



# The Modernization of the NWS SKYWARN® Weather Spotter Program

## Making Advances through Education, Technology and Partnerships

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### Introduction

Since its humble beginnings in the 1960's, the program now boasts over **350,000** volunteer spotters across the nation.

- Spotters are volunteer citizens comprised of people from every profession.
- The storm reports that they provide are significant "ground truth" information that help the NWS meteorologists issue timely, accurate and detailed warnings.



### SKYWARN Modernization Project

A series of advances have been underway since 2009 through the efforts of the SKYWARN Modernization Project. This project has made improvements in several key areas from training materials to adopting innovative online technologies as well as developing working relationships with non-traditional parties sharing similar missions.

#### Paper Foci

- Education
- Technology
- Partnerships

### Education & Online Training



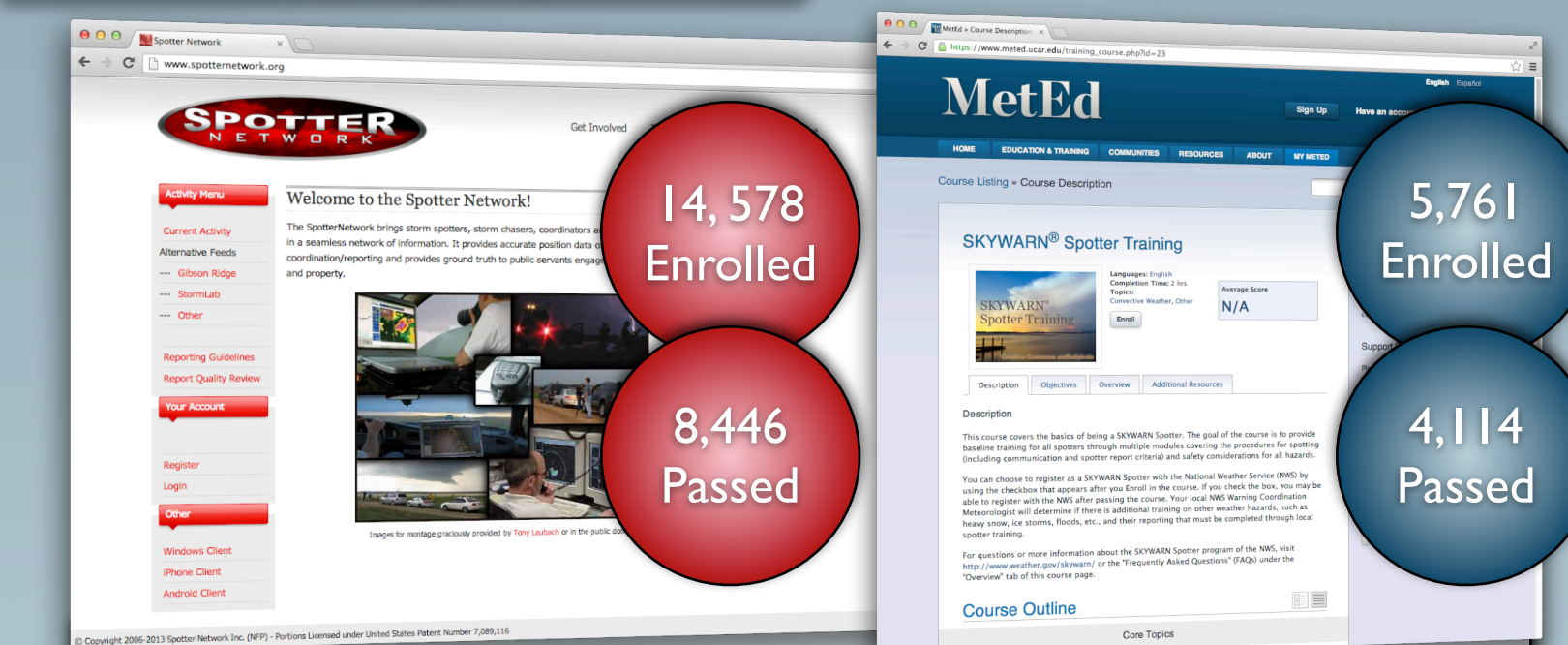
Basic and Advanced Spotters' Field Guide replaced with single 68 page *A Guide to Being a SKYWARN Spotter*, which incorporated more recent scientific research. Topic sections included in the new guide include:

- The Spotter's Role
- Thunderstorm Basics
- Tornado Formation
- Technology and Storm Spotting

### 2012 Classroom Training

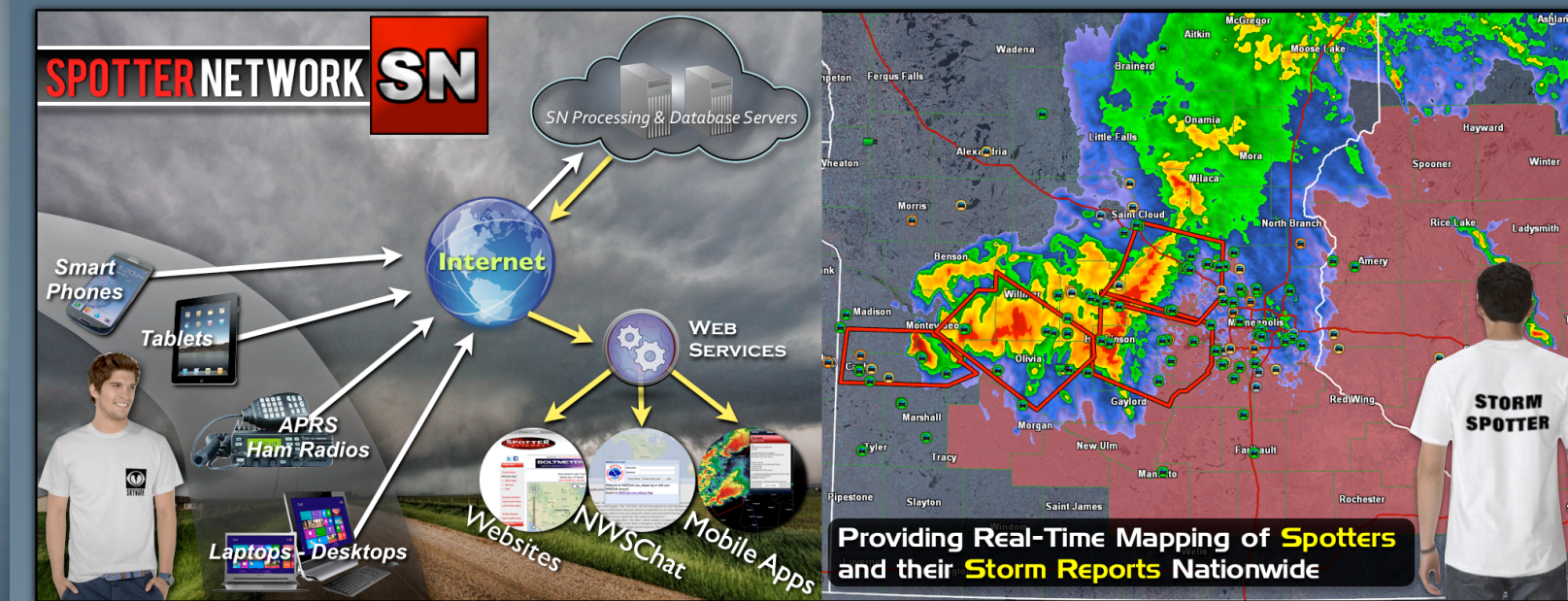


### Online Training Options

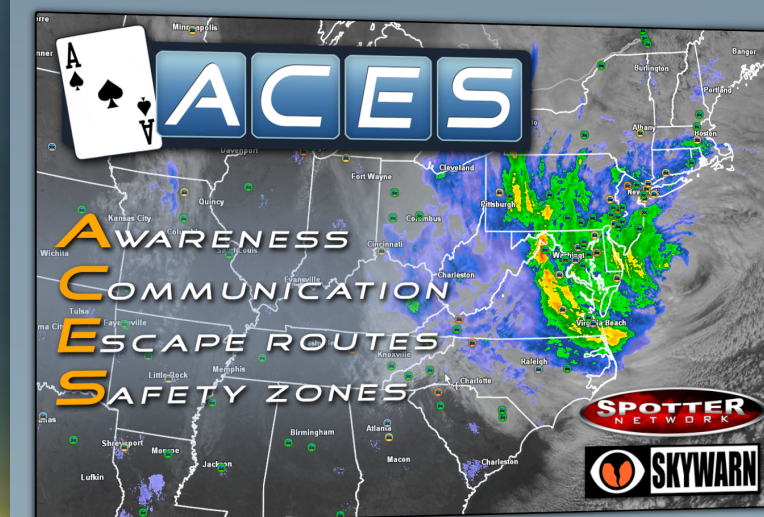


NWS SKYWARN approved online training is now available through MetEd - COMET® Program and Spotter Network! NWS WCMs have the authority to accept either of the above training alone, in combination with local training, or as optional, pre-study material for local training, for their local SKYWARN weather spotter training certification.

### Technology



Spotter Network provides a web-based reporting system, which empowers stationary and mobile weather spotters to share their real-time location and storm environment observations. Reports are stored in a centralized database and queried by a web service URL for use in web mapping, virtual globe, and weather data visualization software. This has provided an innovative weather management tool that can collect, synthesize, and redistribute individual spotter position data and their submitted storm reports within a few seconds.



