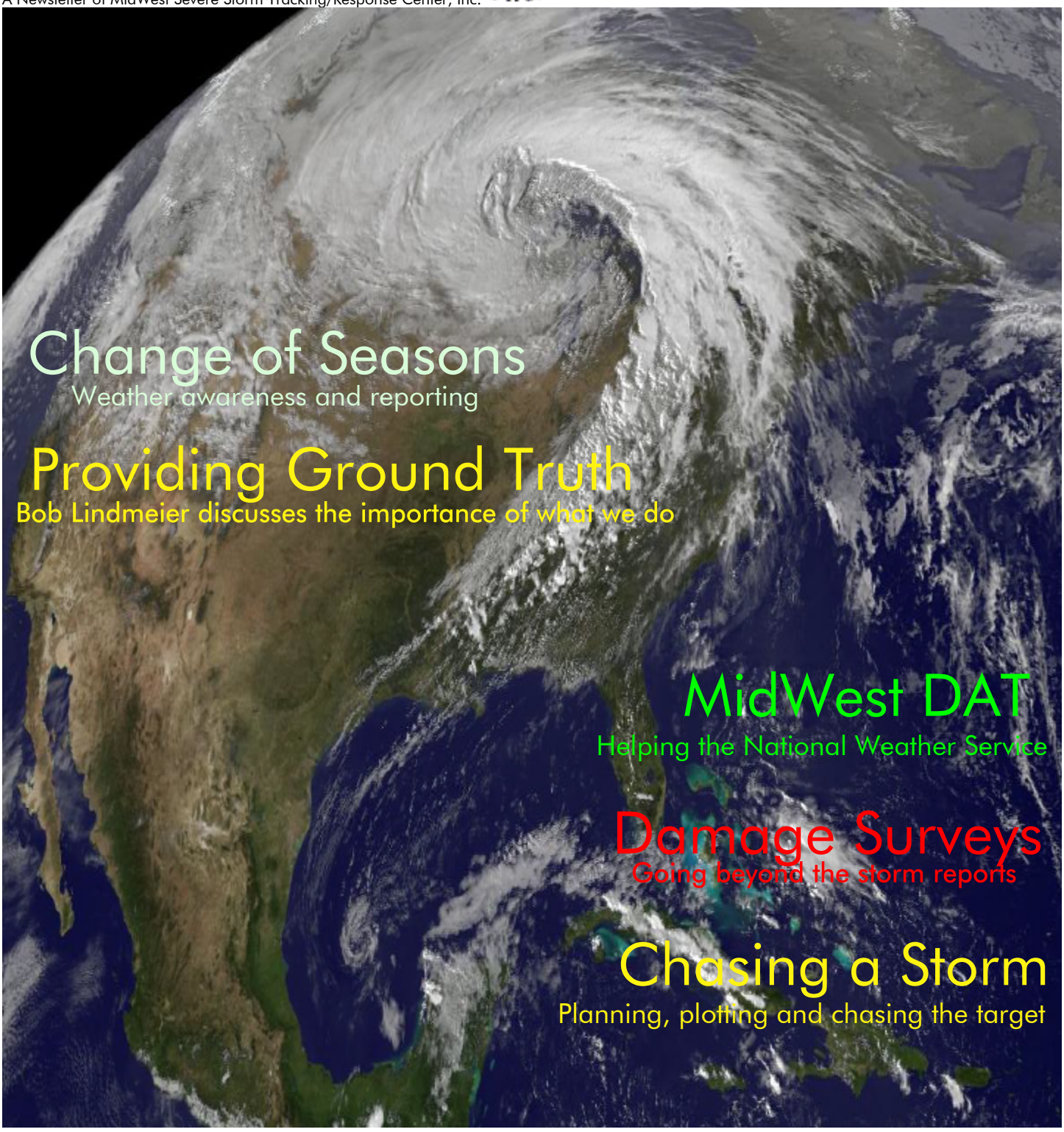
# MidWest Tracker

newsletter

Fall/Winter, 2010

Visit us at http://www.midwestsstrc.org

A Newsletter of MidWest Severe Storm Tracking/Response Center, Inc.



## Change of Seasons

Weather awareness and reporting

## Providing Ground Truth

Bob Lindmeier discusses the importance of what we do

## MidWest DAT

Helping the National Weather Service

## Damage Surveys

Going beyond the storm reports

## Chasing a Storm

Planning, plotting and chasing the target

Dale Bernstein, President/CEO
MidWest SSTRC, Inc.

## Welcome to the *MidWest Tracker Newsletter*!

As the days of summer have faded and we transition into the fall season let's take a look at the first three quarters of 2010.

First and foremost, I would like to thank each and every MidWest Team Member for their dedication in which they serve our communities. Once again, 2010 has been and continues to be, a busy and evolving year for MidWest.

Volunteering will always remain one of the toughest and demanding means of personal involvement. Family and career schedules - and additional commitments, will always be a challenge as to what degree they the volunteer are able to offer at any given time.

MidWest remains extremely privileged that many Team Members are able to present so much time, energy and resources in getting the job done. Each and every Volunteer Organization relies on these Team Members and it is greatly appreciated beyond words. That by no means reduces the interest, involvement or dedication of those Team Members who give back when and how they are able.

Starting in the spring of this year, MidWest assisted in multiple National Weather Service Severe Weather Classes in multiple Wisconsin Counties. MidWest has participated and co-hosted these classes for years and we will continue to do so in the future. MKX Rusty Kapela and all the folks from the National Weather Service do a fantastic job in educating all those who attend.

