

MidWest Tracker



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Holiday Event Page 8

Visit us at www.midwestsstrc.org

Welcome to the
MidWest Tracker
Newsletter!



This fine newsletter is brought to you by the hard work and dedication of our editor and with special thanks to Mr. Steve Fitzsimmons.

*Times they are a changing,
Come gather 'round people.*
The now famous lyrics of Bob Dylan dating back to 1963 continue to bring focus to this day. For those of us who are not keen on Mr. Dylan, take heart in Sir Winston Churchill ...

*“A pessimist sees the difficulty
in every opportunity,*

*An optimist sees the
opportunity in every difficulty”*

Reflection has great value, however experience of life remains a great teacher. The sharing of hopes and dreams, the foundation of family and

community continue to be the basis of who we are as mankind.

Let no one lead you astray. These days are challenging to this great nation and to the peoples of our planet. Yet challenges are ingredients that lead to opportunities, and opportunities lead to success, of learning and growth as individuals and community.

2009 has been a relatively calm tracking and response season for MidWest. That being said, in speaking with the folks down at the Storm Prediction Center, they have a count of 969 tornadoes confirmed, based on their NWS storm data submissions, as of October 10, 2009.

While the count, per se', is low, we have lost 22 souls from this violence of nature. While in 2008, souls lost was 126 and the three year average comes in at 91. My personal belief is that any such loss is unacceptable.

It is with the many technical advances of the National Weather Service, of the NOAA, of the world science

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community, that we continue to improve in the predictability of severe storms. It is because of organizations such as MidWest that we remain vigil in our duties – which we continue on our path of learning, teaching, sharing and of giving back to our communities that continue to make a difference.

I have reviewed the past presidents newsletters and see a trend, a common factor. It is



MidWest news

A p p r e c i a t i o n

C o n g r a t u l a t i o n s

You the Volunteer, the MidWest member, the individual, the group. This is who and what MidWest is and remains. It may sound corny to some whom are looking in, however from those of us looking out, it is solidly embedded in our nature to be the best of the best.

Throughout our fairly calm year, we have quietly gained ground. Once again MidWest went the extra mile with the spring NWS Spotter Classes and interacted in multiple counties. MidWest continues to grow and assist in Iowa and Rock County and we look forward to always expanding our air waves and assistance as deemed proper and necessary.

Many of our fine members successfully completed the Advance Tornado Spotter

Course presented by Madison Area Science and Technology (MAST). Our special thanks and appreciation to Rocky Wenz – Research Projects Coordinator and George Hrabovsky – President of MAST, and Congratulations to all the MidWest members who participated!

The general meetings remain a great source of networking and learning as we go forward, with contributions from within as well as our special guest speakers throughout the year.

This past season of 2009 saw the accomplishment of MidWest forming a Disaster Assessment Team, with training, and the formation of the DAT Field Manual. Another sincere Thank You to each and every one of you!

Our Chief Operations Officer, Tim Shriver and family and his

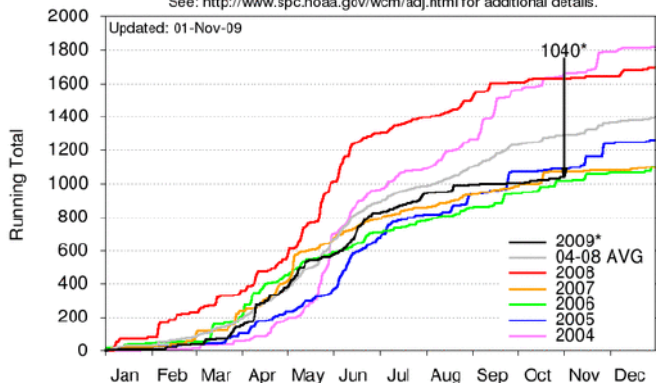
operations base have moved into their new digs in Deforest, WI. They hosted the 2009 MidWest summer picnic of which everyone had a grand time.

I'd like to take this moment to give our thanks to Tim for all that he does. He remains a solid and critical portion of MidWest and as with all of the MidWest family, *thank you's* are sometimes few and far between when the days, weeks and months run against each other. Sometimes it's just nice not only to hear it, but to say it, so thank you Tim!

So what's ahead for MidWest? As we come upon the close of 2009, we have indeed achieved many of our goals. Yes, we struggled with some and as always have more goals to meet.