### Safety Campaign

SKYWARN adopts ACES Safety Program modeled after the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes and Safety Zones (LCES). ACES provides a missing public safety link to keep stationary and mobile spotters safe in any situation.

### Partners

Completed Memorandums of Understanding, which laid the ground work for both the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) and Spotter Network to be recognized as a valued partner of the NWS SKYWARN Weather Spotter Program and foster collaborative efforts to support the fulfillment of the NWS mission of protecting life and property and enhancing the national economy.

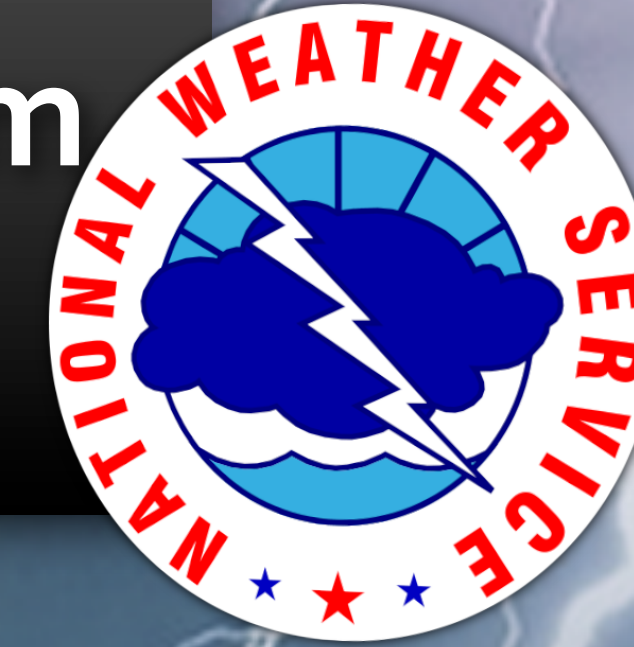
### Future Projects



Our work is far from finished! The NWS SKYWARN Program will continue to leverage ties with ARRL and Spotter Network and foster new partnerships with supporting organizations who make this collaboration successful.

Among a few of the projects slated for 2013 include...

- Expansion of Training Materials beyond Thunderstorms.
- Integration of Spotter Network and NWS SKYWARN databases.
- Enhancing SKYWARN.org with additional resources and functionality.
- Support mobile application development for spotters and chasers to report to NWS.



# WEATHERSPOTTERS

The Symbolic Eyes and Ears of the NWS

