

THE MAX A. KOHLER AWARD

Purpose of Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize meritorious service sustained for a period of years contributing to the fulfillment of the hydrologic forecast and flood warning mission of the National Weather Service (NWS). The award is named in honor of Max A. Kohler who is one of the most nationally and internationally renowned hydrologists of all times. A discussion of his achievements is found below. Individuals recognized by this award are honored primarily for sustained accomplishments in (1) the improvement of data observation, collection, and analysis, and (2) flood or water management forecast production and dissemination resulting in higher forecast accuracies and/or extension of warning lead times. While the award is primarily oriented toward recognizing the performance of general work force employees such as technicians, hydrological or meteorological forecasters, service hydrologists, research hydrologists, etc., the award may at times be presented to supervisors, or possibly in very rare situations to individuals external to the NWS who have made some significant sustained contribution to fulfill the NWS hydrologic mission. Note, there is no implied intent that a person must be near retirement to merit the award.

Selection of Award Recipient

An evaluation board consisting of the Director, Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS), Chief of OCWWS' Hydrologic Services Division (HSD), and the five Regional HSD Chiefs would consider nominations annually. While nominations would be invited each year from all NWS managers of personnel working with the Hydrologic Program, the award would be presented only when the evaluation board considered there were candidates that truly merited the award. The award consists of a plaque and is known as the Max A. Kohler Award. The plaque will not be accomplished by any cash award.

Selection Factors for recipient of the award are:

1. Preparing and/or disseminating hydrologic products which contribute to saving lives, reducing property damage, or increasing economic productivity.
2. Research, analysis, and/or implementation resulting in improved hydrologic forecasting capabilities.
3. Hydrologic training/education for NWS or other personnel.
4. Developing, utilizing, and improving cooperative efforts with communities, states, Federal and other agencies.
5. Contributions toward maintaining, improving, and/or implementing high quality and effective hydrologic service.

6. Demonstrating significant public service in areas not connected with NWS which bring favorable publicity to the NWS and its employees while continuing to maintain effective professional competence.

Max A. Kohler Vita

Max A. Kohler has been one of the most prominent pioneers in developing operational hydrologic forecast techniques, both in the operational hydrologic activities within the United States and internationally in organizing operational hydrologists and gaining recognition for hydrologic programs. He has served with distinction at all levels of the National Weather Service (NWS) Hydrologic Program.

During his first 15 years of Federal service, he served first as a Hydraulic Engineer and then as a Research Scientist in the Hydrology Programs of the Weather Service (then known as the Weather Bureau). In 1951, he was appointed Chief Research Hydrologist with the Weather Bureau. In 1954 this title was changed to Chief Hydrologist. He held the position of Chief Hydrologist off-and-on as the program evolved until his appointment in 1972 as Director, Office of Hydrology. In the 21 years following his initial appointment as Chief Hydrologist, Mr. Kohler provided strong influence and leadership for both technical and program directions of the NWS River Forecast Service. Many of the elements of his pioneering efforts continue as a basis for operational river forecasting. During interim periods in his tenure as Chief Hydrologist, Mr. Kohler served also in other capacities including an assignment as Director, Hydrologic Research and Development Laboratory. In 1973, he retired after 36 years Federal service.

In addition to his many direct contributions to the NWS Hydrology Programs, he has been very influential nationally and internationally. He was instrumental in establishing the Commission for Hydrology within the World Meteorological Organization, and he served as the first president of that commission. He has further served on many national and international hydrologic committees and has held such prestigious posts as the Chairman, International Association of Hydrologic Sciences (a sub-unit of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics); Chairman of Section W, American Association for the Advancement of Science; Council Member of the American Meteorological Society; and Member of the National Academy of Engineering. He has also authored or co-authored many significant papers on river and water supply forecasting, evaporation, and precipitation, and co-authored the well-known university level hydrology texts, *Applied Hydrology* and *Hydrology for Engineers*.

Because of his many years of service in the field, in research, and as a leader in the hydrologic community, Mr. Kohler is a person who has instant name recognition among hydrologists. Finally, he is a person who, with patience and sympathy, has encouraged excellence among his fellow workers in the NWS.