



### **Eight Alaska Met Techs Receive \$91,210 in Back Pay in Grievance Settlement**

(July 5, 2011) The NWS distributed over \$90,000 in back pay to eight met techs at the Cold Bay and McGrath WSOs to resolve a grievance filed in December 2010 by the National Weather Service Employees Organization. The grievance alleged that the NWS Alaska Region violated an agreement made with the union to restore these offices to full time operations.

On September 11, 2009 Alaska Region notified NWSEO of its desire to reduce the hours of operations at WSO Cold Bay ostensibly due to an “unexpected staffing shortage.” Management assured the union that this would be a temporary measure only, and that full staffing would be restored in four to six months. On September 14, 2009 NWSEO Alaska Region Chair Jim Brader agreed to reduce the hours of operation at Cold Bay to 16 hours a day for this staffing emergency provided that 24 hour a day operations were restored by February 2010. However, management never filled the vacancies at this office and it continued to operate only 16 hours a day until after the grievance was filed in December 2010.

Similarly, on September 13, 2010, NWSEO agreed to temporarily reduce the operations at WSO McGrath to 16 hours a day until December 1, 2010 due to a what management termed a “severe staffing shortage.” Once again, management did not fill a position that had been vacant since July 2010. On November 29, Mr. Brader reminded management of its agreement to restore full time operations effective December 1, but management ignored his request. The union filed the grievance on December 7, 2010 demanding that full time operations be restored at both Cold Bay and McGrath and that the staff at those offices be paid the overtime they would have earned had the offices returned to 24 hour operations as agreed.

On January 13, 2011 NWS headquarters granted the grievance and restored full time operations at both offices effective January 16. However, NWS headquarters agreed to pay only a small part of the overtime that the employees lost as a result of the agency’s violation of the two agreements. The union demanded to take the back pay issue to arbitration. The case was resolved in May when management agreed to pay the eight met techs that had been stationed at these offices during 2010 a total of 1,876 hours of lost overtime, 676 hours of lost night differential, plus interest.