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Feature Article

Suncoast Is First in Florida to Recognize StormReady® Community and Supporter!



Senior Forecaster **Barry Goldsmith** (right), Mayor **Jerry Beverland** (center) and Fire Chief **Scott McGuff** (left) hold up a StormReady® road sign and commemorative plaque.



Senior Forecaster **Barry Goldsmith** (right), and Public Safety Director **Tim Oldham** (left) displaying plaque commemorating the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art's StormReady® designation.

Two StormReady® recognition ceremonies were held in February, giving official designations to Florida's first Community (Oldsmar) and first Supporter (The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art). On December 21st, 2004, the West Central and Southwest Florida StormReady® Board approved each entity's application. The ceremonies were held in early 2005 rather than at the time of approval due to the Holiday Season.

Oldsmar, February 15

The ceremony was held at the bi-weekly Oldsmar City Council meeting. The meeting included the elected Council, the Mayor, City Attorney, and others. Fire Chief Scott McGuff accepted the designation, which was witnessed by an audience of more than 25 local residents. McGuff was instrumental in ensuring that Oldsmar met the official StormReady® criteria. In fact, Oldsmar exceeded the necessary criteria in several instances, including the capability to disseminate NWS hazards information on a city cable access channel

Congratulations, Oldsmar, on becoming the first StormReady® Community in Florida!

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, February 24

On the sun-drenched terrace of the Cà d'Zan Mansion on the campus of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, a ceremony was held to commemorate the Museum for receiving Florida's first StormReady® Supporter designation. Tim Oldham, the Director of Security and Safety for the Museum, was awarded a plaque recognizing the achievement.

The ceremony, hosted by Museum Executive Director John Wetenhall and Chief of Marketing and Communications Jeanne Lambert, was attended by nearly 75 persons, including Museum benefactors, staff, and local media from the Sarasota/Bradenton area. Mr. Oldham is charged with not only the safety of Museum staff and visitors, but also the multi-million dollar art collection that the Ringlings amassed during their lifetimes. Oldham, a former Manatee County Emergency Operations Official, provided an impressive application, one that could pass muster for County or Community recognition!

The ultimate success of the StormReady® program will rely on the three levels of recognition to enable efficient receipt of hazardous weather information to people and places in harm's way. The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art's recognition is a great example of readiness at the Supporter level. NWS Tampa Bay is hopeful that many other Suncoast communities and private/public entities that host large numbers of people or valuable property will consider becoming StormReady® as well!

Community

Always in a Giving Mood



NWS Tampa Bay Staff and Hillsborough County Sheriff's Deputies **Varga** (front center) and **Hoskins** (far right) stand behind the stash of Christmas goodies for the local adopted family. Forecaster **Ryan Sharp** (front left) and wife Jen handled most of the shopping.

Local Family, Troops Receive Gifts, Supplies *by Ryan Sharp*

Even after pledging a record amount of salary donations (over \$11,000!) to the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) for 2005, WFO Tampa Bay continues to give to the community. In December, the

As for the CFC, not only did NWS Tampa Bay shatter its previous overall donation record, but two staff members received the Campaign's highest honor, the Gold Eagle. Information Technology

office worked with the Hillsborough County Sheriffs Office (HCSO) to "Adopt-a-Family" for Christmas. The adopted family had a single mom with five foster children whose ages range from one year old twins up to 10 years old. In thank you letters received from the family, the bikes (pictured above) were the biggest hit!

In addition to the Adopt-a-Family, WFO staffers also donated supplies and comfort items for our troops overseas. The supplies were picked up by the HCSO just before Thanksgiving and combined with other donated items from groups all over Hillsborough county to ship to the troops before Christmas.

Officer Tony Harper and Forecaster Ryan Sharp were awarded for donations totalling at least \$1,000 for 2005. Thanks a "million", guys!

Finally, as of this writing, the office has gathered money to sponsor a local softball team with the East Bay Little League. For those of you in the south Hillsborough County area, look for the kids running around with the National Weather Service on their backs and give them a cheer!

Weather Review

Winter '04/'05: Generally Dry, A Little Warm

Just a few relatively minor weather hazards dented an otherwise uneventful winter (December 2004 - February 2005). Temperatures featured a few fluctuations, not uncommon as the polar jet stream makes occasional inroads into the Sunshine State this time of year. On the whole, readings ended up just a hair above normal. Precipitation totals were drier than normal from Tampa Bay to Lakeland and points north, with Tampa a little more than half the normal total. Farther south, values ranged from normal to slightly above normal. However, the number of dry days far outnumbered wet days; in fact, there were only three distinct rain events during the winter; one per month. See our Climate Page for details.

