

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE, PRODUCT DESCRIPTION DOCUMENT (PDD)

TYPE: Experimental Product

DATE: November 19, 2004

Severe Weather Tracker

Part 1 - Mission Connection

1. Service Description: Advances in web services technologies, as well as scientific advances in technology, have afforded the National Weather Service (NWS) an opportunity to display, in graphic format, more discrete areas impacted by severe convective storms. Warnings and watches for storms capable of producing tornadoes, damaging wind and hail, and flash flooding will be graphically depicted by polygons rather than by county. This methodology will provide emergency managers, media and the general public with more specific severe weather information.

2. Purpose/Intended Use: This experimental web display of warning and watch polygons generated by the local NWS forecast office and the Severe Storms Prediction Center is provided to:

a. Provide customers and partners with visual access to warning and watch information that is always current, more specific and with higher resolution than traditional text products.

b. Receive feedback from those users on potential refinements to graphic display of warning and watch information.

3. Audience: The current audience for the Severe Weather Tracker web page consists of, but is not limited to, emergency management, media, information vendors and the general public.

4. Presentation Format: The Severe Weather Tracker web page of polygon watch/warnings is presented for display as php/html format. The images themselves are stored in png format. The Severe Weather Tracker can be viewed using a web browser. A sample of this web page can be found at <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/eax/>.

5. Feedback Method: We are always seeking to improve our products and services based on user feedback. Therefore, users of this experimental service are asked to complete the survey located <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/survey/>. Comments will be compiled through August 31, 2005 and evaluated by the appropriate NWS program managers. Technical questions may be addressed via e-mail to: mark.mitchell@noaa.gov.

Part 2 – Technical

1. Format and Science Basis: The Severe Weather Tracker grid point web display can be viewed in graphic format. The vertices of the warning polygons are obtained directly from the warnings as issued by the forecast office, processed to display a polygon and then sent to the NWS Central Region Web Server. The data fields include severe thunderstorm watches and warning, tornado watches and warnings, and flash flood watches and warnings.

2. Availability: Updates to the Severe Weather Tracker are automated and available every three minutes.

3. Additional Information: The Severe Weather Tracker is being tested at the Kansas City/Pleasant Hill NWS forecast office with the goal of experimental implementation across the NWS Central Region by January 1, 2005.