MidWest looks forward to an increased participation with these referred to Spotter Classes in 2011. This will enable even greater public and media involvement, and will being new members to the MidWest Team throughout the Counties we serve and beyond. MidWest also continues to accept community requests from Boy/Cub/Girl Scouts, Volunteer Fire Departments, Communities and others, for severe weather presentations.

MidWest Team Member Lisa Roberts was named to the Board of Directors. We appreciated the unsung personal commitment from each of the Board Members and also the Members of the MidWest Advisory Board.

MidWest Team Member Brent Cook accepted the position of Wisconsin Rock County Operations Manager. Team Member Mike Wolkomir accepted the position of Wisconsin Iowa County Operations Manager and Team Member Dan Starker accepted the position of MidWest Training Coordinator. Hedi Nava continues her excellent duties as our MidWest Member Coordinator as well as does Steve Fitzsimmons as our MidWest Newsletter Editor.

This year we saw the idea stage of the MidWest Damage

IN THIS *Issue*



Cover: On October 26, 2010 a historic Low Pressure system moved through the state bringing with it 65+MPH winds, one tornado and breaking Wisconsin's record for lowest pressure ever recorded, 961.3 millibars. http://www.crh.noaa.gov/mkx/?n=102610_recordcyclone

# Midwest news

## Appreciation & Gratitude

Assessment Team grow to reality with D.A.T. members Tim Shriver, Robin Shriver, Hedi Nava, Lisa Roberts, Tom Roberts, Rick Volbrecht, Brent Cook and Dale Bernstein thus far. (Please see the section on D.A.T. news)

MidWest has joined the Sullivan Committee! (Please see the section on MidWest SulCom)

Of course there are many others who work tirelessly behind the scenes, to include web hosting, radio – tower - repeaters, and the list is endless as to what it takes and who gives so much for the MidWest organization that we continue to serve our communities 7/24/365 in the most professional means possible – and we thank each and every one!

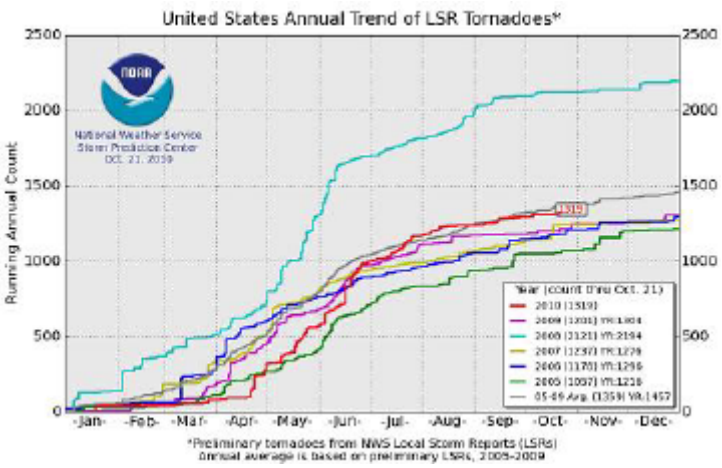
We have seen the expansion of MidWest Media involvement in the interest of Public Safety. Starting this 2010 winter you will see a greater interaction between MidWest and the Media with live up to date various source reporting directly to the Media in the interest of public safety and early severe storm awareness. (Please see the section on MidWest Media)

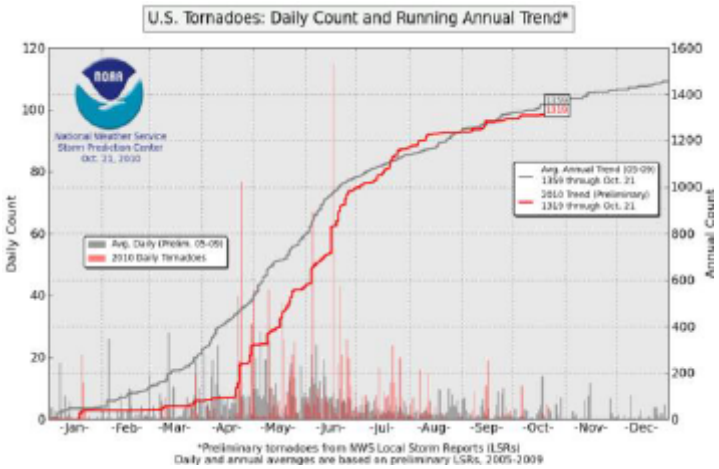
The year has seen an increase for those Team Members to carry out the weekly MidWest Radio Check-In Nets, both on the Business Band side as well as our Ham side. MidWest Team Members have also increased participation in Net Control, MOD and AMOD duties as well as receiving greater Team Member input in our Radar Ops, Nowcasting and Forecasting area. We look forward to increased training and greater participation in this and all other areas of training.

With the assistance of the MidWest Servere Storm Tracking/Response Center and other organizations, the National Weather Service has recorded 43 tornadoes. This translates to 2010 being the second busiest tornado year on record for Wisconsin (as of 09-03-10).

That is more than double the number of tornadoes that normally occur in Wisconsin, and ties the number of tornadoes in 1980, and only falls behind those reported in 2005 when the official count was at 62.

