NOAA's National Weather Service

The National Cooperative Observer

The National Cooperative Observer is an online newsletter.
http://www.weather.gov/os/coop/coop_newsletter.htm

Spring 2009

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NWS Cooperative Observer Program Welcomes New National Manager at Headquarters

I wanted to take a moment of your time to introduce myself to the group as the new National Cooperative Program Manager. I am working on several adjustments to the program to ensure your efforts get the level of respect and admiration they richly deserve.

Joel Cline, National Coop Program Manager

One thing the Coop program certainly does well is the awards and recognition of the volunteer Observers throughout the country. The newsletter is a great publication that will continue to spotlight you, the wonderful individuals and institutions who help us everyday by providing the nation and world with critical high quality weather and climate data.

To further enhance your efforts, we are looking at several improvements to the program, including the following:

- Changes to the management of the program to ensure parts and equipment are better stocked and readily tracked. These changes will better support our hard working National Weather Service (NWS) employees.
- A budget that can sustain the program and help it expand while being fiscally responsible.
- More training for new and experienced NWS employees who staff the Coop program.
- Updated outreach tools and activities that better reflect the way the Coop program is run today.
- Improved accountability to the program where there was little oversight before, reaching to the highest levels of NWS management to ensure proper handling of the Coop program.

We need you, the nearly 10,000 Observers across the country, to continue your valued work on a daily basis. We need NWS staff to ensure the program is run correctly to build on more than a century of work and ensure the program remains a trusted source for excellence in weather and climate data by our peers and users far into the future.

As talk of a new National Climate Service evolves in Washington, D.C., the drive to make climate products and services useful to regular business and individual needs will grow to include local products.

These local products and services can only be developed through high quality data that is on a scale large enough to cover the entire country from urban areas to rural settings, coastlines to mountains and plains. My goal is to manage the Coop program so it is poised to lead the way. If you have thoughts, concerns or ideas, please feel free to share them with me. ☼

Joel Cline
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National Coop Program Manager

Rain Gauge Modernization

This summer marks the start of a much anticipated project to modernize the long running Fischer-Porter recording rain gauges. This project involves some 1,800 sites in our Coop network, and will span more than 18 months.

From outward appearances, the Fischer-Porter will look nearly the same. Inside the cylindrical housing, however, an electronic weighing sensor, coupled with a simple data logger, will replace nearly all of the mechanical parts, including the punch-tape assembly. The new design, called the Fischer-Porter Rebuild (FFR), will be a welcome change to both the Observer and the climate services community. Beside saving the NWS many hours of repair work, it will enable a greater percentage of the Observer's 15 minute observations to be analyzed and published in the monthly Hourly Precipitation Data bulletins.

If you have any questions on the upcoming Fischer-Porter modernization, feel free to phone your local NWS representative.

What's in that MMTS Beehive Anyway?

By Michael McAllister
OPL, NWS Jacksonville, FL,

If you're not involved with cleaning a Maximum/Minimum Temperature Sensor (MMTS) sensor unit, you probably have not seen inside it. The white louvered "beehive" contains a thermistor in its center with two white wires. The wires connect it to the plug on the base of the unit. It's really a very basic instrument. So what else is there to be discovered in the disassembly of the unit?

I cannot vouch for the rest of the country, but here in northeast Florida and southeast Georgia, we regularly find various critters making their home inside the beehive. At the Jacksonville, FL, NWS office, we usually replace the beehive on our annual visits. After getting the dirty beehive back to the office, and before carefully taking it apart for cleaning, we leave it in a secure outside area for a day to let any "residents" inside vacate, then we dunk it in a bucket of water to flush out any reluctant squatters.

Red Wasps

Our most common uninvited guest is the red wasp. These wasps enjoy the shelter, security and height of the beehive. They usually build their nest toward the top of the unit. We have found all size nests, from small ones with only four or five holes/cells to large nests that cover an entire louver.

