

Houston Chapter of the American Meteorological Society

September 2009

Hurricane Ike, User Response and Effectiveness of NWS forecast products: Brian Haines

Tuesday, September 22nd

Dinner – 5:45pm

Candelari's Pizza

6002 Washington Ave. (downtown)

Meeting – 7:00pm

Harris County's Office of Emergency Management
Transtar Building, 6922 Katy Rd.

Hurricane Ike (2008) produced the greatest storm surge along the Texas Coast since Hurricane Carla made landfall near Port Lavaca, TX, on 11 September 1961. Although Ike had maximum wind speeds of only a Category 2 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson intensity scale, the hurricane had a very large wind field with hurricane force wind radii extending close to 115 miles prior to landfall. The size of the wind field resulted in a devastating storm surge. The fact that Ike was not a

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Notes from the President –

Greetings! -- The other Chapter Officers and I are looking forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming monthly chapter meeting on Tuesday evening, September 22. We will start off our evening with a group dinner at Candelari's Pizza.

Following dinner we will be moving to Harris County's Office of Emergency Management's. Mr. Bill Wheeler, the Harris County Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator will be our host for the meeting there in the 1st Floor Training Room. We should start arriving at 6:30pm so that we start our meeting at 7pm since we are being hosted by Harris County OEM. Tours of the OEM part of the facility may be possible after our meeting. Thanks to Bill and Gene Hafele who helped in securing our meeting room.

Our presenter will be Brian Haines, a Senior Meteorology Major from Texas A&M. His presentation was developed during his Hollings Scholarship Program while serving at the Houston NWSFO, with mentor Lance Wood, Science Operations Officer. I do hope members of the Texas A&M and the UH Student AMS Chapters will join us as well for the presentation. They are always welcome to visit with us during any of our events and meetings.

Even though the 2009 Hurricane season has been slowed by the strong shearing in the Atlantic Basin this year, there have been plenty of last year's Hurricane Ike related conferences being held this year. The new University of Houston Hurricane Center and the SSPEED Center at Rice University has been quite busy in this arena. I tried to attend all of these I could, and found all of them very interesting indeed. The latest was the Ike Revisited Conference held at Rice University by the SSPEED Center, held on Monday, September 14. I will be adding all the presentations to our Chapter Library. If you know of any interesting weather related meetings, talks, or conferences coming up in the next few months, please contact me to post them on our chapter website and letting your fellow chapter members know more about these events.

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major hurricane (Category 3 or greater) on the widely used Saffir-Simpson intensity scale, but produced a life threatening storm surge, surprised many coastal residents. The Category 2 rating resulted in many Southeast Texas residents within the storm surge threat zone deciding to stay as Ike approached, ignoring evacuation orders from local officials. The public response from Hurricane Ike illustrates the need for a better understanding of how residents assess their hurricane hazard risk upon the threat of a hurricane. Therefore, for this study we investigated user response and preferences, as well as the effectiveness of NWS Hurricane Local Statements (HLS) and storm surge products. This was accomplished with a 14 question general survey, followed by a more detailed 22 question NWS product survey. The general survey was designed to determine which media residents use for receiving tropical cyclone information, and what they consider to be important decision making information; while a subsequent survey focused on determining the effectiveness of NWS HLS and storm surge products. The respondents indicated they rely on television as their primary source of information and that they prefer both graphical and textual based products. Regarding evacuation decisions, 20 percent of respondents indicated that the Saffir-Simpson intensity rating (current and/or forecast) was the primary deciding factor, which is the same percentage as those listing recommendations by local officials.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

www.amshouston.net

NATIONAL WEBSITE

www.ametsoc.org



CORPORATE SPONSORS



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Notes from the President continued...

Last month's meeting was a viewing of the 1961 Hurricane Carla Special, produced by KPRC-TV's former News Director, Ray Miller. I think everyone found the film very interesting, especially as it covered one of the most powerful hurricanes to make landfall on the Texas coast. It was very easy to compare the destruction from Ike with what Carla did to Bolivar and Galveston, even though Carla's low-pressure center made landfall over 100 miles away from Galveston. It was in a way, sort of refreshing to see how very serious the media were, without all the fancy graphics or special equipment. I enjoyed watching a reporter describing a scene at the Victoria airport, using his handkerchief as a sock to cover his microphone and reduce the screeching wind sounds. When the wind was dangerous, he reported from the leeward side of the building to keep safe from flying debris. Also noted were all the taped windows in Galveston along the seawall with huge single X's across the window panes. The swept clean areas of Kemah and Bolivar as well as those small towns near the landfall area captured the impact of such a powerful hurricane.

Looking forward, the October meeting is planned for October 20th and will be held back on the east side of town. At this time, we are trying to secure one or two presenters to discuss the IKE DIKE Idea, possibly Bill King, former Kemah Mayor, and James B. Blackburn, Jr., Adjunct Professor and Lecturer in Environmental Law in the Environmental Sciences and Engineering Department of Rice University. This could be one of the most interesting meetings of the year. Another interesting event is the Houston Lyceum: The Cause and Laws of Storms. On October 1st at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston at 6:30 PM, Lance Wood and I will present the second in the lecture series that revisits identical topics—but with a contemporary take—from Houston's earliest cultural institution, The Houston Lyceum. The Houston Lyceum was founded in 1854 as a precursor to the first public library. The original lecture was given in 1855 by C.G. Forshey. Houston Lyceum is curated by artist/curator Andrea Grover in conjunction with No Zoning: Artists Engage Houston.