With such professional organizations like MidWest SSTRC, Inc., early warning and public education remain the main ingredient to personal





***Training, training, training, has – is and yes, will always remain a challenge for us, as it does with any organization whose focus and mission is to be the best of the best...***

safety. Of those forty three reported tornadoes, not one loss of life has occurred and that is simply outstanding!

Yes there have been injuries, to include those 15 persons injured by the 21 June 2010 tornado that occurred in the Eagle Wisconsin area. However, it is what we and others do, to provide the necessary ground truth in providing the early detection of violent storms that helps most.

As we look back at 2010, we did the job we have been asked to do and we have done well. MidWest continues to be extremely fortunate in the talented membership base that we have and again we thank each and every one of them!

Certainly there will always be room for advancement, for training, for teaching, for experience, to grow with today's and tomorrows technology, to welcome new members so that we may continue to serve our communities.

MidWest is looking forward to the 2011 NWS Spotter Classes, with great anticipation, along with additional media and public involvement.

MidWest continues to assist in any way it can in the protection of life and property from any threat, be it natural or man made.

As always, stay informed and stay safe. Knowledge and experience are the best means to success.

D. Bernstein
President/CEO


Wisconsin State Journal

Central Madison housing up in air

THEIR JOB IS TO FACE THE STORM


Next Meeting of MidWest SSTRC Inc.
DANE * IOWA * ROCK

Monday November 15, 2010
1011 Nichols Road
Monona, WI
7:00 PM CST

2010 Holiday Party
*Tuesday, December 14, 2010,*
*7 PM - 10 PM at The Tower Inn*

## H E L P F U L *Links*

1. NWS Spotter Page
2. MidWest Training Resources
3. Milwaukee SkyWarn
4. MAST
5. Tornado Summaries (SPC)
6. MidWest SSTRC Store
7. MidWest Cafe Press Store
8. Jetstream - NWS Training

## Mark Your Calendar

**March 13, 2011** Daylight Savings Time begins - Push clocks ahead 1 hour at 2 AM ("spring forward").

**March 14-18, 2011** Flood Safety Week

**April 1-15, 2011** Wisconsin Tornado & Severe Weather Awareness Week (Drill Day on the 14th, 1 to 2 pm).

**April 5-29, 2011** Air Quality Awareness Week (sponsored by EPA & NWS)

**May 11, 2011** NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards Day in Wisconsin

**May 15-20, 2011** National Safe Boating Week (sponsored by National Safe Boating Council)

**June 5-11, 2011** Rip Current Awareness Week

**June 9, 2011** Wisconsin Heat Awareness Day

**June 19-25, 2011** National Lightning Safety Awareness Week

**June 23 - July 3, 2011** Milwaukee's Summerfest

**June 25-26, 2011** Field Day (ARRL Sponsored Event on National Emergency Preparedness)

**July 25 - July 31, 2011** AirVenture (EAA Fly-in: Oshkosh Wittman Field Airport)

**August 4-14, 2011** Wisconsin State Fair, West Allis

*Courtesy of NWS*

## D.A.T. News

MidWest Disaster Assessment Team, Dale Bernstein, Team Leader

Involvement in Disaster Assessment has been a long term goal for MidWest. We are pleased to announce the formation of the MidWest SSTRC Disaster Assessment Team.

Together with the D.A.T. members the outlay of ideas, planning, initial training and a D.A.T. Field Manual has brought forth the formal and recognized MidWest D.A.T. Current MidWest D.A.T. members include; Tim Shriver, Robin Shriver, Hedi Nava, Lisa Roberts, Tom Roberts, Rick Volbrecht, Brent Cook and myself Dale Bernstein.

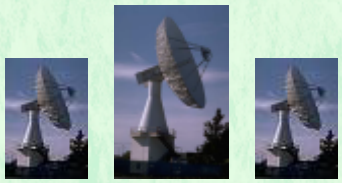
As with our General Meetings, regularly scheduled D.A.T. meetings are conducted of which on- going training, tactical discussion, networking and more takes place.

The MidWest D.A.T. retains the MidWest Mission Statement. It is to the point, to assist in any means that we can and that we are called upon to do so.

MidWest D.A.T. has been deployed multiple times already this year. We reported our survey information to the National Weather Service, which resulted in multiple confirmed tornadoes here in Wisconsin. MidWest D.A.T. remains as does MidWest, on duty and on call 7/24/365.

MidWest D.A.T. will deploy for internal survey informational use and training and will deploy when a qualified request is received. As with MidWest, MidWest D.A.T. members are strictly voluntary and we deeply appreciate the amount of time and dedication they give forth.

## Wednesday Night Nets



1. Check-ins begin at 7:00 PM on the Ham Radio side on 444.375, 444.750 and 444.575 Mhz. *Practice reporting in TLCS format.*

2. Check-ins begin at 7:30 PM on the Business Band side on 451.275 Mhz. Practice reporting in TLCS format. *Test your radios.*

3. **T**ime: The time of event.
**L**ocation: Where you are reporting from.
**C**ondition: What are you reporting.
**S**ource: Your call sign.

D.A.T. surveys are more often then not, a challenge. They are structured on accuracy with professional information gathering based on training, knowledge, experience and more. Techs in the woods, back country roads, personal interviews, photographic and physical evidence, granting of

permissions to cross agricultural and private lands -- there is more than meets the eye to assure the accuracy and professional results that must be presented.