From personal experience, I have learned to be careful in transporting the dirty beehives. At a rural site about 2 hours away from Jacksonville, I removed a beehive from its post and set it on the ground while I put a clean beehive in its place. I rolled the dirty beehive on the grass, then shook it. Nothing came out or buzzed, so I placed it in the back of the Coop van. About 10 minutes after leaving the Coop site, I noticed a couple of wasps on the back window. A few minutes later there were about

Typical red wasp nest

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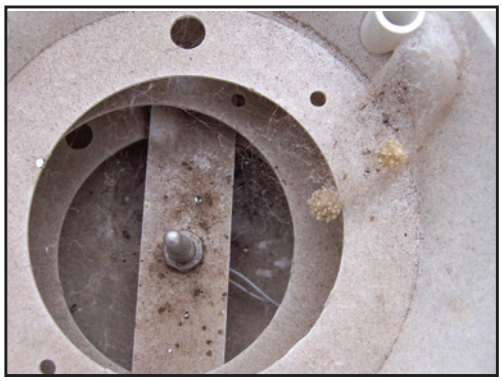


Top: The inside of this MMTS looks a little dirty with some spider web and egg sacs. Bottom: a Brown Widow spider, flipped over to show the red hourglass on the underside of the abdomen.

5 to 10 wasps on the back window. A few more minutes and there were more wasps–and they were making their way forward! Driving with the windows down, I finally found a good place to pull over so I could remove the beehive and air out the van. I wasn't stung but now our standard operating procedure is to place the dirty beehive in a plastic bag before putting it in the van.

At another site, the wasps were not so docile. As I approached the dirty beehive, I noticed a couple of wasps flying nearby. I carefully removed the beehive and gently placed it on the ground. After finishing my Coop duties, I placed the beehive on its side and rolled it on the lawn. About 10 angry wasps came flying out. I did a little flying of my own away from the beehive. When things calmed down, I rolled the beehive again – and another 10 to 15 wasps flew out. A little while later I tried again, and more wasps came flying out. Finally, when nothing else came out in reaction to rolling the beehive, I bagged it. And then I noticed a wasp flying around the clean beehive I had just installed. Sigh…

Mud Daubers

Another frequent guest found in the beehive is the mud dauber/dirt dauber. These are also in the wasp family, but live a more solitary life. They build a mud nest, fill it with paralyzed spiders, then lay their eggs on the spiders. When the eggs hatch, the new wasps have a ready meal. Their nests are often found on eaves on houses. The nests look like a mud tube or multiple mud tubes. In the MMTS beehive, they often cover up the thermistor by building their nest on and around it. Fortunately, the mud dauber is not aggressive and will fly away when you approach its nest.

Mud Dauber nests. Would mud insulation favor global warming or cooling?

We find spiders in the beehives at times, but not as often as one would think. Most of the time it is a jumping spider, a small colorful, active spider that is not poisonous or aggressive, though they can be territorial. We have found black widows and brown widows, which are poisonous, but fortunately, they are rare.

The most unusual MMTS inhabitant I have found is the Cuban tree frog. The Cuban tree frog is an invasive species that grows to about 5 inches in length, 3 to 4 times the size of the native green tree frogs. It is a voracious eater of other frogs and lizards. What are they doing

After finishing my Coop duties, I placed the beehive on its side and rolled it on the lawn. About 10 angry wasps came flying out. I did a little flying of my own away from the beehive.

in a temperature shelter? I'm not sure, but they are NOT welcome!

What Can You Do?

And now the big question—do these trespassers alter the temperature readings? You betcha! Unfortunately, your NWS representative cannot always tell there is a problem when performing remote quality control.

If the trespassers are causing a variation of only a couple of degrees from nearby sites, the difference may not be significant enough to warrant attention, or it may be rationalized away as a local effect, such as the sea breeze, nearby rainfall, air drainage area, etc.

Three small wasp nests

What can an Observer do about the situation? Call your NWS Coop manager if you suspect something nesting or living in the shelter.

