

RACC Meeting Minutes No. 192 (1/31/07)

1. Purpose: A regularly scheduled meeting of the RACC was held from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. EST in Room 3246 on Wednesday, January 31, 2007, to discuss and address national and regional AWIPS issues, problems and concerns.

2. Regions In Attendance: The following regions (and other NWS organizations outside of Silver Spring) participated in the conference call: **ERH**: Joe Palko, Cindy Scott, Dave Novak; **WRH**: Gar Nelson, Craig Schmidt, Scott Dummer; **CRH**: Bill Gery, Greg Noonan; **ARH**: Duane Carpenter, Phil Mieczynski; **PRH**: Bill Ward; **GSD**: Joanne Edwards; **NWSTC**: Randy Schupbach; **Warning Decision Training Branch**: Timm Decker; **NRC**: Jeff Sickles; **Forecast Decision Training Branch**: Shannon White;

3. Discussion Items: The following topics were discussed/briefed at the meeting:

a. Status of AWIPS Release OB7.2 and Associated WarnGen Template Defects: The national deployment of AWIPS Release OB7.2 began on Monday, January 29, and as of January 31, the software has been installed at 26 sites. On Tuesday, January 30 the installation was completed at WFO BIS and TWC in approximately 3 hours with no installation errors encountered. The AWIPS Regional Focal Points, coordinating the scheduling of the installations at their sites, using the Oracle Calendar should ensure that all OB7.2 installations are completed by April 15. The software must be installed at RFC systems prior to March 9 in order to obtain software fixes required for the new Daylight Savings Time policy modification implementation on March 11.

Testing for the next Major AWIPS Release, OB8.1 is continuing on the Raytheon Test system TBW3. The first alpha installation of OB8.1 is tentatively scheduled for February 28 on the Raytheon test system TBDW.

On Monday January 29, a Lessons Learned teleconference was conducted with Regional AWIPS Focal Points and the OB7.2 Beta Site Representatives. The feedback received was mostly positive. A few of the more significant positive aspects were that the installation was relatively short (about 3 hours), the instructions were easy to follow and in a good format, the issues tracking was improved from previous releases and the site representatives liked having the weekly conference calls. A few negatives aspects which were reported included: in a few instances the DVDs arrived late at the beta sites and it impacted their readiness to install; when testing of Discrepancy Report fixes are required by beta site representatives more information is required; and there were some problems with completion of Raytheon's Test Procedures at the beta sites since for some of these test cases, additional files and data were not available locally.

One recommendation received at the Lessons Learned meeting was that site representatives prefer to have one specific contact point for issue discussions since when numerous individuals contact them for the same problems they have to repeat the information multiple times, and also the site personnel don't know who to follow up with. An additional recommendation is the requirement for improved testing of the software at Raytheon test platforms prior to making the software available to alpha and beta test sites. One of the most significant recommendations was

also made after the completion of the OB7.1 beta testing phase: there is a requirement for enhanced support for mission critical software when delta upgrades are made at beta sites late in the day and key support people have already left for the day. These occurrences during beta testing have negatively impacted the operations when sites were unable to disseminate operational products after delta installations.

There will be an OB7.2 Maintenance Release, OB7.2.1 that will provide fixes for selected critical issues identified during the beta testing phase. Karen Tepera of Raytheon mentioned that the OB7.2.1 maintenance release contents will be finalized on February 9, and the release is expected to be deployed in early to mid-March. This release will also contain the fixes required for the Guam time zone changes.

Concerning the OB7.2 WarnGen template issues brought to our attention by Greg Noonan of Central Region, several of these defects are known issues that have already been prioritized for inclusion in future AWIPS Releases. The Discrepancy Report (DR) Team, comprised of representatives from each region is chartered to classify and set the priorities for AWIPS defects documented in DRs. During the beta testing phase two DR fixes, 18291 and 18292 were made to AWIPS templates, so when the weekly delta upgrades were installed at beta sites, changes to the baseline WarnGen templates were made. Mike Rega has previously addressed these changes and has provided instructions for the local customization of OB7.2 WarnGen templates.