In years past we were fortunate to obtain damage path information from aerial surveys provided by an Ultra Light and on one occasion a single engine aircraft. We have long known of the benefits of aerial surveys to determine damage and tornadic storm paths. The Ultra Light is a wonderful means of aerial data collection, being inexpensive and accessible through the generosity of the owner/pilot Chris Gullikson of which we are deeply grateful of his continued assistance.

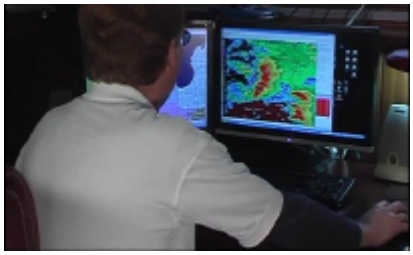
With cost and response time in mind, MidWest D.A.T. is in the planning stages of a new aerial data collection means and is scheduled for full field test operations in the spring of 2011. Commonly referred to as a UAV (Unmanned Arial Vehicle), there will be no vehicle and or control cost to MidWest and or to the MidWest D.A.T. At this time I suspect there will also be a beta test period for onboard A/V equipment. I continue to absorb pilot and control training and I remain confident that the test period will bring the UAV up to full duty status within the start of 2011.

As MidWest D.A.T. may be deployed at a greater rate it is imperative that we keep up on the available technology to fulfill our missions. The MidWest D.A.T. UAV may also be called upon to assist in other areas as requested by recognized agencies and or organizations to include, but not limited to assisting in recognized Search and Rescue Operations.

As with MidWest itself, MidWest D.A.T continues to grow.

Congratulations to the entire MidWest D.A.T. for a job well done!


**Special Note:** Adam Chernow submitted the Midwest SSTRC Promotional Video he did this past spring into the MCA-I: Madison WAVE awards. He doesn't know if he won or not, but should know by the November meeting. Good luck Adam! To see this informative video, here is the link ... http://www.youtube.com/user/midwestsstrc



## Damage Surveys…Going Beyond Just the Severe Weather Report. *Rusty Kapela, WCM*

First, let's set the record straight. The National Weather Service greatly appreciates your effort to provide accurate severe weather reports. The NWS is Your National Weather Service. The NWS is only as good as the support it gets.

So, you managed to relay a couple excellent severe weather reports to the NWS during a 4-hour severe weather outbreak across southern Wisconsin. The watches end, you get some sleep, and then go to work the next day, run errands, or whatever. It's time to completely forget about that severe weather outbreak. Right?

From the NWS side of the house, maybe not. There may have been 10 to 15 tornadoes in southern Wisconsin during that outbreak. There may also have been a couple major microbursts that leveled thousands of trees, and a couple reports of 5-inch diameter hail that damaged thousands of homes and vehicles.

Someone has to document the timing, severity, and extent of that wild severe weather. This could be a huge undertaking. Who is ultimately responsible for all of that documentation? The NWS is responsible – and remember….local residents clean up the debris and trees the next morning faster than you can boo. Did you know that I spent 8 hours trying to document the March 8, 2000 tornado that spun up at Milwaukee Mitchell Field? Good thing I didn't have to survey 10 tornadoes on that day!

This is where you come in. Several MidWest SSTRC members have pushed themselves out of their comfort zone and learned the in's and out's of post-storm damage surveys in order help the NWS make sense out of what happened. Can you do the same? You'll be amazed how much you'll learn! Contact the leadership of MidWest to point you toward the training material.

On July 22, 2010, ten tornadoes spun up across south-central and southeast Wisconsin. There were also some thunderstorm wind reports. Too much to document, and not enough time. So I contacted MidWest and requested some help in documenting tornadoes in Dane and Rock counties. They sent out several teams while I and a couple other meteorologists concentrated on the counties of Jefferson, Waukesha, and Walworth. Success was the result – MidWest documented a tornado near Mt. Horeb, and another one near Albion, both in Dane County. In Rock County, they proved that a tornado report didn't pan out – turns out the person in Rock County was observing a tornado in Jefferson County.

What do you have to accomplish in a damage survey? Here's the run-down:

**1.** Take digital pictures of the damaged structures and trees – including some close-up shots of the building's foundation and damaged walls/roof. Then, e-mail your pictures to rusty.kapela@noaa.gov

**2.** Using some kind of mapping software, sketch out the damaged area, or possibly the center-line of a tornado damage track, and e-mail the graphic to Rusty.

**3.** Try to talk to some local people and ask them for their name and telephone number and what time the storm struck, what they saw, etc. E-mail this information to Rusty.

**4.** Be ready to talk to Rusty on the telephone and discuss the severity and pattern of the damage so that we can determine if it was a tornado or a downburst.