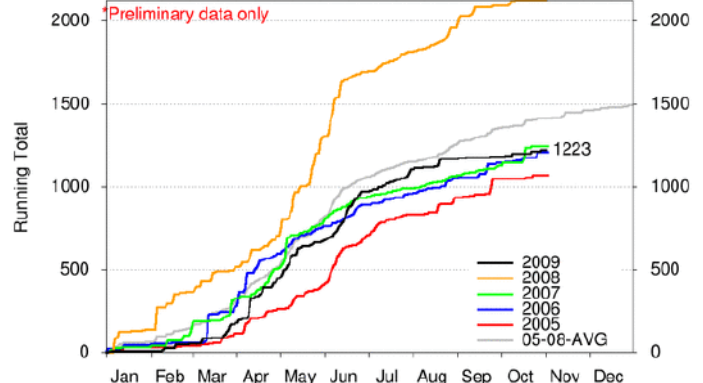
 U.S. Annual Tornadoes 2004-2009

* 2009 tornado running total estimated by multiplying preliminary count from Local Storm Reports (LSRs) by 0.95 to remove overcount. See: <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/wcm/adj.html> for additional details.



Severe Storm Report Trends*

U.S. Tornado Reports (from LSRs for all years) through Oct-31





Training, training, training, has – is and yes, will always remain a challenge for us, as it does with any organization whose focus and mission is to be the best of the best...



Training, training, training, has – is and yes, will always remain a challenge for us, as it does with any organization whose focus and mission is to be the best of the best. One remaining challenge is field training, also known as ride alongs. This will be a main focus for us as we enter into the 2010 season. We simply must afford each other with this mission of *shared training*. As we know, this is a difficult mission at best. It just isn't as simple as saying it will happen. Work schedules, family structure, community involvement, etc, etc, etc, all play a part in the best laid plans. Yet, as we always do, we will endure and achieve accomplishments for this goal. Posting your status as to your availability to ride or to host goes a long way to seeing this goal through.

We will be scheduling more DAT training and forming

regular DAT meeting schedules for 2010 in addition to our general meeting schedule. I know that all DAT members are looking forward to assisting the many folks that we work with, in any means they request of us, and in the utmost professional manner. With DAT and other areas, we will work on field maneuvers, pre and post events. Stagings and debriefings will also see a progressive focus for our 2010 season.

MidWest will again be involved in the 2010 Dane County Severe Weather classes as well as other locations as we look forward to working with those who request our aid and commitment to community service.

Special thanks to the folks at the Great City of Monona WI who as in the past years - are once again granting us gracious meeting space on a monthly, annual schedule. There may be other organizations out there who have such available meeting space, however, I dare to say that the meeting digs we are presented with far exceed many others out there.

THANKS MONONA!



Next Meeting of MidWest SSTRC Inc.
DANE * IOWA * ROCK

Monday January 18, 2010
1011 Nichols Road
Monona, WI
7:00 PM CST



H E L P F U L

Links

1. [NWS Spotter Page](#)
2. [MidWest Training Resources](#)
3. [Milwaukee SkyWarn](#)
4. [MAST](#)
5. [Tornado Summaries \(SPC\)](#)
6. [MidWest SSTRC Store](#)
7. [MidWest Cafe Press Store](#)
8. [Jetstream - NWS Training](#)



This is what it's all about folks. That's the community working with and for the community! It only gets better. On the personal home front, there will be a major restructure of the Monona Base with the assistance and knowledge of several of our MidWest family members. The Media/Training Room is also on the agenda for completion.

Is there more? Of course there is! Isn't there always?

D. Bernstein
President/CEO



Wanted - Student Volunteers

The National Weather Service Office in Sullivan WI is currently accepting applications for Student Volunteers. This is primarily for the summer of 2010, roughly the end of May through the end of August. However, in some cases, the students also volunteer during the school year. Hours vary, but are extremely flexible and are typically 1 day per week for 8 hours. 1-2 student volunteers will be selected. For more [info click here](#).

Pushing yourself as a severe weather spotter.
Rusty Kapela, WCM

First of all, a BIG thanks to MidWest SSTRC for all of your help in the 2009 severe weather season! Your efforts are critical to the success of Wisconsin's severe weather program. Yes, the NWS in Wisconsin issued only about 50% of the normal number of tornado, severe thunderstorm, and flash flood warnings in 2009, but we wouldn't want to wish "more" severe weather on anyone, would we (wink-wink)?



