

## AMS/NWA MEMPHIS CHAPTER 13 MAY 2014 MEETING MINUTES

1. The President welcomed and thanked everyone for attending our May and last meeting for the 2013-14 school year. Please don't forget to sign in.
2. The treasurer's report was given with a call for needed scholarship donations.
3. Scholarship nominees go through May 20<sup>th</sup>. As of current no nominations have been received.
4. The University of Tennessee (UT) at Martin started a student chapter with their MET program. They invited the AMS/NWA Memphis Chapter to help collaborate on a project with them in the future.
5. Officer nominations for President, Vice President, and the Secretary/Treasurer positions. No new nominations were offered. So the current officers were forwarded as a slate of officers for next year. They were nominated, seconded and elected by a majority vote, keeping the current officers for another year.
6. The National Center for environmental Prediction (NCEP) will be hosting "Advances in Extra-Tropical Cyclone Understanding and Prediction Since the 1979 Presidents' Day Storm" presentation on 28 May 2014 at College Park, Maryland For those of you who would like to attend please see one of the officers after the meeting for the online registration information.
7. Speakers for the evening were, Nick Hellums, Matt Taylor, and Nick McElhaney storm chasers/video journalists with "Midsouth Storm Chasers". The three speakers discussed how the Midsouth Storm Chaser organization not only provides live video streaming during times of severe weather, but they also raise money and supplies through fund raisers to give back to communities that suffered losses from tornadoes. Nick McElhaney spoke first describing how the followers of the Midsouth Storm Chasers have increased from 100 to over 9,000 in the past 3 years and how the team has started a fundraiser "Storm Chasing for a Cure" to raise money for St. Jude's kids in Memphis. They also raise money for the local Ronald McDonald house. Nick also described how the team's live video supports not only on-air Meteorologists, but also the National Weather Service by enticing the public to take immediate shelter/protection from the warnings with their live ground confirmation of tornadoes. In addition Nick was quick to pass along that an active chase is deemed over, when the need to render aid is seen. This recently happened in Vilonia, AR back on April 27<sup>th</sup>. They had been following the EF-4 that initially started near Mayflower AR, staying about a minute behind the storm when they saw the need to stop in Vilonia to find missing persons. Their assistance turned out to be a life changing event for themselves and the victims. Matt Taylor was the second speaker to talk. He piggybacked on what Nick had to say concerning the activities that the group participates in and went on to describe the next day chase (28 April) across central and northeastern Mississippi. One of the worst cities to be hit was the small town of Louisville. Matt indicated that it's typically the smaller towns that are in greater need for aid and needed supplies for the victims. Matt showed pictures of the intense damage, to include a three story hospital. From this damage an emergency Triage team of doctors and nurses had to set-up a make-shift large tent hospital to offer services, while clean-up and repairs to the main hospital were

quickly adhered to. Emergency workers worked around the clock for several days to save lives. A few of the most serious cases were life-flighted out to Jackson, MS and Starkville, MS. Matt also described how the team scatters their chasing operation with the 3 or 4 vehicles they own to get the best storm coverage, allowing more of the public to get warning verification. The last to speak was Nick Hellums. Nick described his storm chase with the May 29<sup>th</sup> 2013 El Reno, Oklahoma tornado. Several storm chasers both well experienced and novice locked on to the storm in which most of you know became deadly to four chasers besides many injuries. He believes that one of the deaths and some of the injuries may be the cause from the recent storm chasing drought seen over the past couple of years with the decreased amount of severe weather in the central U.S. Then, when one or two outbreaks do occur, several more inexperienced chasers are drawn to the storms and either getting hurt, causing car accidents or getting in the way of emergency vehicles. Nick described one accident he had on the day of the El Reno tornado in which a local individual found the Midsouth team on line and quickly got in his truck with his cell phone and came up on them. The tornado that day change paths quickly and Nick had to immediately turn around. As soon as he backed up, the other driver hit him in the rear. Nick went on to describe that they have one person on the team that hangs back and manages the webpage, handling all the incoming photos and live video streams. Lastly more video and photos of recent chases and victim aid support were shown.

8. Questions were asked after the presentations such as vehicle insurance and what radar data does the team use?
9. Thanks were given to the three speakers and the support that the Midsouth Storm Chasers give to Midsoutherners.
10. The meeting concluded with the President reminding everyone that the upcoming summer lunch will be scheduled in July and that the next official meeting will be held in September. Watch the website or emails for the exact dates.

Jim Branda, Secretary

Approved,

Tom Salem, President