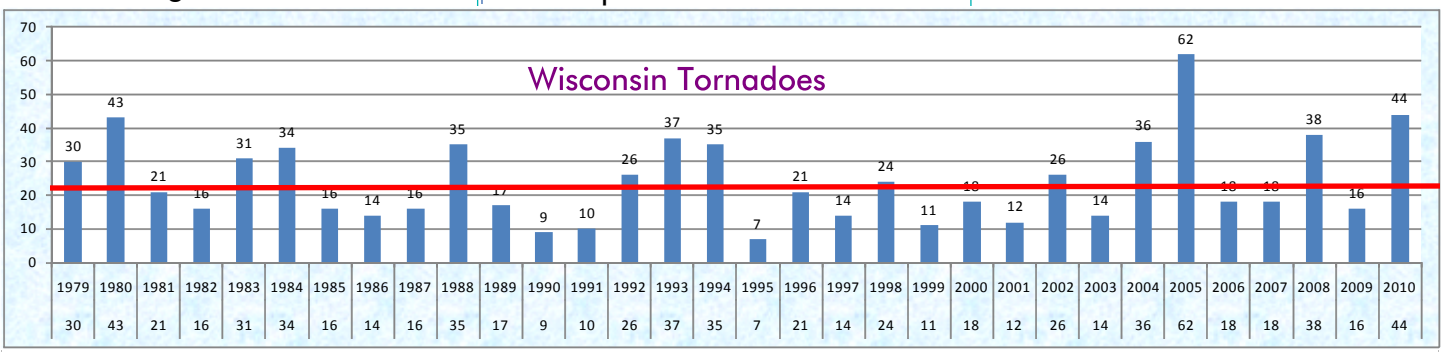
**5.** Should you meet up with media members, please do not make an official announcement of what you think the storm was (tornado or downburst), or what the EF-rating of the tornado will be. This can lead to confusion and in the end actually create more work for all of us. Tell the reporter that you are just gathering facts that will help the NWS determine what actually happened, and request that they contact the NWS for more details.

Last, but least, you may be able to gather more severe weather reports during the next couple days when you talk to relatives, friends, co-workers, and/or drive your vehicle. Even Post Office employees are a possible source of weather information.

Rusty Kapela, *Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM)* WFO Milwaukee


JANESVILLE MESSENGER

SPOTTING A STORM

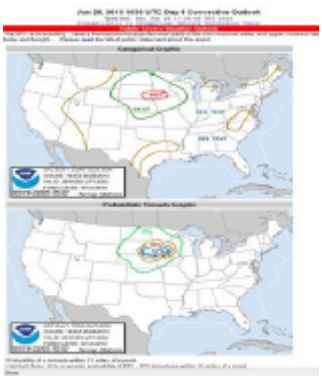


# A Long String

by *George E. Hrabovsky*

Here it was, the 26th of June, and it was probably going to be our last chase of the season. We had gone out three times before and not intercepted anything tornadic; not even any good storms, really. Our driver, Jim, was changing jobs and he would be on the road a lot, so with our car not working, this was it. I looked at the situation and pondered. Here is the situation that I was looking at in southern Minnesota:

There was good convergence, a negative tilt trough cutting into the region, and warm front coming up from the south, and a possible triple point developing. It looked reasonably good. SPC agreed and put out this outlook:



So we went for it. We left just after noon. And we drove, and drove, and drove. At 5PM we stopped for dinner and checked the weather. There was, and had been for many hours, a tornado watch for our target area. Nothing was developing though. We were at a critical point in the chase. Should we head back, and get nothing, or do we risk continuing with the possibility that nothing would develop. We decided, since it was likely the last chase for us this year, to go on.

We arrived in the target area just as the watch ended at 8 PM. A new watch, this time as sever thunderstorm watch was issued. I did not like the look of the clouds, they looked like a big squall line to me. And it was.

We proceeded to the west of Albert Lea and went north on 169. We managed to get just north of Winnebago when all Hell started to break loose. There were towers firing ahead of the squall line. We stopped and watched them. it was getting too dark to get good pictures. By 9 PM we could see the cloud base and it arched around from our west to our north. It was a bit strange, it looked like a supercell, but I knew it was a squall line.

Then it hit me! It was a Line-Echo-Wave-Pattern (LEWP)! That was why it looked like a supercell. As we watched a wall cloud formed and began rotating. Then tendrils formed beneath it and danced in a spiral pattern in front of us. It lasted only a minute or so. Then the squall line hit and we were in rain so hard we could barely see across the hood.

We rode storms with numerous severe wind warnings, flash flood warnings, and several tornadoes all the way back to Madison. It was about 4 AM when we got home.

The moral of the story, sometimes a forecast is right, and you just have to stick with it to the end no matter how bad things look until it all comes together where you thought it would!

*George E. Hrabovsky is the president of Madison Area Science and Technology (MAST), an organization that offers advanced spotter training among other opportunities to learn and grow. He is currently working on a physics book with Leonard Susskind, one of the inventors of string theory.*

# Redoubling efforts

## CHANGE OF SEASONS

*By Tim Shriver, Chief Operating Officer, MidWest 122*

With the change of the seasons, we need to remind ourselves that winter has its own set of weather events and dangers.

These dangers can come in the form of typical severe weather, like severe thunderstorms, hail, lightning, high winds and yes, tornadoes (except for February on Tornadoes).

Since MidWest SSTRC Inc. is tasked with protecting life and property from any and all threats, be they natural or man made, we need keep our skills sharp and be ready for the unique weather events that the cooler/colder part of the year brings us.

About 70 percent of the deaths during the winter are due to traffic accidents in hazardous winter weather. 25 percent of the deaths occur due to folks getting caught outside in the elements.

The accurate and timely reporting of the effects of a winter storm or severe winter weather event is just as important to public safety as our summertime severe weather events.

I ask that all MidWest members and supporters redouble their efforts in the coming months to improve their storm reporting abilities, help MidWest complete needed projects and provide even more public awareness of severe weather.