Do not spray the pests and risk getting stung or getting a breath full of bug spray. A buildup of chemical spray on the shelter/thermistor may not be good for it. Let's hope it won't be a weekly visit. ☼

Memorial: John Kortes: 76 Years of Observations

John Kortes died Saturday evening, May 9, in Casper, WY. John was 101 years old and was one of the longest serving Cooperative Observers in the 119 year history of the NWS Cooperative program. His 75 years of service nearly equals the 76 years served by Cooperative Observer legends Ed Stoll and Ruby Stufft. Earl Stewart of Cottage Grove, OR, with 78 years of service, holds the record in the program.

John began taking observations in 1930. He got involved when he heard about a government program that furnished and maintained weather equipment for individuals willing to provide weather reports to the U.S. Weather Bureau. John thought that was a real good deal because he was interested in weather but could not afford to purchase his own equipment in those days hard knocks days of the Great Depression.

John Kortes proudly shows his 70 Year Ruby Stuff Award presented to him in 2000. Pictured from left are Jack May, Acting Central Region Director; Lester Stufft, son of the legendary Ruby Stufft; **Ruby Stufft Award Winner John Kortes***; and Bill Parker, Meteorologist in Charge (MIC), NWS Cheyenne, WY.*

John was also one of the original Observers in the Western States Phenological Network, which was established in the 1950s by Joseph Caprio. And living in a data sparse and desolate area in Wyoming made the weather reports from the Kortes Ranch all that more valuable. The Kortes family generously plans to continue taking observations at John's station.

John Campanius Holm Award

Richard and Marlys Hjort, *John Campanius Holm Award winners, show their award out by the Cotton Region Shelter at their home in rural Forest Lake, MN. The award was presented at the University of Minnesota by MIC Dan Luna and Observing Program Leader (OPL) Michelle Margraf, of the NWS office in Chanhassen, MN*

Ruby Stufft 70 Year Length of Service Award

Charlene Fischer *from Fischer Store, TX, shows her Ruby Stufft Award, presented by MIC Joe Arellano, NWS Austin/San Antonio, TX, in recognition of 70 years of service by Charlene and her family. The Fischers have maintained unbroken rainfall observations dating back to 1890. Her uncle, Willie Fischer, began taking official rainfall on June 1, 1939. Her father, Eddie, took over on December 1, 1952. Charlene has been keeping records since January 1, 1977.*

100 and 75 Year Honored Institution Awards

St. John's Abbey *Cooperative Observer* **Brother Bradley Jenniges**, *accepted a 100 Year Honored Institution Award from MIC Dan Luna, of NWS Chanhassen, MN. Brother Jenniges has been taking observations at the Collegeville St. John, MN, site since April 2005. He joins a long list of volunteer Observers from St. John's Abbey who have recorded daily weather conditions for the NWS since 1892.*

The **Huntington Indiana Water Works** *staff show their 75 Year Honored Institutional Award. The site is part of the Historical Climate Network. The network dates back to October 1882. The Huntington Water Works began taking observations in November 1932. The award was presented by Brentley Lothamer, OPL, NWS Northern Indiana and MIC Michael Sabones.*

Pictured from left are Huntington City Mayor Steve Updike; MIC Michael Sabones; Observers **Larry Covey** *and* **Ronn Martin**; *Tresa Baker, Rep for Congressman Dan Burton; and OPL Brentley Lothamer. Photo by Administrative Support Assistant (ASA) Margaret Taylor.*

50 Year Honored Institution Awards

Superintendent **Tim Reel** *accepts an Honored Institution Award on behalf of the city of Whitewater, WI,* **Waste Water Treatment Facility** *for 50 years of service as a participating Cooperative institution. Presenting the award was Data Acquisition Program Manager (DAPM) Rudy Schaar of the NWS Sullivan, WI, office.*

Recently **Larry Catel,** *Plant Manager at the* **Copco Dam Pacific Power** *substation, accepted a 50 Year Honored Institution Award from NWS Medford Cooperative Program Manager (CPM) James Bunker. The plant has been taking readings since May 1, 1959. Larry has been the primary Observer since 2000.*