There were four distinct temperature cycles, alternating between cold and warm spells (Figure 1). December was largely cool, but was followed by a two week period of 5° to 8° above normal weather to begin 2005. The pronounced Pacific/North American pattern, a dominant feature of Winter 2004/05, ensured this would not last, and much cooler weather closed out January. February began with minor fluctuations, but culminated in a one week period of 5° above normal readings. This, too, would not last, and March came in like the proverbial lion.

Precipitation occurred seldom during the winter of 2004/05, but each time was rather notable. The Christmas weekend storm dropped 1 to 3 inches, with local pockets of 4 inches. On January 14th, the cold front that ended the balmy start to the new year dropped generally between a half inch and an inch of rain as it swept across the Suncoast. The final, and most prodigious, event occurred on February 27th, when low pressure intensified while moving from the central Gulf to the Big Bend region. The initial warm front dropped between 1 and 2 and one-half inches area-wide. A complex of thunderstorms developed in the eastern Gulf west of Sarasota County after the warm front passed. As the storms moved onshore, they consolidated into a 20 to 40 mile-wide band from Sarasota/Bradenton northeast through northern Manatee and Hardee Counties, as well as southern Polk County. Total rains in some areas exceeded 7 inches, causing rapid rises in a few rivers and producing brief

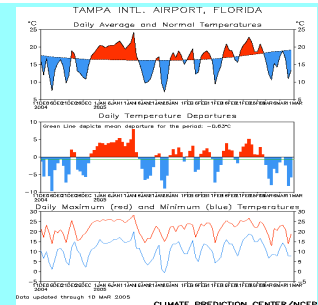
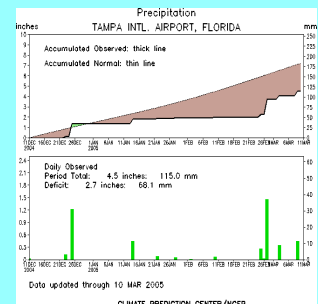


Figure 1. Winter temperature departure from normal, Tampa International Airport.



moderate flooding on the Manatee River on February 28th, and minor flooding on the Peace River at Zolfo Springs on March 1st-3rd.

Figure 2. Winter accumulated precipitation, Tampa International Airport.

NOAA Outreach

NWS Tampa Bay Featured In NOAA Video



Forecasters Richard Rude (left) and Rick Davis, ready for filming by professional production crew.

NWS Tampa Bay was part of a collaborative effort to highlight the work of all NOAA agencies in the Tampa Bay area. The 20 minute video will be used for public outreach by each of the agencies. The agencies included the National Weather Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Aircraft Operations Center, and the National Ocean Service.

This partnership between NOAA agencies is a result of a recommendation by the NOAA Performance Review Team (PRT). The PRT recommended the development of pilot regional coordination programs to ensure that all NOAA employees are aware of each other's available products and services as well as to coordinate relevant activities to ensure one NOAA face to the outside.

Phenomena

The Smell of Rain?

On occasion, people will say that smells are stronger just before it rains. There is actually some truth to this. It happens that odors must be dissolved in water vapor to be smelled. With the approach of weather systems that produce rain, the amount of water vapor in the air increases, allowing more odors to be dissolved and hence

Office Staff

Hail and Farewell...



New Faces, New Places

Frank Alsheimer (right, arrow) was promoted to fill the Science and Operations Officer position at Charleston, SC, in early January. Frank was a forecaster at NWS Tampa Bay for more than 9 years, serving as Senior Forecaster since 1998. He led the office's radar, satellite, and briefly, the tropical cyclone programs. He was also a member of several regional program teams, was on the local StormReady[®] Advisory Board, and attended the Regional Operations Center in Fort Worth.

He was very effective at linking NWS operations with customer service issues, and was known for promoting ideas that looked ahead to use newer technology to communicate our messages to a variety of customers. WFO Charleston's gain is our loss. Thanks for the memories, Frank!

Replacing Frank is Rick Davis, who is a frequent contributor to the Quarterly! Rick brings more than four years of experience as a general forecaster at NWS Tampa Bay, but also a variety of hands-on interests in marine and fire weather. As Incident Meteorologist (IMET), Rick has assisted wildfire mitigation in Florida and the Rocky Mountains, and set up several familiarization fire visits in west central Florida. His most interesting support duty included space shuttle Columbia recovery operations (2003) and oil clean-up efforts after Hurricane Ivan (2004).

An avid surfer and fisherman, Rick is always in tune with coastal weather, providing valuable first hand experience of how winds effect and produce

smelled. The next time someone says "It smells like rain", get out your umbrella!

various conditions in and near the surf zone.