**Be Prepared**

Weather awareness and reporting:

**1.** Do you have an accurate thermometer? Wind Gauge? Rain Gauge?

**2.** Have you reviewed the winter reporting protocols for MidWest?

**3.** Are you checking in as much as you can to the MidWest radio nets?

**4.** Are you attending meetings as much as you can to stay up-to-date and relevant?

**5.** Are you able to post weather reports via eSpotter?

**6.** Area(s) selected for snow measurements? Three is good. Five is best.

**7.** Can you see major roads/buildings that could be

## MidWest 2010 End of Year Holiday Event!

Each December, MidWest hosts a Holiday Event gathering. As in the past all MidWest Members, Board of Advisors, those who support MidWest and those folks who are interested in meeting MidWest are welcome to attend. We do ask for a RSVP from those attending, which will facilitate in our planning of the event.

**When:** Tuesday, December 14, 2010, 7 PM - 10 PM

**Where:** Tower Inn on Broadway, 1008 East Broadway, Monona, WI

*Members are asked to bring a dish to pass.*

**Contact:** Dale Bernstein, dale.bernstein@midwestsstrc.org

affected and you could report on?

**Be Ready if things go bad**

**1.** Do you have an alternate source of power and heat?

**2.** Are your cars winterized and ready for cold and snow?

**3.** Are your communication devices ready and in good shape?

**4.** Extra food and staples incase you are snowed or iced in?

**5.** Snow blowers, shovels ready?

## WHY? WHEN? HOW? and WHY ME?

*By Tim Shriver, Chief Operating Officer, MidWest 122*

Reporting of winter events is not all that much different than

reporting of any other type of severe weather.

T.L.C.S. is still used, but some additional information may be wanted/needed.

Here is what KMKX (Rusty) suggests:

Time report transmitted

Time snow measurement taken

Location of snow report*

6-hour (or 24 hour) new snowfall in inches

Current snow depth in inches**

Optional additive info - current visibility, wind conditions, temps, road conditions, max snow rate (inches per hours), etc.

*referenced to the nearest city/village to the nearest mile and 16 compass points.

(MW122 NOTE: NWS Reference Points work best)

**average of at least 5 measurements scattered across the property. This would be known as the "current snow depth". A combination of old and new snow together which has consolidated/settled.

MW122 NOTE: Use a white board, 3 foot by 3 foot or larger. Place 3 – 5 of them around in open areas.

Measure all 3-5 to come to an average.

Remember, 2 inches all ready on the ground and 4 more just fell, does not mean you have 6 inches on the

ground. Be sure to measure it.

But if one or two is what you have, insure it/they is/are not affected by shade, tunnel winds, drifting etc.

Also, reporting large amounts of drifting or the drifting shut of roads is very important to report.

Rusty goes on to say:

"When measuring new snowfall...and the total snow (old and new) on the ground....it can only be done once every 6 hours or more...with the 6 hour time frame being the minimum. You can choose to measure snow once every 24 hours, or once every 12 hours, or once every 6 hours. If you measure once every hour...that's fine...but there will be settling and the once every 6 hours is what we do in the NWS."

"Example: You have a steady to moderate snowfall for 12 hours (not common) with no snow on the ground initially. Let's assume you measure 1 inch each hour on a white snow board. At first, you think that you measured 12 inches of new snow. Not entirely correct..since you violated the 6-hour rule. Six hours of settling might give you a 6-hour new snow measurement of only 5 inches in the first six hours...that is...even though you measured 1 inch each hour, your new snow measurement after 6 hours (depth of new snow on ground) would only be 5 inches. Five inches is what you report to us for a 6-hour total. Now...let's assume the exact same thing happens in the next 6 hours....you now have 10 inches of new snow since the snow started. Additional settling in the 2nd six hours might give you a total snow depth at the end of the 12-hour snow period of only 9 inches. You eSpotter, email or call the NWS and tell us you picked up 10 inches of new snow and have a total snow depth of 9 inches."

Reports of an urgent or severe nature should be submitted via radio net, if one is ongoing or phoned in directly to the WFO.

The following are winter weather events that we should activate and have ongoing nets for:

**1.** Major ongoing traffic incidents and/or major road closures.

**2.** Blizzards.

**3.** Major ice storms.

**4.** Sizable power outages.

Runs much like the summer events. It is up to the MODs/AMODs to be aware and for everyone to lend a hand where and when needed.

I am sure there are other winter events that will warrant a net or activation but the ones above are the basics.

Remember, we do not use condition level "Blue" for winter weather events.

**Please see this link for more information on activation levels:**

http://www.sulcom.info/winter_procedures/winter_criteria.htm

When reporting hazardous road conditions or winter storm reports, T.L.C.S. works well, but adding mile marker(s) information and the name of the road is important. Nearest

cross roads also help. If there is an ongoing major impact to people, structures and/or traffic corridors we need to know this ASAP! Waiting only allows the

situation to worsen. Getting the word out to public safety entities and the public are vital.

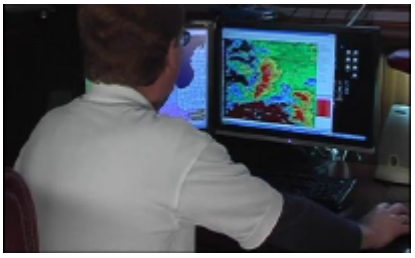
As a well trained spotter/tracker, you have the unique ability to see, recognize, report

and affect change on an event. Let's make use of these talents year 'round.

Your safety first! Be prepared and be safe!