45 Year Dick Hagemeyer Awards

Howard *and* **Patricia Romsdal** *of Bradshaw, NE, receive the Dick Hagemeyer Award from Steven Eddy, MIC, at NWS Hastings, NE. For the past 45 years they have been recording the precipitation. During this time they took over 16,000 observations reflecting more than 1,200 inches of rain and over 1,400 inches of snow. Photo by Marla K. Doxey, DAPM, at NWS Hastings.*

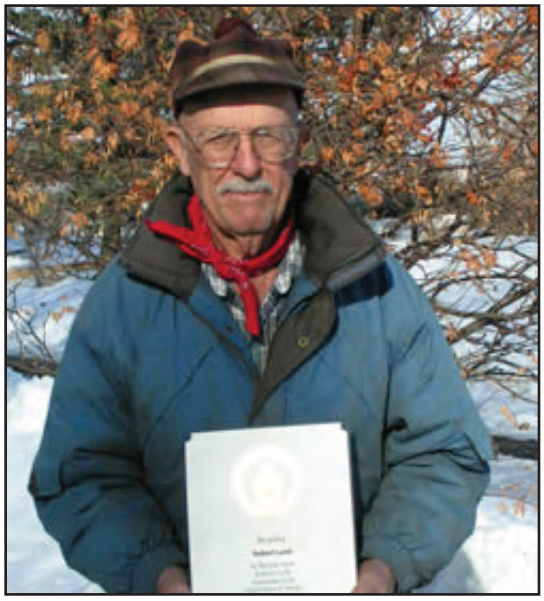
40 Year Length of Service Awards

Alice N. Herron *of Forest, MS, shows her 40 Year Length of Service Award. Alice telephones her 24 hour rainfall amounts to NWS Jackson, MS. Her reports are used not only by the forecast office but also by the River Forecast Center in Slidell, LA. These reports help NWS forecast rising water levels on nearby rivers and streams. Alice also confirms severe weather events in her area. The award was presented by Jim Fairly Meteorological Intern (MIT), at NWS Jackson.*

From left, **Lois Dover** *of Ellijay GA, and son* **Alan Dover** *accept a 40 Year Award from Kent Frantz, Senior Service Hydrologist, at NWS Peachtree City, GA. Alan accepted for his father,* **Alfred G. Dover**, *who passed away recently. The ceremony took place at A. S. Dover Construction Company in Ellijay. At the ceremony, Lois passed the torch to Alan, who has agreed to take over observations.*

35 Year Length of Service Awards

Fred Briese, *right, of Correctionville, IA, accepts his 35 Year Length of Service Award from Sioux Falls, SD, MIC Greg Harmon. Fred received the award at the Sioux Falls Cooperative Observer Appreciation Day in April. Photo by DAPM Donald Morin.*



Robert Lund, *of Paonia, CO, was presented with a 35 Year Length of Service Award by Becky Klenk, CPM at NWS Grand Junction, CO.*

John W. Maddox, *left, holds up his 35 Year Length of Service Award for his service in Rome, GA, with help from OPL Frank Taylor, NWS Peachtree City. Photograph courtesy of Tom Wallace, Southeast River Forecast Center.*

John is a past Holm and Jefferson Award winner. His family has been taking Coop observations for close to 160 years!

30 Year Length of Service Awards

Tim and Diane Ehma, *right, were presented with a 30 Year Length of Service Award by NWS Glasgow, MT, OPL Matt Moorman. Tom and Diane take readings near Mildred, MT. Photo by CPM Brian Burleson.*

Dr. Galen Eiben *of Shell Rock, IA, accepts his 30 Year Length of Service Award from Jeff Zogg, Hydrologist at NWS Des Moines, IA. Dr. Eiben is looking forward to another 10 years of service. Photo by MIC Brenda Brock.*

A 30 Year Length of Service Award was presented to **Gayle Kingery**, *an Observer at Bailey, CO. The award was presented by Frank Benton, Hydrometeorological Technician (HMT) at NWS Boulder, CO.*