I'm continually amazed at your enthusiasm and dedication being a spotter in the spirit of public safety. WOW! Your zeal make us work harder at the NWS, make no bones about it. You have organizational structure, regular meetings, goals, and also have fun along the way. Look how far you have come in the past 6 years and imagine what it will be like in another 6 years...incredible!

I'm often asked questions by you and other spotters that suggest there is a big appetite out there for more weather/radar education. This tells me you are not satisfied with the "status-quo" and want to push yourself to the next level. This is where I feel inadequate - I wish I had the



- Wednesday Night Nets**
- 1 Check-ins begin at 7:00 PM on the Ham Radio side on 444.375, 444.750 and 444.575 Mhz. *Practice reporting in TLCS format.*
 - 2 Check-ins begin at 7:30 PM on the Business Band side on 451.275 Mhz. Practice reporting in TLCS format. *Test your radios.*
- Time:** The time of event.
Location: Where you are reporting from.
3 Condition: What are you reporting.
Source: Your call sign.

time and resources to satisfy your "hunger," but I'm pulled a hundred different ways at the office and involved in many things outside of severe weather spotting.



What I can do though, is try to point you to resources that each of you can use to push yourself to the next level. I'm sure some of you have already found or utilized some of these resources, but here's a list of resources: 1) your co-spotter -

we all learn from others, 2) take a weather class at a university – in person or on-line/remotely, 3) surf the web – NWS sites, other government or university web sites, or spotter-based web sites, 4) purchase weather-related books and share them with co-spotters, and 5) subscribe to the Weatherwise magazine (<http://www.weatherwise.org/>), other magazines/newsletters.



I'd like to make comments about item #3 above. All of the NWS web sites have educational material of some sort – exhaust this resource. Educational documents and slide sets have been posted. I think the “JetStream” material on the NWS’s Southern Region web site is superb (<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/jetstream/>). Don’t forget to glance at the “Top News of the Day” sections and Top News Archives on NWS web sites – there’s a lot of educational material posted in these sections. Of course, one can’t leave out one last option – type into a search engine any spotter-related word or phrase such as tornado, microburst, rear flank downdraft, rotating wall cloud, etc. Up will pop a wealth of educational material. Now....if we only had 48 hours in a day!

Rusty Kapela, *Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) WFO Milwaukee*

Being On the Inside by George E. Hrabovsky

You see, it was all unintended. I had no desire to see the world from that perspective again. And the chase had gone so well up until that point. Here we were driving along I-35 in Iowa when it happened. But, I am getting ahead of myself.



It was Sunday, 21 June, 2009. This was the outlook as we entered Iowa:

"...IA/IL/NRN MO/SRN MN/SWRN WI... WEAKENING MOIST CONVECTION IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE LIFTING NNEWD ACROSS THE UPPER MS RIVER VALLEY TODAY ASSOCIATED WITH EJECTING SHORTWAVE TROUGH. IN THE WAKE OF THIS ACTIVITY ...SURFACE WARM FRONT WILL REMAIN WELL DEFINED FROM PORTIONS OF CENTRAL IL INTO CENTRAL/NRN IA AND SHOULD PROVIDE FOCUS FOR INCREASING SEVERE THREAT LATER TODAY. STRONG HEATING ALONG THE MO RIVER VALLEY SHOULD ALLOW AXIS OF NEAR 90F SURFACE TEMPERATURES TO NOSE INTO NWRN IA WHERE CONVECTIVE INHIBITION WILL BECOME QUITE WEAK BY 21Z...ALTHOUGH WEAK LAPSE RATES ARE EXPECTED TO LIMIT AVAILABLE MLCAPE. REGARDLESS... AIRMASS WILL STILL BECOME MODERATELY UNSTABLE AND SEVERE THUNDERSTORM DEVELOPMENT IS EXPECTED NEAR THE WARM FRONT OVER NWRN IA DURING THE LATE AFTERNOON. ACTIVITY WILL LIKELY INCREASE IN COVERAGE AND INTENSITY ESEWD THROUGH THE EVENING. MODERATE TO STRONG SWLY H85 FLOW WILL SUPPORT FAIRLY LARGE

LOW LEVEL HODOGRAPHS NEAR THE SURFACE WARM FRONT WITHIN DEEP LAYER SHEAR AROUND 35 KT...BOTH SUPPORTIVE OF A RISK OF TORNADIC SUPERCELLS AND SMALL SCALE BOW ECHOES INTO THE EARLY TO MID EVENING."