Tim, MidWest 122

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION**



**NWS Winter Storm Prediction**

http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/wwd/winter_wx.shtml

**SPC Winter Impact Graphics**

http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/wwd/impactgraphics/

**NWS Six Hour Snowfall**

http://www.weather.gov/forecasts/graphical/sectors/conus.php?element=SnowAmt

**Probability Of Freezing Rain (day 1 – 3)**

http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/wwprobs/zr_probabilities.php

**NWS Recent Snowfall and Snow Depth Maps**

http://lwf.ncdc.noaa.gov/snow-and-ice/recent.php

**NWS Winter Weather Terminology**

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories/s794c.htm

**SulCom Winter Storm Report Criteria**

http://www.sulcom.info/winter_procedures/winter_criteria.htm

## Afternoon with Gary

*Steve Fitzsimmons, MidWest 136*

Over the past year, MidWest members were invited for a special behind the scenes tour of WISC-TV Weather Central. Meteorologist Gary Cannalte was a most gracious host. We were shown how images of him cast against a green screen were merged with weather images in the computer producing the screens we see on TV every night.

Everyone had a chance to participate. As we looked at the large green screen behind us, we saw the images the computer produced making it look like we were standing in front of a weather forecast.


Towards the end of the tour, Gary took questions and shared some of his personal experiences being in the business. It was fun. Thanks Gary!

## 27 Storm Track Meteorologist Bob Lindmeier

After 30 years in the television weather broadcast business, I have come to truly appreciate the value of storm spotters. The ground truthing the storm spotters provide during severe weather events is absolutely crucial during my severe weather coverage on Channel 27.

The improvements made over the years on the NWS NexRad Doppler radar, and the new algorithms available to us to quantify and pinpoint different types of severe weather on our Weather Central ESP computer (our front end to NexRad radar data) have significantly improved the severe weather product presented to our viewers. We are now much more precise and confident of what we say to our viewers about severe weather than even just ten years ago.

However, without the ground truthing provided by spotters, all of our technology would be a lot less effective. There is a big difference between "a radar indicated tornado" and "a storm spotter report of a tornado on the ground". When the station receives reports of damage or an actual funnel, we will ramp up our coverage even more and zero in on the location of the report.

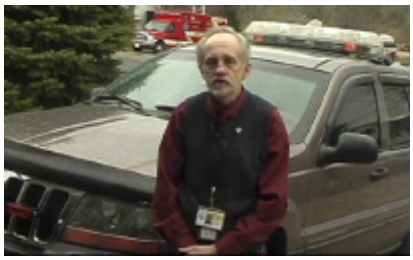
During the winter, storm spotters are of great value too. During a winter storm, the density of the ASOS network is not enough to accurately portray the weather picture over our viewing area, especially when mixed precipitation events are occurring.

This is why the Storm Track team at WKOW-TV is excited to partner with MidWest SSTRC during storm events. The storm spotters at Midwest SSTRC will be able to provide valuable, specific information to supplement the storm coverage provided by the Storm Track weather team during both summer and winter storm events.

In exchange we are hopeful that the increased visibility provided to Midwest SSTRC by being on-air at WKOW-TV will increase the visibility of your organization and increase its membership.

## MidWest SulCom

*Dale Bernstein, President/CEO*
*MidWest SSTRC, Inc*



We are pleased to announce that *MidWest Severe Storm Tracking/Response Center* has been selected as a Team Participant with The Sullivan Committee.

The Sullivan Committee (SulCom) is a working group of volunteer based service organizations that establish collection and communications standards for collection of near real-time and residual ground-truth weather data in support of NOAA's National Weather Service Forecast Office at Milwaukee / Sullivan, WI.

Sullivan Weather has near and long-term weather forecasting responsibility for twenty counties in Southern Wisconsin of which are: *Colombia, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Green, Green Lake, Iowa, Jefferson, Kenosha, Lafayette, Marquette, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha and the adjacent coastal waters of Lake Michigan from Winthrop Harbor IL to Sheboygan WI.*

As does MidWest SSTRC, SulCom has scheduled meetings year round.

Chief Operations Officer Tim Shriver has been named the primary MidWest SulCom representative and President/CEO Dale Bernstein has been named the secondary Midwest SulCom representative.

MidWest is looking forward to the participation with SulCom and other area SulCom Teams in the interest of pubic safety and advancing the level for the early detection and warning of severe storms.

NWS Sullivan, WI

## Only the Crystal Ball Knows

In less than four months it will be Spring and you know what that means -- storm spotter classes! What will 2011 be like? Only the crystal ball knows.

MidWest SSTRC Newsletter Editor
Steve Fitzsimmons

Thank you for letting me be your newsletter editor. It is always fun and rewarding to work with all of our contributors behind the scenes who make this newsletter the success it is. If you think of an idea that can help *MidWest Tracker* in any way, please let Dale or me know and we'll see if it can be done.

2010 will go down in my book as a very active year for weather. I think we seen a little of everything this year from the second highest number of tornadoes ever recorded in Wisconsin (44), to record breaking Lows that brought winds in excess of 65 MPH across our state. One meteorologist in Illinois even compared this Low equal in pressure to a category three hurricane.

This past year we experienced flooding rains, hood damaging hail and tree crushing winds. What a year. If there was ever a time to speak of the importance of such an organization as *MidWest*, this is it. Time and time again, MidWest members answered the call and responded, thereby helping their communities and the National Weather Service. Some days we would be at condition red, yellow or green all day, sometimes many days in a row. Mother Nature was relentless. I personally experienced a large tree limb hit on my roof and have many new dents in my car hood as I'm sure many of you have too.