Roland Marney, *center, Observer at Dodson, MT, and wife Bonnie show his 30 Year Length of Service Award. Roland also reads the Milk River levels near Dodson. The award was presented by MIT David Shallenberger of NWS Glasgow, MT. Photo by OPL Matt Moorman.*

30 and 25 Year Length of Service Awards

Eva Oxarart, *Coop Observer at Content, MT, received a 30 Year Length of Service Award from OPL Matt Moorman, NWS Glasgow, MT. Eva's site dates back to 1939. Photo by MIT David Shallenberger.*

From left, *NWS Austin/San Antonio HMT Pat McDonald presents Observer* **Joan Smith** *with a 25 Length of Service Award with help from OPL Steve Smart. Photo by Joan's son, Mark Smith.*

Danny Startis, *of Garwin, IA, accepts his 25 Year Length of Service Award. The award was presented by Steve Teachout, HMT, Des Moines, IA. Danny is hoping spring will come to Iowa soon so he can get into his garden.*

Pictured right is Sioux Rapids, IA, Observer **Brain Waldstein** *as he accepts his 25 Year Award from NWS Sioux Falls MIC Greg Harmon. Photo by DAPM Donald Morin.*

25 and 20 Year Length of Service Awards
25 year Honored Institution Award

A 25 Year Length of Service Award was presented to **Tom Francis**, *an Observer at Golden, CO. Photo by Frank Benton, HMT, Boulder, CO.*

The **Helen, GA, Police Department** *receives an Honored Institution Award for 25 years of service. From left are Lans Rothfusz, MIC, NWS Peachtree City;* **Bonnie Sauter**, *Communications Supervisor;* **Marcia Wall**, *Communications; Helen Police Chief* **Ted Ray**; *and Frank Taylor, NWS Peachtree City. Photo by NWS Meteorologist Laura Griffith.*

Plant Operator **John Brown** *accepts a 25 Year Honored Intuition Award on behalf of the city of Lake Delton, WI,* **Waste Water Treatment Facility**. *Presenting the award was DAPM Rudy Schaar of NWS Sullivan, WI.*

From left, **Herbert Queen**, *of Grainfield, KS, accepts a 20 Year Length of Service Award presented by G. Michael Lammers, OPL; Christina Henderson, HMT; and Katie Burtis, Meteorologist; of NWS Goodland, KS. Photo by Kelly James.*

20 and 15 Year Length of Service Awards

From left, **Frederick L. Kite** *of La Pryor, TX, accepts a 20 Year Length of Service Award from OPL Steve Smart, NWS Austin/San Antonio.*

Mrs. Tommie N. Strickland, *right, holds up a 20 Year Length of Service Award presented at her home near Lafayette, GA. The award was presented by Peachtree City, GA, Meteorologist Laura Griffith. Photo by Frank Taylor.*

A 20 Year Length of Service Award was presented to **David A. Curtis**, *an Observer at Sedalia, CO. The award was presented by HMT Frank Benton, NWS Boulder, CO.*

Observer **Dave Farmer** *was presented a 20 Year Length of Service Award for the Yates Center, KS, area. Photo by CPM Leon Wasinger from NWS Wichita, KS.*

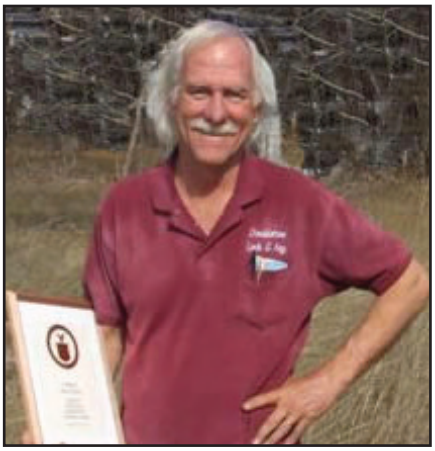
Preston English, *center, received his 15 Year Length of Service Award at Unicoi State Park near Helen in North Georgia. The award was presented by Laura Griffith, Meteorologist, NWS Peachtree City, and Lans Rothfusz, MIC. Photo by Frank Taylor, NWS Peachtree City.*

