

AMS/NWA Memphis Chapter Meeting Minutes – 18 November 2014

President Tom Salem opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and making a call for chapter dues and any donations to the chapter scholarship fund. The Treasurer's report was given and Tom requested any ideas for spring meeting topics. Chapter member Stephen Kearney provided a report on the National Weather Association Annual Meeting held in Salt Lake City October 19-23, which included special emphasis on decision support, breaking out of the current paradigm of scheduled forecast release times, increasing use of graphics especially on social media, and a report on the brand new NWA Digital Seal for internet-based weather providers. Next year's Annual Meeting will be in OKC, while the American Meteorological Society's next Annual Meeting is in January 2015 in Phoenix.

The evening's presentation was given by Center Weather Service Unit (Memphis) meteorologist Stephen Kearney entitled "*Way Up North: The Life and Times of an Alaskan Forecaster and Impacts of Weather on the People of Alaska.*" Kearney first discussed his three years (2008-2011) spent in a small WFO in Nome and then a larger WFO in Fairbanks, comparing and contrasting the climate and describing his lifestyle in the harsh environment.

The second portion of Kearney's presentation focused on how weather affected the people of Alaska in multiple realms. These included hydrology, marine weather, fire weather, and aviation, besides the general weather trends that affected lifestyle of people that are rooted in cultural tradition. Kearney described the general slowness of the movement of information where TV is lacking outside big cities and transportation is limited in rural areas. With 34,000 miles of coastline, marine weather is a focal point and ice buildup and very strong weather systems (hurricane force wind) are hazards on the coast. He also talked about the impact of sea ice coverage on shipping and hunting, as well as marine forecasts that extend farther north due to a reduction in sea ice. During fire weather season (April-October), there is a dedicated NWS shift for decision support in this area. The Alaska Aviation Weather Unit covers a huge area from Russia to the North Pole, the North Pacific, and all of Alaska with forecasts and hazard maps for aviation use (which in many areas serves as a lifeline).

Kearney concluded his discussion with a bit about winters in Alaska and the effects on daylight of living at such a high latitude, where temperatures are more driven by mesoscale features than diurnal variation. Lack of snowpack can also be a serious impediment to lifestyle in many ways, including the ability to hunt and travel.

The meeting concluded with no new discussion items and a forthcoming announcement on the chapter's next regular meeting in January 2015.

Minutes taken by Erik Proseus for Jim Branda

Approved,
Tom Salem, President