



# *The Four Winds*

*National Weather Service Employees Organization*

March 2010

## **NWSEO's Diligent Work Pays Off: Department of Commerce Puts the Brakes on Plans to Consolidate CWSUs**

The Department of Commerce has decided it will **not** accede to the FAA's request to close and consolidate the NWS Center Weather Service Units located at 21 ARTCCs. Secretary Gary Locke made the decision after meeting personally with NWSEO President Dan Sobien, Vice President Bill Hopkins and General Counsel Richard Hirn to discuss the issue. New political appointees at NOAA, including Under Secretary Dr. Jane Lubchenco and her staff helped facilitate the decision.

This decision is the culmination of a five year lobbying effort by NWSEO to preserve both aviation safety and NWS employee jobs. NWSEO spent over \$200,000 in this lobbying effort and obtained the support of the Senate Commerce Committee, the House Science Committee (which held hearings last year attacking the consolidation) and the House and Senate Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittees. NWSEO officials met with the Obama transition team immediately following the 2008 election and met repeatedly with newly appointed DOC and NOAA officials during 2009 to educate them about risks which the consolidation of CWSUs would create for the flying public. According to a senior Science Committee staffer, NWSEO's lobbying "did great work on this for the union and the country."

"The collaborative work of the NWSEO, DOC and NOAA will promote safe air travel, save money and protect our jobs," said NWSEO President Dan Sobien. "NWSEO membership played a great part in saving the jobs at the CWSUs. If you work at a CWSU, thank a NWSEO member. If you're not a member yet, this is just one of many reasons to join."

NWSEO and NOAA have been working closely and frequently to improve the quality of services the NWS is providing for the nation. One of these efforts is the placement of additional aviation forecasters at forecast offices or CWSUs. A demonstration project, involving the assignment of three additional dedicated aviation forecasters was conducted last quarter at the WFO New York. The early results of this effort are extremely encouraging with a 50 percent decrease in weather related flight delays during the trial period over the same time last year.

NWS Director Jack Hayes sent the following message regarding NOAA's decision not to move forward with the consolidation plans:

(Stewards: Please post Jack Hayes' letter and this Four Winds side by side.)



### Message from the Director

The NWS, in collaboration with the FAA, developed a plan to consolidate CWSU services from 21 to 3 CWSUs: 2 Continental United States (CONUS) sites and an additional CWSU in Anchorage, AK. This business model was designed in response to FAA requirements for more consistent, high-quality aviation weather products and services focused on weather impacts to the National Air Space System (NAS) at a lower cost.

After a careful review, NOAA has decided not to forward the NWS response to the FAA at this time. NWS is currently developing an alternate plan that would maintain the current 21-Center model, but deliver enhanced services to meet the FAAs needs.

These enhancements could include:

- Develop and implement CWIP
  - Provide consistent, collaborative weather information
  - Provide TRACON forecasts for high-traffic terminals
- Establish team of NWS personnel at the Air Traffic Control System Command Center
  - Provide CWSU off-hour aviation weather support
  - Provide on-site weather information for traffic management decisions
- Establish a CWSU Program Manager within the Aviation Service Branch
  - Provide a single point of contact for the CWSU program
- Establish an aviation desk at the Golden Triangle WFOs (New York, Chicago, and Atlanta)
  - Provide enhanced forecast services to high-traffic terminals

In the coming weeks, NWS will continue to work with the FAA to structure a plan that meets the FAAs future needs.