Special Service Award, 10 Year Length of Service Awards

Gene Scott Hammer *received a Special Service Award posthumously for his generous service at Franklin, WV, a Coop site since 1953. The Award was presented to his family by HMT Scott Hammer of NWS Sterling, VA.*

Brian Clifton, *right, Coop Observer in Glasgow, MT, received a 10 Year Length of Service Award. Brian's station dates back to 1951. The award was presented by OPL Matt Moorman. Photo by MIT David Shallenberger.*

Robert L. Dalton, *left, of Alto, GA, received a 10 Year Length of Service Award from Frank Taylor, NWS Peachtree City, GA. Photo by Laura Griffith, NWS Meteorologist.*



Steve Flocke *of Wimberley, TX, shows his 10 Year Length of Service Award. Photo by HMT Patrick Mcdonald, NWS San Antonio, TX.*

Mark Gubbins, *right, Observer at Iroquois, SD, accepts a 10 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Sioux Falls MIC Greg Harmon. Photo by DAPM Donald Morin*

10 Year Length of Service Awards

Melody and Jackie James *of Kenton, TN, show their 10 Year Length of Service Award presented by Jim Belles, MIC, at NWS Memphis, TN.*

Observer **Ron Jerrick** *was presented a 10 Year Length of Service Award for Belle Plaine, KS, by CPM Leon Wasinger, NWS Wichita, KS.*

Pictured at right is Lakefield, MN, area Observer **Joel Poppe** *accepting his 10 Year Award from NWS Sioux Falls MIC Greg Harmon. Photo by DAPM Donald Morin*

Observer John V. Piquette of Westcliffe, CO, was presented a 10 Year Length of Service Award. NWS Pueblo, CO, OPL Randall Gray presented this award to John. Photo not available.

Chief **Lynn Murphy**, *left, Observer for Lexington, TN, accepts a 10 Year Length of Service Award from MIC Jim Belles NWS Memphis, TN. Chief Murphy is also recognized as one of the best Crappie fishermen in the area.*

Delbert Stanton, *left, Coop Observer at Brusett, MT, received a 10 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Glasgow, MT, OPL Matt Moorman. Delbert's site dates back to 1940. Photo by NWS Hydrometeorologist Rex Morgan.*