I looked over the charts throughout the day, and decided things looked good. Off we went, James Firmiss, the Secretary of MAST, was the driver, Di Hrabovsky, the Treasurer of MAST (and my wife), was navigating in the back seat. Rocky Wenz, the MAST Research projects Coordinator stayed home and provided nowcasting support.

We entered Iowa around 5 PM. By 6 PM storms had begun to develop west of Cedar Falls. We had a beautiful view of the storms. There were two impressive supercells in front of us. We were getting numerous tornado warnings and we were seeing lowerings indicating a possible tornado to our left and front, or west southwest of us. The video is inconclusive, but we think we passed the TIV going the other direction, it sure looked like the TIV.



Around 20:20 we encountered extremely high winds and a burst of rain on the highway. Visibility briefly went to zero as the leading edge of the wall cloud passed over us. We turned around and went back east, got to I-35 going south and took it. On the video there

Inside the storm



is an indication of a tube-like vortex passing to our left, or north east, as we went east. I believe we had just been run over by a weak tornado. This conforms to a tornado report from our location at that time frame.



Note: The camera time is off by one hour.

We went south and were stopped by an emergency management vehicle under the rotating wall cloud along with a small caravan of other vehicles. As we proceeded south we were looking for the tornado when the visibility went to near zero and the winds rocked the car. I watched in growing astonishment the rainbands rotating from right to left in front of us. The pattern was concave, that is the rain bands were going counterclockwise and condensation leaping from the ground upward at a forty five degree angle, and we were near the center of circulation! At that moment of realization Jim asked, "Where is it?"

16 - That's the number of tornadoes to hit Wisconsin in 2009.
21 - That's the average.

These 16 tornadoes were of the weaker EF0 and EF1 varieties.



On the video there is a comedic moment where I respond, "Uhh, well, we're sort of in it..."

That's right; we had just been run over by two tornadoes in the space of a half hour.

Adding injury to insult the car began overheating and we had to stay at a hotel overnight.

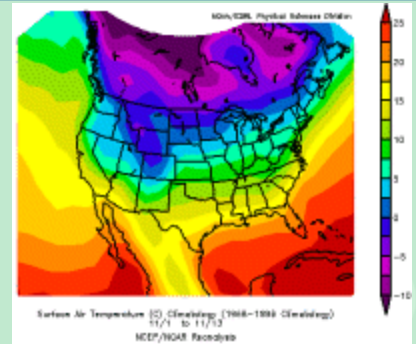
Our forecasting was very good, we were on target as good as it gets, talk about tornado interception! Once again a seat-of-the-pants chase got us into the target area, and knowledge of storm structure and dynamics put us in the danger area. We were **EXTREMELY LUCKY** these were F0 tornadoes.

George E. Hrabovsky is the president of [Madison Area Science and Technology \(MAST\)](#), an organization that offers advanced spotter training among other opportunities to learn and grow.

Past Tornadoes

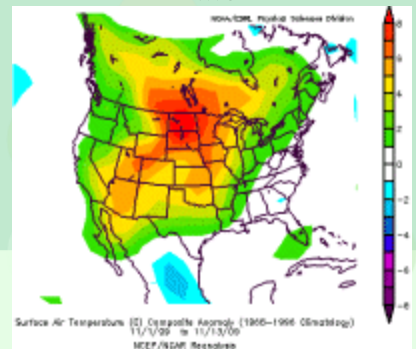
- 2008 - 38
- 2007 - 18
- 2006 - 13
- 2005 - 62

DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL



The image below shows the departure from normal over the past couple weeks.

Notice the well above normal temperatures in the Northern Plains. -- NWS



Wisconsin's Winter Awareness Week
 Nov 9-13, 2009



MidWest 2009-2010 Board & Officer Elections

Dale Bernstein - President/CEO
 Chad Woodward - Vice President
 Dave Willow - Treasurer/Chief Administrative Officer
 Tim Shriver - Chief Operations Officer
 Lisa Price-Roberts - Board Member
 Sandy Letlebo - Secretary
 Heidi Navda - Membership Coordinator
 Brent Cook - Rock County Operations Manager
 Mike Wolkomir - Iowa County Operations Manager

A Thank You ...

Any successful organization or business is driven by the success of its team. From the individual team member to the overseers -- which in the case of MidWest is the Board of Directors. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the Board Members.

