

# NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley In Your Neighborhood...and Beyond!



**Busy Autumn!** *Above, Clockwise from Left:* Meteorologist **Chris Birchfield** chats with prospective volunteers at the UTPA Fall Career Fair in Edinburg; Forecaster **Blair Scholl** stands ready for children and parents at Amazing Skies in Harlingen; Meteorologist **Erin Billings** and Senior Forecaster **Geoff Bogorad** await Halloween visitors at Boo at the Zoo in Brownsville; Spanish Language Liaison **Maria Torres** describes the Spanish Language NOAA Weather Radio transmitters to Telemundo (Channel 40) at the NWS Brownsville Office.

## September 2014

**September 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29:** Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) *Barry Goldsmith* participated by e-mail, phone, or both, in the **Weekly Texas Drought Monitor Teleconference.**

**September 3:** National Weather Service Brownsville sponsored **Ribbon Cutting for the Spanish Early Weather Notification System.** This was a celebration of the addition of two

transmitters in Pharr and Harlingen that broadcast NOAA/NWS products completely in Spanish. The Spanish-designated transmitters bring total to seven nationwide. Nearly all major Rio Grande Valley English and Spanish media partners attended, which was led by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC). US Rep. Filemon Vela (D-TX 34), State Senator Eddie Lucio, the Mayors of Harlingen and Brownsville, Melinda Bailey (NWS Southern Region Headquarters) and others attended. Details can be found here: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/bro/?n=nwrspanishceremony>

**September 6:** *Barry Goldsmith* and Information Technology Officer *Pablo Gonzalez* represented NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley at the **2014 Oceanarium**. Barry and Pablo manned the NWS booth. The estimated number of visitors was around 1,000 parents and children. The event was very successful, with dozens of questions from visitors. Tim Smith (KRGV Channel 5 News) also interviewed Barry about the services that NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley provides to the region. The tornado/waterspout simulator was a big hit with the children (as usual), who brought their parents to our table which allowed us to target them with additional NWS information, including hurricane preparedness. The Urban Science Initiative and Gladys Porter Zoo thanked NWS for participating.

**September 9 and 10:** NWS Southern Region Headquarters Deputy Regional Director *Mike Coyne* and Amarillo Meteorologist in Charge *Jose Garcia* led a **Local Mini BLAST Workshop** to the NWS Brownsville staff.

**September 16, 17 and 18:** *Barry Goldsmith* participated in the **Texas Division of Emergency Management/NWS Texas Coastal Office Tropical Coordination Meeting in Austin**. This meeting was held to better define tropical Decision Support Service templates and time frames from regional/state/local to Weather Forecast Office (WFO) Level. WCMs from Brownsville through Lake Charles attended the meeting.

**September 17:** Meteorologist-in-Charge *Steve Drillette* provided a 30 minute talk at the **Texas Regional Bank Freedom Club in Brownsville**. This talk was focused on the awareness and preparedness for the Rio Grande Valley Weather. Four people were in attendance.

**September 18:** *Pablo Gonzalez* and Meteorologist *Chris Birchfield* staffed a booth at the **Brownsville Literacy Center**. This event was mainly for students, teachers, and the community to learn about various local, state, and federal agencies that serve the Rio Grande Valley. An estimated total of 100 individuals visited the booth and were very interested of the information provided. Several other organizations were interested in receiving a tour of NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley.

**September 18:** *Steve Drillette* provided a 30 minute talk at the **Texas Regional Bank Freedom Club in Brownsville**. The talk was similar to that given on September 17<sup>th</sup> for the Brownsville Club. Seventeen people attended.

**September 19:** *Barry Goldsmith* gave a 30 minute talk at the **Texas Regional Bank Freedom Club in La Feria**. This talk was focused on Weather Impacts by Season in the RGV." There were mostly retirees but permanent residents of the area. A total of 49 people attended; the talk was well received by those in attendance.

**September 25:** Forecaster and Spanish Language Liaison *Maria Torres* did an interview with Director Gerardo Lorenzo at the **Radio Esperanza Studios in Edinburg** and talked about the latest on the tropical systems and potential impacts they create along the lower Texas Gulf

Waters. We discussed what rip currents are, what the meaning of the different flag colors are, and what to look for when people head out to the beach.

