



## **Partners Appreciation Day Draws A Crowd!**

### **NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley Welcomes Core Supporters**

On a Chamber of Commerce sunny November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the National Weather Service Office in Brownsville opened its doors to nearly two dozen core partners in emergency management and local media to several tours and a live viewing of the late afternoon weather balloon/radiosonde release. The diverse group of visitors spanned the range of support, including:

- Texas Division of Emergency Management District 3 Coordinator
- County and City emergency managers and staff from Hidalgo County, City of McAllen, and the City of South Padre Island
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Incident Management, Rio Grande Valley Sector
- Texas State Department of Health Services

- Texas Association of Local Health Providers, Cameron County Health and Human Services
- South Texas Emergency Care
- American Red Cross of South Texas
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas Forest Service
- KRGV-TV Channel 5 (highest rated English-Language news broadcast)

Three tours, dubbed “From Observations to Operations for a Weather-Ready Nation”, brought the visitors outside to learn how observations from the surface (Automated Surface Observing System) and aloft (from upper air radiosonde/weather balloon releases) are collected, and an overview of the Brownsville WSR-88D radar. The tour then moved indoors, stopping briefly in the equipment room where data processing was explained before heading to the operations floor. Forecasters explained how observations and computer model data are synergized into seven day weather predictions, and how radar data are interpreted to determine the potential hazards of wind, hail, tornadoes, and flooding rains from local storms. The final tour stop was a brief presentation on Weather Ready Nation, including an overture to partners to work directly with several of our forecasters in the future. The project, known as “Adopt-A-Community”,



would allow individual forecasters to build relationships with emergency management personnel at City, County, or Community (Public Health, Education, Environment, Infrastructure, and more) levels.

Tours were conducted by Marketing and Outreach Team Leader **Maria Torres**, Senior Forecasters **Geoffrey Bogorad** and **Tim Speece**, and Warning Coordination Meteorologist **Barry Goldsmith**. **Sam Martinez** from the Public Service Unit launched the 5 PM weather balloon; Forecasters **Kirk Caceres** and **Justin Gibbs** provided details on how forecasts and

warnings are “made” to visitors throughout the afternoon. A formal weather briefing was given by Senior Forecaster **Mike Castillo** (above) and Forecaster **Justin Gibbs** to partners in the facility just prior to shift change (2 PM CT). “Partners Appreciation Day allowed NWS Brown

A great spread of snacks, sandwiches, and drinks was provided by the City of Brownsville. NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley is always thankful and fortunate for the continued support from our core partners across the spectrum of public safety and broadcast media. Building a Weather Ready Nation requires more than improved warning lead times and long range forecasts; equally as important is the strength of the bond between people. Partners Appreciation Day allowed many of the staff to introduce themselves to important stakeholders and spend some quality time to start and build these human bonds. “Partners Appreciation Day allowed NWS Brownsville operational staff to begin building one-on-one relationships by sharing goals to improve communication, and listen to their needs,” said **Ms. Torres**. “It was satisfying for the employees to hear how grateful our partners are for the work we do to inform their decisions to protect life and property.”



*NWS Brownville/Rio Grande Valley Meteorologist-in-Charge **Steve Drillette** (left) and Warning Coordination Meteorologist **Barry Goldsmith** (right) presenting Brownsville Assistant City Manager/Acting Emergency Manager **Jeff Johnston** (second from left) and Brownsville City Manager **Charles Cabler** (second from right) with a Special Service Award for support of Partners Appreciation Day.*