Chad Woodward, who remains as MidWest Vice President extends himself in so many directions, that his hat tree must be 20 feet tall.

Dave Willow, who remains as MidWest Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer, continues to guide MidWest in the utmost professional and knowing means.

Tim Shriver, who remains as MidWest Chief Operations Officer continues to double up his duties as Dane County Operations Manager as well. We certainly do appreciate all that he has and does for MidWest.

Tom Fleming (pictured below, second from right) has resigned his MidWest Board position and on behalf on the Board of Directors, all Team Members of MidWest we thank Tom for all that he has given to the organization.



NOAA:

U.S. Posts Third Coolest-Highest Precipitation for October on Record

October Global Temperature 6th Warmest on Record

Tom and I go back a long way. I still recall those countless discussions on the idea of a severe weather organization and taking that passion, those dreams, those ideals and seeing them birth into MidWest and to where we are today and where we will beyond tomorrow.

The road was rough at times, and Tom was right there side by side with all of us, and often holding the light along the way.

Tom's involvement in the Sullivan Committee was an essential ingredient to our origin. His Armature Radio experience, his knowledge, his passion for giving back to the community, sharing his weather experience and knowledge has been a great gift to not only MidWest, but to all those who he met along the way.

It has been said that no good deed goes unnoticed. And so it was on 4 December 2003 that Tom Fleming was honored by the NWS for his outstanding contributions to the NWS in helping save lives. I remain proud to have been able to attend that ceremony presented by Ken Rizzo and Rusty Kapela of the NWS.

Thank you Tom Fleming, another **Outstanding Job Well Done** sir. We all wish you great success and

joy in your life and welcome your ongoing interest with MidWest.

I'd like to welcome new Board Member **Lisa Price-Roberts**, who brings her commitment, dedication to community, knowledge and enthusiasm to the board. Lisa has been on several MidWest committees and we look forward to her new involvement.

Sandy Letlebo remains the MidWest Secretary. Not an easy job and often behind the scenes, we truly appreciate all that she does for MidWest. Sandy has also accepted the duties as the MidWest backup Dane County SulCom Representative.

Heidi Navda remains the MidWest Membership Coordinator. Most organizations do not have the great benefit of such a person or such a position. The Membership Coordinator is an important part and one of the main reasons for a successful membership. As a great ambassador for MidWest, our 2010 membership drives will keep her very busy and we thank her for her continued dedication.

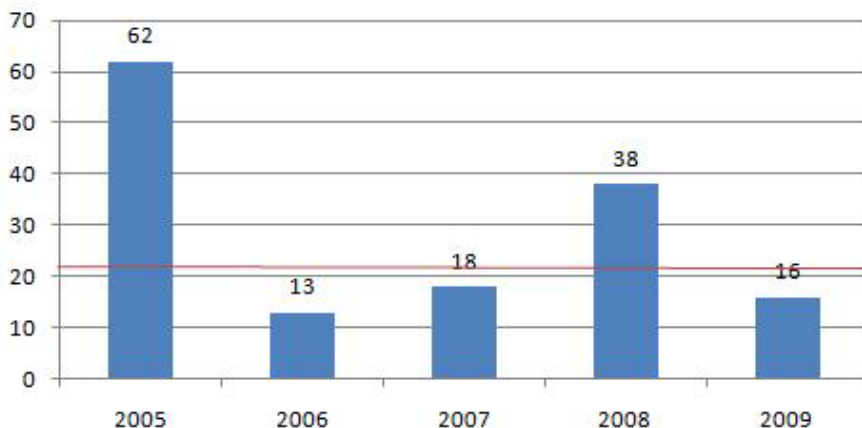
Mike Wolkomir remains as the Iowa County Operations Manager. While our efforts in Iowa County expand, we welcome the experience and knowledge that Mike brings to the position and of his dedication to MidWest.

We would like to welcome **Brent Cook** as our Rock County Operations Manager. Brent's involvement in MidWest, his dedication to community service and his knowledge make him an asset to MidWest and his Rock County community. Brent is able to work with many different agencies and persons on multiple levels and is an important addition to the Community of Rock County. As in Iowa County, there is much advancement in Rock County that will take place in 2010 and I am thankful that we have the right people in place to get the job done.

And yet it remains, the ever important role of the volunteer. It matters not what your position in life is, it matters what your life is to and for others.

Dale Bernstein, President/CEO
MidWest SSTRC, Inc.

