

CHECKINS TO THE SKYWARN NET FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY-2010

(Highlighted names/calls are "Honor Roll" Checked in 3 times during January)

WB8CBA	Edwin	Calumet	2
W8FMR	Terry	Laurium	1
W8FWG	George	Laurium	5
KD8GBH	David	Dollar Bay	5
KC8HBE	Michael	Bay City (Via Echolink)	1
K8HRO	Randy	Aura	4
N8HZH	Jon	Dodgeville	1
KD8JAM	William	Allouez	4
W8KQB	Tom	Elo	5
WX8MQT	William	Negaunee	4
KB8XI	Roland	Hancock	2
KC8YDU	Mark	Hancock	1
KC8YSZ	Gary	Bumbletown	3
TOTAL:			38

VOICES USED ON NOAA WEATHER RADIO:

First of all.....these voices: that you hear are all digital recordings, no human voice is used at all! The voices are not real people, they are derived from something called a "text-to-speech" converter, and are a fair approximation of the human voice. but there have been given names of real people and are being updated as time goes on. Here's some past history of the voices that were heard on NOAA Weather Radio from the beginning:

Voices Used on NOAA Weather Radio

From the introduction of NOAA Weather Radio until the late 1990s, nearly all the voices heard in the broadcasts were those of the staff at local National Weather Service (NWS) offices. The messages were manually recorded, first on tape cartridges and later digitally, and placed in the broadcast cycle.

As part of the NWS Modernization during the 1990s, many local offices were closed and their NOAA Weather Radio consoles were moved to the new or enhanced Weather Forecast Offices. This was also the start of a period of rapid expansion of the Weather Radio network. What had been about 400 transmitters in 1990 grew to near 600 by the end of 2000 and is now (OVER 1,000 IN THE YEAR 2010) over

1,000 transmitters across the 50 states, are heard, including Puerto Rico, Guam, and American Samoa.

To cope with the increasing number of transmitters at each office, and to speed the overall delivery of warning messages to the public, the Console Replacement System (CRS) was deployed at NWS Weather Forecast Offices in the late 1990s. CRS introduced a computerized voice nicknamed "Paul" using the DECTalk text-to-speech system. DECTalk grew out of research by the late Dr. Dennis Klatt of MIT. While CRS greatly enhanced the speed of delivery and scheduling of Weather Radio messages, there was some dissatisfaction with Paul's voice. (But....a public survey showed Paul's voice to be the best !)

The National Weather Service embarked on a Voice Improvement Processor (VIP) program in late 2000, and implemented newer text-to-speech voices nationwide in 2002, nicknamed "Donna" and "Craig". A year later, further updates were made. The "Donna" voice was improved, "Craig" was replaced by "Tom", and a Spanish voice "Javier" was added at a few sites.

All of the VIP voices have been produced using the Speechify text-to-speech system. (The official Speechify name for our "Donna" voice is "Mara".) Speechify was originally a product of the Speechworks company, based on technology developed by AT&T. Speechworks was purchased by Scansoft in 2003, and Scansoft merged with Nuance in 2005.

The VIP voices generally have been better received by the public than "Paul" was. There is a better capability to fine-tune the pronunciation of words and phrases along with controls to adjust the volume and rate of speech. These all help to make the voices more understandable when it really counts - in warning situations.

WHAT IS NOAA WEATHER RADIO ALL HAZARDS?

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting weather information 24 hours a day direct from nearby National Weather Service offices. NWR is the fastest way to receive warnings of severe weather and floods. NWR broadcasts National Weather Service warnings, watches, advisories, forecasts, general weather information, and other hazard information. Weather messages are generally repeated every 4 to 10 minutes and are routinely updated every 1 to 3 hours or more frequently in rapidly changing local weather or if a nearby hazardous environmental condition exists.

NWR, known as the "Voice of the National Weather Service", is a service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The NWR network includes more than 1,000 transmitters, covering all 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the U.S. Pacific Territories. NWR requires a special receiver or scanner capable of

picking up the signal. Broadcasts can be found on seven frequencies in the VHF band.

NOAA Weather Radio Frequencies

162.400 MHz (WX2 on marine radio)

162.425 MHz (WX4)

162.450 MHz (WX5)

162.475 MHz (WX3)

162.500 MHz (WX6)

162.525 MHz (WX7)

162.550 MHz (WX1)

Working with the Federal Communication Commission Emergency Alert System (EAS) , NWR is an all hazards radio network, making it your single source for comprehensive weather and emergency information. NWR also broadcasts warning and post-event information for all types of hazards, both natural (such as earthquakes and volcanic activity) and environmental (such as chemical releases or oil spills).

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That's all for now.....See you next month, where there are only four weeks of reporting activities. Thanks to all who checked in to our net. Tell your ham friends of the SKYWARN NET and join us each Friday at 9, Eastern time, for the SKYWARN NET.

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