

Decision Support Services in an Urban Environment

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In January 2012, the National Weather Service (NWS) Baltimore/Washington Weather Forecast Office (WFO-Sterling) began a Pilot Project as part of the NWS "Weather Ready Nation Initiative." The goal of the WFO-Sterling project: provide Impact-Based Decision Support Services (IDSS) in an Urban Environment. These IDSS services are being developed to provide more tailored and relevant forecast services for emergency managers (EMs) throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia. The goal is to provide key information so EMs will be better prepared to respond to the many different types of hazardous weather that affect the Nation's Capitol and surrounding areas. As part of this project, three new meteorologists have joined WFO Sterling. They are designated as "Emergency Response Specialist" (ERS) meteorologists.

This poster will illustrate how the WFO-Sterling ERS Meteorologists are working on a spectrum of activities to enhance IDSS. One activity is developing and strengthening partnerships with EM's in the WFO-Sterling region. Since coming on-board during early in 2012, the WFO-Sterling team of ERS Meteorologists has been engaged in an intensive outreach campaign, visiting 56 counties and cities; sharing ideas for service improvements with emergency managers throughout the D.C metro area, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. Through these meetings and partnerships, feedback received from EM's is being used in the development of an impacts catalog. This catalog helps hone in on how different hazardous weather threats affect communities and the range of decisions emergency managers make in the face of these threats.

In addition, the ERS Meteorologists have provided onsite weather support for numerous venues, including the National War of 1812 Commemoration "Sailabration" activities, 4th of July on the National Mall, the G8 summit in Maryland, as well as participating in several hurricane, nuclear training, and flash flood exercises throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

Additional core partnership work is ongoing with the NWS Meteorological Development Laboratory and NCEP Hydrometeorological Prediction Center to help develop and test a suite of probabilistic winter weather forecast prototypes for the 2013 winter season.

Future pilot project plans include staffing ERS Meteorologists within various agencies, e.g., during the 2013 Presidential Inauguration, providing enhanced remote weather support (e.g., via video and other means), and developing strategies for working with the public and members of the Weather Enterprise to begin the process of building a Weather Ready Nation .