**September 25:** Science and Operations Officer *Douglas Butts*, *Pablo Gonzalez*, and Electronic Systems Analyst *Paul Schaafsma* provided a **Tour to Ms. Shirley Mayes and Ms. Gavymar Rivera from Texas Department of Public Safety's Houston's Mitigation Office.** The tour, hosted by NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley along with the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, highlighted the two Spanish-language transmitters, as well as hardware and software configured at the office. DPS, who provided the bulk of the funding for the project, also toured the transmitter sites. The purpose of the tour was to evaluate how state funds were spent; the visitors left the office impressed with the project and outcome. More details at [http://weather.gov/rgv/?n=2014\\_dpshoustonvisit](http://weather.gov/rgv/?n=2014_dpshoustonvisit).

**September 25:** Senior Forecaster *Mike Castillo* gave a talk and answered questions at the **Brownsville Historic Rotary Club** at Antonio's Restaurant. The talk focused on the NWS, the remainder of the 2014 hurricane season, and the 201/2015 winter outlook. He handed out hurricane guides and NWS Brownsville Brochures to those in attendance as well as reusable bags, pencils, key chains, magnets and can insulators (koozies). A total of 30 people attended.

## October 2014

**October 6, 13, and 20:** *Barry Goldsmith* and Meteorologist *Erin Billings* participated by e-mail, phone, or both, in the **Weekly Texas Drought Monitor Teleconference.**

**October 8:** *Maria Torres* provided an **interview to Radio Esperanza** on rainfall totals for the month of September and talked about the importance of the NOAA Weather Radio transmitters now available in Spanish. This interview concluded a year of monthly interviews with this radio station.

**October 8:** *Barry Goldsmith* and *Pablo Gonzalez* attended the **Texas Public Safety Broadband Program meeting in McAllen.**

**October 9:** *Barry Goldsmith* and *Chris Birchfield* attended the **University of Texas – Pan American (UTPA) 2014 Fall Career Fair Employer/Student Social** and networked with more than a dozen prospective volunteers.

**October 9:** *Barry Goldsmith* and *Pablo Gonzalez* toured the **LRGVDC 9-1-1 EOC facility in Weslaco** for a possible alternate location in case of a catastrophic local incident that incapacitates NWS Brownsville's office location. Victor Morales of LRGVDC led the tour. A tentative agreement was reached, but a more formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be crafted for this location.

**October 10:** *Barry Goldsmith*, *Chris Birchfield*, and volunteer *Bianca Villanueva* staffed a booth at the **UTPA 2014 Fall Career Fair.** Between 50 and 100 students visited the booth and eight resumes were received from potential volunteers ranging from communications to computer science.

**October 15:** *Barry Goldsmith* and *Pablo Gonzalez* met with John O'Valle (Regional Administrator, Texas DPS 3A) and Disaster District Commander de la Garza at the Texas DPS Region 3 site to discuss NWS Brownsville Continuity of Operatinos (COOP) plans when the

Disaster District Committee (DDC) is activated, which occurs at this facility. From this meeting, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was forged to have **Texas DPS Region 3 Headquarters** serve as a staging location for NWS Brownsville DSS in case of COOP activation when the DDC is activated (i.e. Valley-wide hurricane event).

**October 18:** Forecaster *Blair Scholl* and *Barry Goldsmith* staffed a table at the **Amazing Skies** event held in **Harlingen** at Texas State Technical College. In total, more than 300 children and parents visited the table and hundreds of brochures and trinkets (can insulators, reusable bags, keychains, etc.) were handed out.

**October 22:** *Barry Goldsmith* promoted the NWS and Public Radio in the Rio Grande Valley on-air and answered phones for prospective contributors during the **KMBH TV/Public Radio Fall Fund Drive**.

October 30: *Steve Drillette*, Data Acquisition Program Manager *Jim Campbell*, *Mike Castillo*, and Forecaster *Kirk Caceres* staffed a table at the annual **Boo at the Zoo event at the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville**. Hundreds of children and parents visited the table for candy and weather brochures.

October 31: *Jim Campbell*, Senior Forecaster *Geoff Bogorad*, and *Erin Billings* staffed a table at the annual **Boo at the Zoo event at the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville**. Hundreds of children and parents visited the table for candy and weather brochures.