



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

Operations and Workforce Analysis Project Update

McKinsey Visits Central Region – NWSEO Provides Input and Asks the Tough Questions

(July 23, 2015) McKinsey & Company, is mid-way through their site visits of NWS offices. The management consulting firm was hired by the National Weather Service for their independent analysis of the NWS, as part of the Operations and Workforce Analysis project (OWA). OWA is a multi-year effort to prepare NWS to deliver a Weather Ready-Nation. NWSEO has involvement in all teams of the OWA project and will be working to protect jobs and ensure that the mission of saving lives and property is protected to the fullest extent.

The first phase of the OWA project includes site visits from McKinsey & Company to determine the strengths of its operating models and workforce structures, and to understand shortcomings and opportunities for improvement. This week, McKinsey & Company visited Central Region Headquarters and MBRFC. NWSEO Central Region Chair Jim Sieveking attended the meetings and reported the following to NWSEO:

“I was given the opportunity to observe McKinsey & Company's meetings with the bargaining unit at both Central Region Headquarters and MBRFC over the past 36 hours. Each meeting lasted for about an hour and they were asked a list of questions that focused on the current state of the National Weather Service, what IDSS meant to them, and who they thought their key partners/customers where. Both meetings went very well.

I also had a chance to sit down one-on-one for about an hour with the leader of the Operations and Workforce Analysis Project and "Partner" of McKinsey, Vivian Riefberg, to voice my concerns and give input from a Regional NWSEO perspective. I spoke to her about the lack of communication from NWS HQ Management, especially when it comes to the future of the organization and the process in getting there. I also expressed my deep concern with regards to the Labor-Management Relationship at the National Level. I told her that NWS HQ sends a proxy (Chief Negotiator) to meet with Dan and Bill instead of Louis and Laura meeting directly with them. I explained how that is completely contrary to how it is done at the Regional Level and that I could not imagine having a productive relationship with Management if I never actually met directly with them.

I expressed my disappointment with timing of NWS HQ's request for renegotiating the Collective Bargaining Agreement. I explained to her that this move by NWS HQ only weakens her company's efforts because it now appears to the bargaining unit (and many managers) that the solution or path forward has already been decided and that

NWS HQ needs to change the rules to get it implemented. This deeply concerned her and she seemed to be caught off guard by NWS HQ's actions last week.

We discussed in great detail the disaster known as Work Force Management and the complicated and often unfair hiring process in the NWS. We spoke about the percentage of employees that are eligible or will soon be eligible for retirement and the fact that the "hole" of vacancies will not be plugged for many years (if ever) at the current rate of hiring. I explained that many offices are already understaffed and that the demand on us internally and externally continues to increase.

We talked about Decision Support Services and I was very clear that these services must remain at the local offices due to the partnerships that have been and will be created. I also told her that DSS can only be as good as the forecast it is based upon, so we cannot just blindly load guidance. This led to a discussion about the model blends (National Blender) and I explained how NWSEO believes the blends to be a great resource and piece of guidance that forecasters can use, but they must continue to possess autonomy over the final gridded forecast.

Finally, she asked if there were any road blocks to evolving the National Weather Service. I told her that people generally want to feel secure and valued in their job, therefore forced relocation and reduced staffing would be major roadblocks. I ended with a plea for open communication and transparency.”

-NWSEO-

**No one cares more for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.**

**No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.
We are NWSEO.**