As you read through the newsletter, you'll quickly notice how MidWest continues to grow. One area noteworthy is the addition of the Damage Assessment Team (DAT). This team is in addition to what MidWest already does everyday and speaks volumes to the professionalism of the organization. What this means to you is there are now more opportunities than ever to become involved and help the organization at every level and opportunities for you to grow and learn.

Speaking of learning, one of the first things I learned at MidWest SSTRC was the importance of weather alert radios. These radios are life savers. If you don't have one, buy one ASAP, because these are the radios that can wake you at 3 AM and warn you of approaching threatening weather like tornadoes.

Who knows what the weather will bring over the next few months. One thing is certain, whatever it throws, MidWest SSTRC will be ready for it.

## WISCONSIN WINTERS – ARE YOU PREPARED FOR CAR TRAVEL?

By Lisa Price-Roberts, MidWest

With winter just around the corner here in Wisconsin, you need to be thinking about being prepared for travel. While most of us in Wisconsin are used to the driving conditions and how to handle our car on the roads, most of us do not have a Winter Car Kit. According to the National Weather Service and the American Red Cross; 70 percent of the fatalities related to ice and snow occur in automobiles, and about 25 percent of all winter related fatalities are people that are caught off guard, out in the storm.

So what should you do? There are some basics you need to have in your car when you head out for travel in the wintertime – even if you are just going to the store.

The following is a check list for a Winter Car Kit, to have in your car at all times in the winter:

- First Aid Kit (should be in car at all times)
- Ice scraper
- Blankets or sleeping bag (for warmth)
- Flashlight (have extra batteries and check regularly to make sure it is working)
- Shovel or empty coffee can (or something that can be used to dig out snow)
- Small can and waterproof matches or lighter and candle (to melt snow for drinking water)
- Large can and tissue (to be used as an emergency toilet)
- Kitty Litter or rug or carpet strips or sand (to be used for traction)
- Bright scarf or bright piece of material (to tie on the antenna for visibility)
- High calorie, non perishable food; such as granola bars

Additional items could include:

- Charged cell phone
- Tool kit
- Tow rope
- Duct tape
- Battery booster cables
- Extra clothing, gloves, to keep dry
- Flares
- Oxygen operated chemical heat pads (like the ones for gloves or boots, Hot Hands is one brand)

The American Red Cross also recommends the following:

- Keep your gas tank near full, to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Avoid traveling alone if possible.
- Let someone know your time table and primary and alternate routes.

If you do get stuck in your vehicle in a storm, STAY IN THE VEHICLE!

- You will become quickly disoriented in wind-driven snow and cold.
- Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
- Keep one window, away from the blowing wind, slightly open to let in air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Be visible to rescuers:

- Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine.

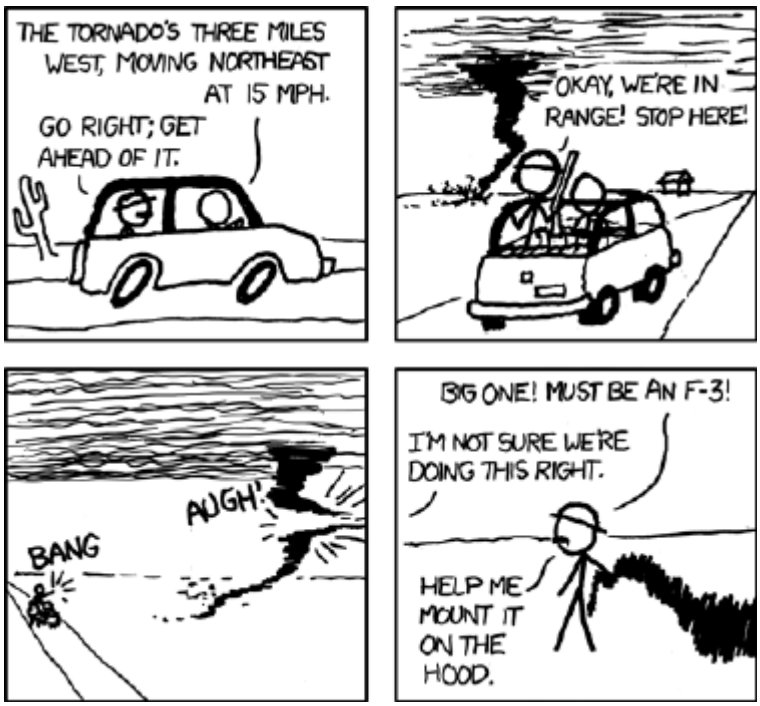
- Tie a colored cloth, preferably red, to your antenna or door.
- After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

Exercise:

- From time to time, move arms, legs, fingers and toes vigorously to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

Never eat snow as snow will lower your body temperature, which is why you should have a candle, matches and a can to melt the snow for drinking. So many of us only have an ice scraper in our cars for winter time and a cell phone along with us. That is not enough. You can't always depend on cell phone coverage. Even if you call for help, it can sometimes take rescuers hours to reach you. So be prepared!!! It just might save your life.

Lisa is a trained weather spotter, Red Cross CPR and emergency first aid certified, is a General Member, D.A.T. Member, and Board Member of the Midwest Severe Storm Tracking/Response Center.




http://xkcd.com/640/