Science and Technology Seminar

NCAR's Societal Impacts Program Research and Outreach

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The NCAR Societal Impacts Program (SIP) was created in 2004 and is funded by NCAR and NOAA's U.S. Weather Research Program. The goal of SIP is to improve the societal gains from weather forecasting by infusing social science and economic research, methods, and capabilities into the planning, execution, and analysis of weather information, applications, and research directions. This talk will provide an overview of the mission and activities of the SIP including current efforts on capacity building, outreach and education, information resources, and primary research and support of other social science research activities.

We will then discuss the WAS*IS program, including an October 2007 NWS-funded WAS*IS workshop in Kansas City. The WAS*IS program is a movement to comprehensively integrate social science into meteorological research and practice in a sustained manner. WAS*IS primarily is doing this through workshops that emphasize learning relevant ideas, methods, and examples as well as building an interdisciplinary community of practitioners, researchers, and stakeholders. To date, over 20 NWS employees have participated in the WAS*IS workshops.

The seminar will conclude with a discussion of current analysis of a recent nationwide study of over 1500 households to access people's (a) sources, perceptions, uses and value of weather forecast information, and (b) interpretation of, use of, and preferences for weather forecast uncertainty information. Results show that the average household accesses weather forecast information from various sources 115 times a month. For the over 113 million U.S. households--and accounting for the 3.6% of respondents who say they do not use weather forecasts--this equates to over 150 billion forecasts accessed each year. Additional results suggest that a significant majority of people are willing to receive forecasts that contain uncertainty information, and many people actually prefer uncertainty forecasts. Moreover, people have preferences for how that information is conveyed. We will discuss more about our key survey findings, implications of the results, and additional research needed to address remaining knowledge gaps in these areas.

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1:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET
SSMC#2,
Room 10246

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