



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

April 16, 2010

NWSEO Spring Council Meeting: NWSEO Presents Their Vision of NWS to Mary Glackin, NOAA Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmospheres

(April 16, 2010) NWSEO President Dan Sobien presented the union's vision of how the National Weather Service can improve its products and services to Mary Glackin, NOAA Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmospheres. The keynote presentation was given at the NWSEO Spring Council Meeting in San Francisco on April 9-11. Mary Glackin was joined by NOAA Director of External Affairs Andrew Winer, Senior Policy Advisor for Oceans and Atmospheres Ahsha Tribble, and NOAA Program Coordination Officer John Juskie.

President Sobien urged the panel to think how initiatives and technology with minimal increases in staffing could reap great benefits for the public. He provided, as an example, how increased staffing at the WFO in New York helped reduce air travel delays by 50 percent. The cost benefit analysis shows that three FTEs in NYC saved the US economy several billion dollars in lost time and productivity. This demonstrates that even a small increase in staffing can serve as the catalyst for changing the slope of the acceleration of benefits of NWS products and services.



NWSEO's vision includes the NWS's role in the nation's quest for energy independence. Because all alternate energy sources (save geothermal) are weather dependent, funding and staffing in the quest for alternative forms of energy could be synergized to achieve other agency goals. Sobien also shared ideas for enhancing life-saving support in emergency situations, the First Responder Program, and a global vision of the NWS that includes international support with forecasts of destabilizing weather and climate hazards for the earth.

Water science is another key issue addressed at the conference. As part of the keynote presentation, Eastern Region Chair David Solano presented a vision for the NWS RFCs. His presentation highlighted the growing need for water services and concern that water use is reaching capacity. He stated that this is a great time for the NWS to invest in water and to accelerate new science and technology into Operations. The NWS has the opportunity to become the authority in both weather and water, but it needs to make an investment in resources, including 3-5 hydrologists per RFC. Solano said that with a minimal investment, the NWS will be well positioned to answer the nation's water needs.

President Sobien concluded the presentation saying he would like to see Labor and Management working together to secure the future of the NWS where products and services are provided with the end user in mind. Mary Glackin stated that many of NWSEO's goals resonated with her. She acknowledged the success of the NYC prototype. There was a discussion on prototyping other concepts for modernizing the NWS.