Tornadoes 2005 - 2009 (21 AVG)



Holiday Event

Dec 7th – 6 PM, All are welcome and those interested please contact Heidi Nava
speedygonzalesstorm@yahoo.com
or dale.bernstein@midwestsstrc.org
for information. MidWest members please refer to the MidWest group emails for information. MidWest members are encouraged to bring a dish to pass.

The Volunteer Volunteers

We've all done it. Here we are MidWest volunteers. Then something comes up and we volunteer for that, than something else, it's who we are.

On Saturday August 15th, that day for the volunteers was no different. Many MidWest members volunteered for the well renowned Wisconsin Dairy Land Dare.

The bicycle race event of 100k, 200k, 266k and 300k, originating out of Dodgeville Wisconsin saw race route elevation gains for the 100k at 7,685 ft, 200k at 14,988 ft, 266k at 19,243 ft and an elevation gain for the 300k at 22,360 ft. The route miles ranged from 65 miles on to 188.9 miles!

With the dauntless task of pre-event planning, and the event ride time of up to 14 hours, that becomes more than a full day!

This is huge event. How do they do it? In comes the

volunteer. The Ham ops, holding down the net, working the rest stations, the first aid and safety needs, bringing in support for machine break downs and more.

Several MidWest teammates volunteered countless hours throughout the event, of which volunteers earn proceeds from the event, in support of their favorite community organization. What organization did our teammates pick?

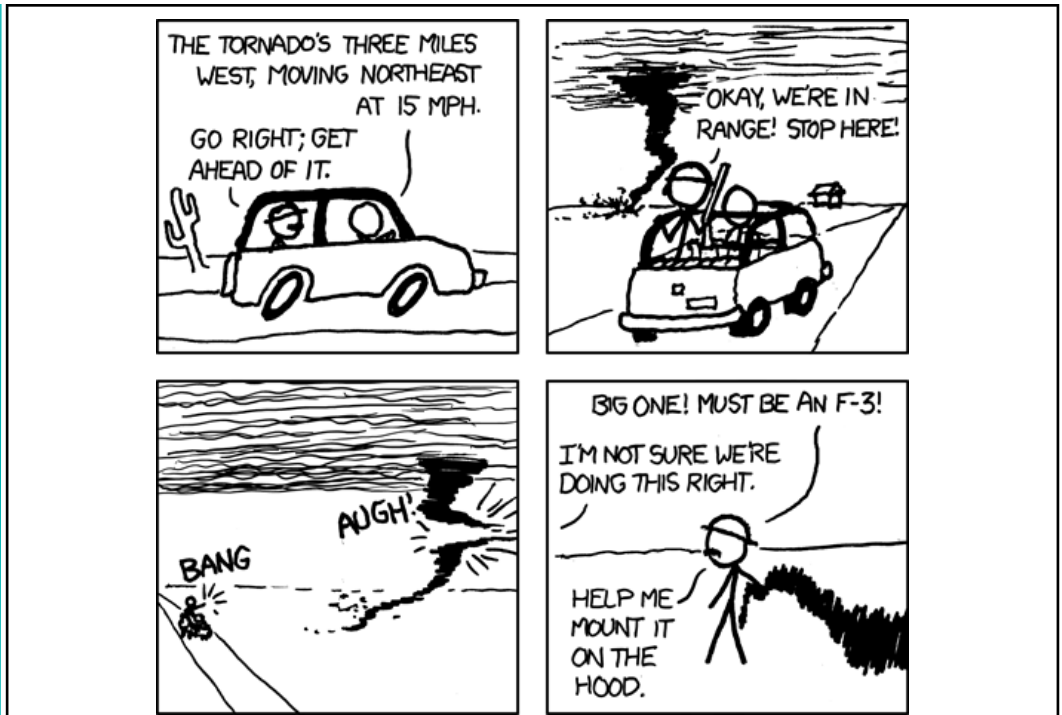
MIDWEST!

So here you go folks, let's all say a **BIG THANK YOU** to the volunteers who volunteer!

db



Chad Woodard and Dale Bernstein gave a presentation about MidWest SSTRC, Inc. for a Weather and Climate Class taught by Matthew Lazzara, Ph.D. The presentation was at the Madison Truax Campus on Tuesday, **November 24**. Dr. Lazzara is a research meteorologist with the Antarctic Meteorological Research Center at the UW-Madison as well as part-time adjunct faculty at MATC.



<http://xkcd.com/640/>

