

Window on the AMS: some presidential perspectives



Serving this year as President of the American Meteorological Society is a privilege and a pleasure – and a truly wonderful opportunity for me. It gives me the chance to understand better the issues – and the people who are shaping them – that affect all aspects of the weather and climate enterprise, especially in those sectors where I do not have routine interaction. This includes interacting with broadcasters, pre-college educators, tropical meteorologists, biogeoscientists, turbulence theorists, agricultural and forest meteorologists, and those engaged in planned and inadvertent weather modification, to name only a few. At the same time, it provides me with a unique opportunity to share my own professional passion – the needs surrounding precise meso- and micro-scale weather information and forecasts – with the community at large. I am able to do this by the special opportunity afforded the sitting AMS president: selecting the theme of the AMS Annual Meeting. In my case, this means choosing “Urban Weather and Climate: Today and the Future” as the theme of the world’s largest gathering of operational, business and academic professionals in the atmospheric and related sciences.

The six broad sub-themes under the Urban Weather and Climate umbrella include: measurements; modeling and forecasting; observations and studies of high-impact urban weather; geographic influences and effects; human and environmental impacts; and urban implications of climate change and population growth. The last sub-theme is also the subject of another article in this volume of Vaisala News (see pages 12 – 15).

The 2009 Annual Meeting will take place January 11-15 in the brand new Civic Plaza Convention Center in Phoenix,

Arizona. If next year’s meeting is anything like this year’s meeting in New Orleans, it will be a dynamic event that attracts more than four thousand registrants and exhibitors. I encourage you to visit the meeting website (<http://www.ametsoc.org/MEET/annual/index.html>) and to join us for what promises to be a capstone event of the coming year.

It is also traditional for the AMS president to identify a new initiative for the Society, and I have elected to explore three actions under the broad banner of education and outreach. In today’s flat world, educating tomorrow’s leaders in science and mathematics is even more critical than it was in the recent past. This holds especially true in a world where weather and climate are increasingly important. Thus, one new action will involve strengthening the Society’s outreach to pre-college students and providing them with improved access to learning materials. A second action also involves improved knowledge resources, but of a different kind. I have proposed that the Society develop and maintain an authoritative online compendium of the atmospheric sciences not unlike the Compendium of Meteorology that was an invaluable reference to previous generations of professionals. Lastly, the time is certainly ripe to increase intersociety-dialogue on an international level. The third action being explored is establishment of a platform or forum for the more than sixty meteorological societies of the world to periodically meet to exchange ideas and experiences and discuss new cooperative ventures.

I look forward to the current year and welcome your ideas and comments. About this time next year, I’ll try to summarize what was accomplished. ■