10 Year Length of Service Awards

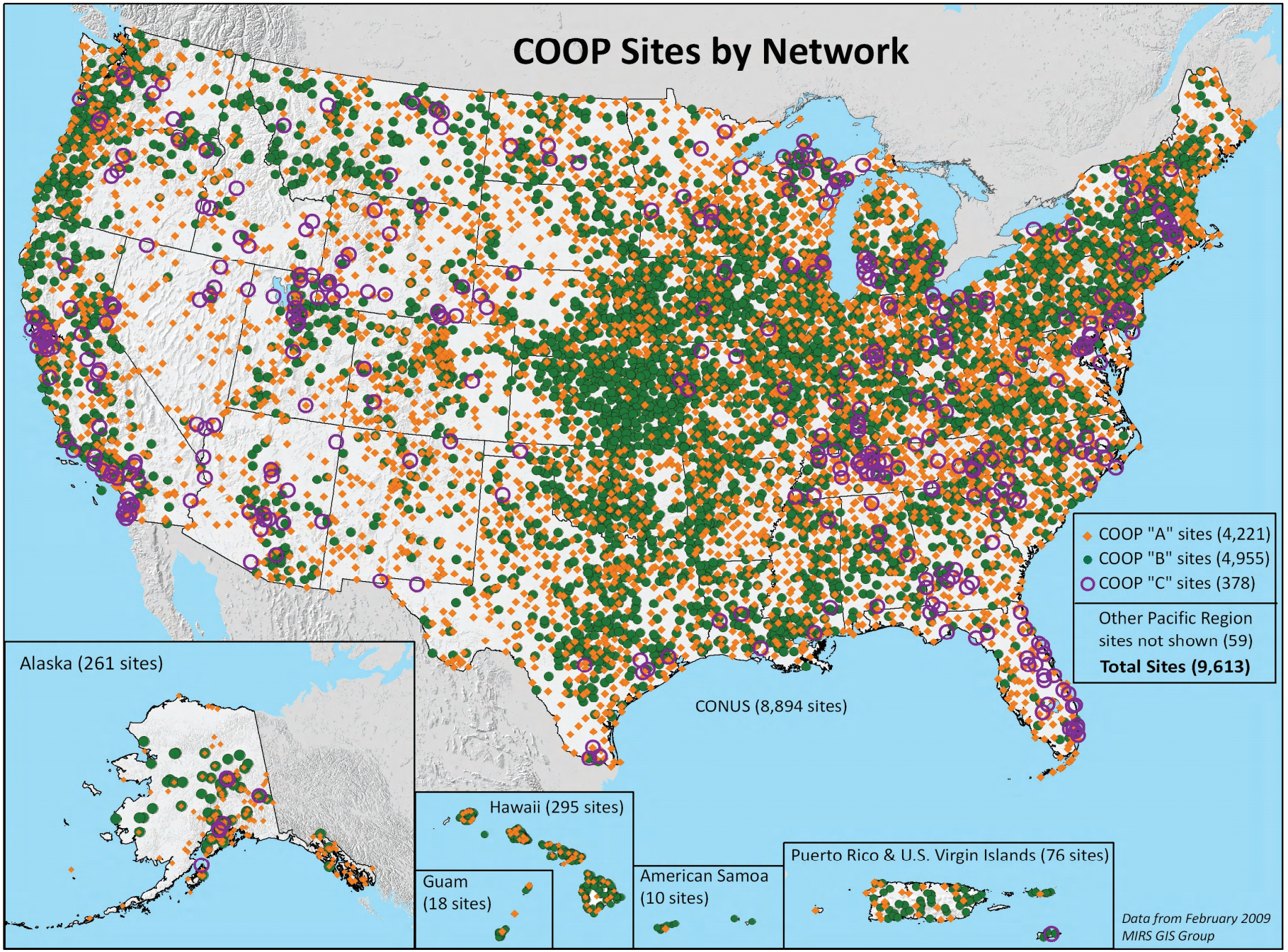
MIC Rick Dittmann, NWS Pocatello, ID, left, presents a 10 Year Length of Service Award to **Ralph Stoor** *of Caribou County. Photo by Gary Wicklund.*

De Smet, SD, area Observer **Donna Stewart** *accepts her 10 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Sioux Falls MIC Greg Harmon. Photo by DAPM Donald Morin*

Luann Swainston *of Lincoln County, ID, shows her 10 Year Length of Service Award presented by MIC Rick Dittmann, NWS Pocatello, ID. Photo by Gary Wicklund.*

Rod Swerman, *La Crosse, WI, accepts a 10 Year Length of Service Award. The award was presented by Tom Stangeland, HMT, NWS, La Crosse, WI. Rod is also a NWS forecaster at the La Crosse office and a Wisconsin native that grew up in Eau Claire, WI.*

Margie and **Ray Veatch**, *Observers in Delta, CO, received a 10 Year Length of Service Award from Becky Klenk, CPM at NWS Grand Junction, CO.*


COOP Sites by Network
COOP "A" sites (4,221)
COOP "B" sites (4,955)
COOP "C" sites (378)
Other Pacific Region sites not shown (59)
Total Sites (9,613)
CONUS (8,894 sites)
Alaska (261 sites)
Hawaii (295 sites)
Guam (18 sites)
American Samoa (10 sites)
Puerto Rico & U.S. Virgin Islands (76 sites)
Data from February 2009
MIRS GIS Group