Mike Rega and other SST members have begun an assessment of the OB7.2 WarnGen template issues identified by staff at WFO Portland. Discussion at the RACC meeting focused on options for addressing these OB7.2 WarnGen templates issues. For some of the issues, DRs have not yet been written. A long discussion ensued on how to get these corrections to the field sites as soon as possible prior to the start of the severe weather season. Shannon White took the action item to write DRs for the template errors that do not yet have a DR associated with them. The DR team intends to discuss these additional DRs at next week's DR Team meeting. Mike Rega is investigating whether changes to the existing WarnGen templates available on the NOAA1 server could be modified in time for the OB7.2.1 Maintenance Release. It was proposed that pre-installation procedures could be included in the OB7.2.1 instructions to download the updated templates from NOAA1. Mike Rega will provide an update on this topic at a future RACC meeting.

b. GHG VTEC Event Tracking Number (ETN) Problems: Ashley Kells briefed the group on the two problems with the ETN. The first problem is the ETN is not resetting at the beginning of the New Year. This is only an OB7.1 problem but a DR was written for OB7.2 and will be fixed for the next New Year change over come 2007-2008. OS and the partners have determined that this can wait until OB7.2 to get this fixed. The second problem deals with some VTEC ETNs prematurely going to over to 0001 and the ETN getting stuck at 0001 or other values. Shannon White is working with ASM on how to resolve this problem.

c. DS De-commissioning and Impact on GIS Functions at RFCs: There is a problem with migrating the ArcView software from the DSs to the DXs at the RFC sites. ESRI will not support ArcView to run on a Linux box. Raytheon has worked with Edwin Welles (and others) and put together a matrix of the above options with their pluses and minuses and impacts. We

boiled them down to 4 options. Two of the most viable options are to allow the RFCs to continue to run the ArcView on the DSs (HP-UX boxes) until AWIPS 2 has been implemented. The second is to allow the RFCs to migrate the ERSI license to the HP-UX workstations. Andy Nappi of Raytheon will report back at the next RACC with an update on the decision of which option is the best way to go.

d. Focal Point/Participants Reports, Problems and Concerns:

Andy Nappi: Concerning the MHS Configuration: The AWIPS system currently uses the X.400 message transfer protocol on the DS servers. As part of the DS decommissioning requirements, AWIPS will be switching from X.400 to the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) running from the Linux DX servers. The initial alpha testing at selected operational sites (both 7.1 and 7.2 sites) revealed a transmit problem with radar products. The issue will be corrected and additional testing of the GFE ISC grid transfer is expected to be completed over the next week. Deployment to all sites is expected to occur in early to mid March. The SMTP is currently on 6 systems (FSLC, NHDA, TBDW, TBDR, TBW3, TBW4).

Also, concerning the trouble ticket surveys, it is important that sites complete the surveys when asked in order to see how well ASM is performing. We recently instituted three actions at the NCF. We moved the focal point for the ASM trouble tickets to the NCF in order to work more closely with the NCF personnel. Second, we moved another engineer to the NCF to work on the trouble tickets before they might go back to ASM. And third, the trouble tickets assigned to ASM for action will go through a NCF “backline” for further evaluation to see if they can be fixed before being moved to ASM.

Alaska Region: nothing significant to report.

Central Region: nothing significant to report.

Eastern Region: Dave Novak is working with Matt Kensey of Raytheon to have the GFE Pre-Release software installed on non baseline hardware at WFO sites. Raytheon is looking to have scheduled installs beginning in mid March to prepare for the early April OB8.1 beta installs. They propose 3 sites per region for ER, WR, SR, and CR and 1 site in AR and 1 site in PR (14 total sites). Assuming these pre-releases require minimal support staff resources, the plan is to expand the installs to more sites. Dave asked who at WSH can assist him with scheduling the test sites. Jamie Vavra said to contact her on this matter.

Pacific Region: nothing significant to report.

Western Region: nothing significant to report.

GSD: nothing significant to report.

NWSTC: A DR was written on the AWIPS setup script to add users to AWIPS in OB7.1. If one adds a user, they cannot ssh to another machine without having to provide a password.

Warning Decision Training Branch: nothing significant to report.

NRC: nothing significant to report.

The next RACC is scheduled for Wednesday, February 14, 2007. If you know of any agenda items you wish to be discussed at this RACC, please e-mail them to Jim Stenpeck and cc Wayne Martin. This is to ensure that all of the appropriate WSH personnel attend this RACC to address your issues.