A few reminders, one very important item is that your annual dues are now due if you haven't paid. At this time, the dues are still \$10.00 but the officers will be meeting to discuss the subject as the chapter needs a few items like a PowerPoint Projector and the screen to go with it. Also there is the cost of meeting rooms. Second, donate to the chapter through the library. Third, help our chapter grow by bringing a friend along with you. Finally, take time to visit our chapter website, www.amshouston.net. If you have any ideas for making our Chapter the best it can be, come to the meeting and tell us please. Remember, a chapter is only as good as its membership.

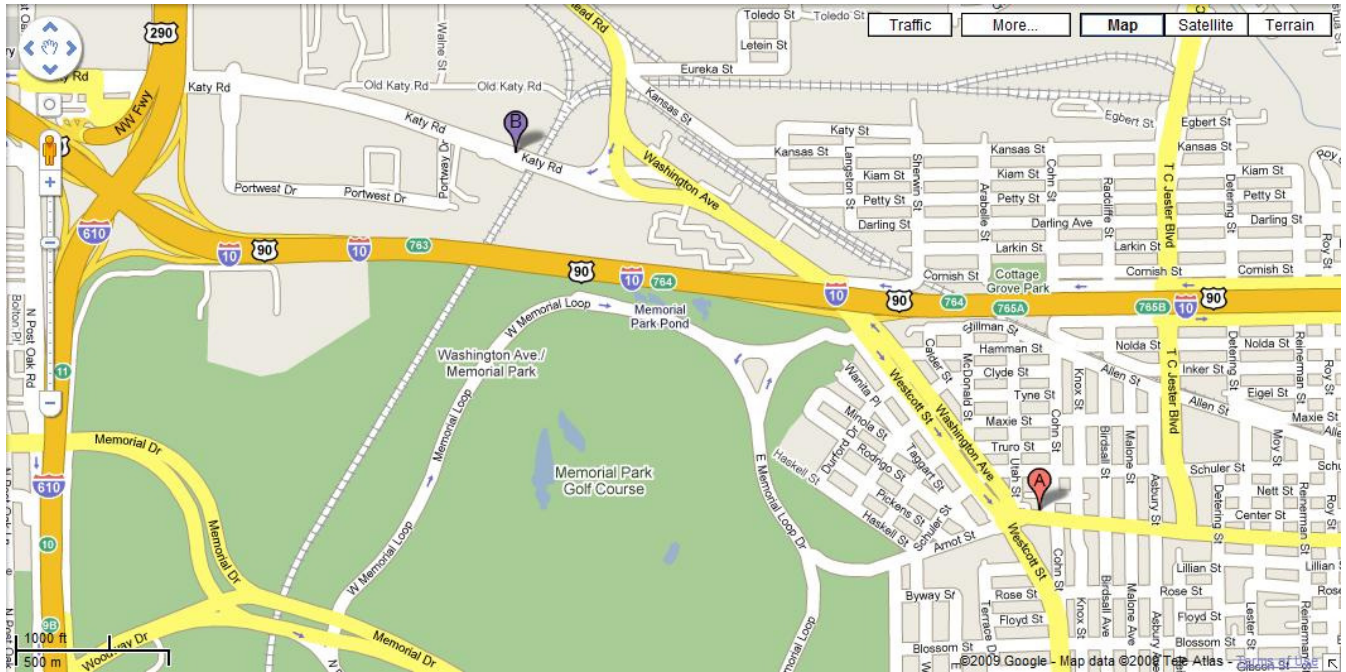
Autumn will be here soon, I hope...

Lew Fincher

Maps & Directions

Candelari's Pizza
6002 Washington Ave., 832-200-1474

Harris County's Office of Emergency Management
Transtar Building, 6922 Katy Rd., 713-88-3100



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Houston Chapter boasts of one of the most diverse memberships in the country. Due to our location we have meteorologists and scientists working for many different types of industry, government, private and media. These people are involved in forecasting and monitoring weather world-wide, right from Houston.

In addition, we welcome everyone and anyone who is interested in weather and weather-related topics.

Our dues are only \$10 per year. Funds are used to pay for dinner and thank you gifts for our speakers, and provide awards for the winners of the Houston AMS Special Awards at the Science and Engineering Fair of Houston held each spring.

If you'd like to become a member, please fill out the form below with your most recent information, include \$10 cash or check and turn it into any officer. If you prefer, you can mail the form and money to our Treasurer. Please see the address below. Checks should be made out to: *Houston Chapter of the American Meteorological Society*

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Work or Home? (please circle one)

Email Address _____

Home phone number _____

Work _____

Mail to:

Brian Planz

c/o Wilkens Weather Technologies, Inc.

2925 Briar Park Drive, 7th Floor

Houston, TX 77042

Send my newsletter by: ___ mail/___ email.

This is for: ___ Dues/___ Address change.

Feel free to contact any of the officers for comments, questions, suggestions or even additions to the newsletter. We would appreciate hearing from you.

Contact Information

<i>President – Lew Fincher</i> Ph: 281-996-1098 Email: lew@hurricaneconsulting.com	<i>Vice President – Drew Wasson</i> <i>Aaron Studwell</i> Ph: 281-518-6067 713-361-4973 Email: drewwasson@gmail.com aaron.studwell@weatherinsight.com
<i>Treasurer – Brian Planz</i> Ph: 713-430-7400 Email: brian.planz@wilkensweather.com	<i>Secretary – Dorri Breher</i> Ph: 281-652-1000 Email: dbreher@impactweather.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

34TH NATIONAL WEATHER ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

LOCATION: NORFOLK, VA – DATES: 17-22 OCTOBER

THE FIFTH EDUCATION AND SCIENCE FORUM

LOCATION: WASHINGTON D. C. – DATES: 12-14 NOVEMBER