The National Cooperative Observer

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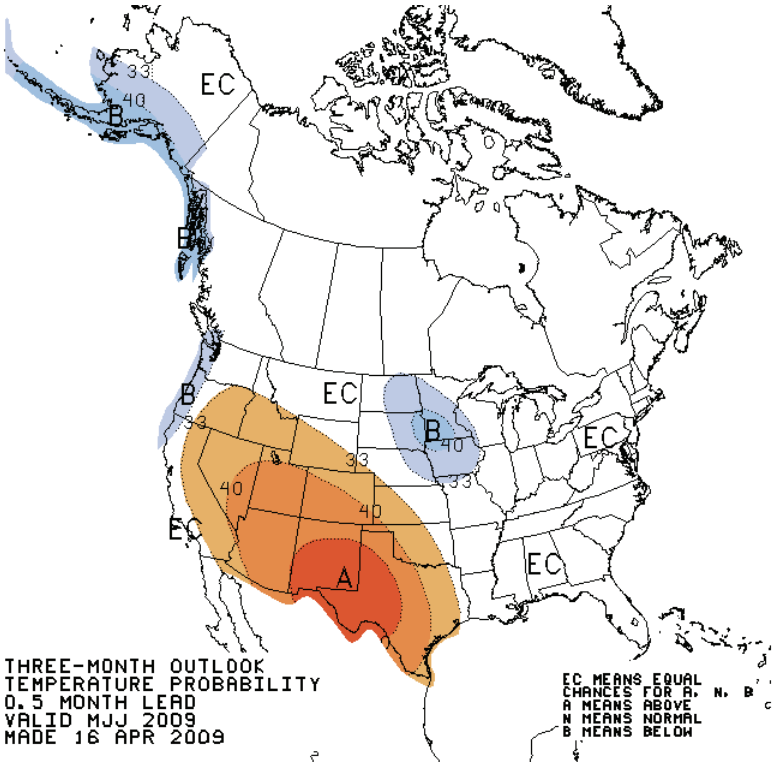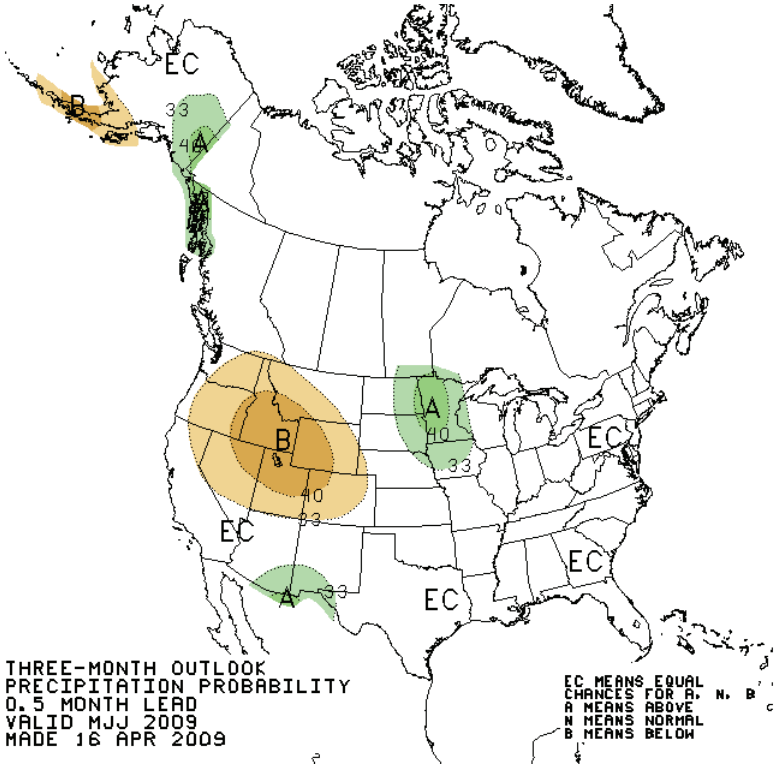
June, July, August Temperature and Precipitation Outlooks From the Climate Prediction Center