

Chicago Chapter of the American Meteorological Society March 6, 2007 Meeting Notes

- Chapter President Paul Dailey announced that the Chicago Chapter of the AMS February meeting minutes will be published in an upcoming issue of the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society. Great job by Patty Wontroba compiling the minutes!
- Treasurer Ray Waldman reported a Chapter balance of \$660.37, cash on hand \$41.36, dues income \$58 and expenditures \$106.67. There are 73 paid members in the Chicago Chapter so far this year.
- Secretary William Johnson is negotiating a price for the publication of the 2006-2007 Chicago Chapter Directory.
- Chicago AMS officers for 2007-2008 are: President Ed Fenelon, Vice President Mark Russo, Treasurer Ray Waldman and Secretary William Johnson.
- Meeting attendees: 25.
- Next meeting on Tuesday, April 3rd at Valparaiso University. Harry Volkman will be the speaker.

The Chicago Chapter of the AMS March 2007 meeting featured speaker Mr. Jim Allsopp, Warning Coordinator Meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Romeoville, IL, and his presentation, 'A History of Chicago Area Tornadoes.'

Mr. Allsopp defined the criteria for a significant tornado. Tom Grazulis' book, 'Significant Tornadoes', helped tremendously. Tornadoes that were of F2 intensity or greater and any tornado that caused at least ten injuries or one fatality was deemed significant. The eight county area of McHenry, Lake, Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall and Will in Illinois and Lake county in Indiana were the targeted geographical area researched. April is the month that has the greatest number of significant tornadoes occurrences. No significant tornadoes have happened in meteorological winter. The decade of the 1960's have the most number of significant tornadoes with 86 while there hasn't been a recorded significant tornado in the current decade. The Plainfield tornado in 1990 was the only F5 tornado in the Chicago area. Lake County Indiana had the most significant tornadoes per 100 square miles with 3.42 and McHenry County the least with 1.32. There have been six days with violent F4-F5 tornadoes which averages out to one every 9.5 years. It's been 16 years since the last F4-F5 tornado in the Chicago area.

Mr. Allsopp counted down the five most notorious tornado events locally. Fifth was the May 6, 1876 F3 tornado that left 2 dead and 35 injured in the only recorded downtown tornado. There were reports of a large multiple vortex tornado moving out towards Lake Michigan. Fourth was the June 20, 1976 Lemont F2 tornado that killed 2 and injured 23. Third was the March 28, 1920 F4 tornado which had a 53 mile path from near Channahon to north and east of Maywood that killed 20 and injured 300. Second was the August 28, 1990 Plainfield F5 tornado which caused 29 fatalities, 350 injuries and \$254 million in damage in 2006 dollars. First was the April 21, 1967 tornado outbreak that had eight tornadoes in the Chicago area, three of them being of F4 intensity. In Belvidere, 24 were killed and 500 were injured by a F4 that was a half a mile wide and had a path of 25 miles. At Lake Zurich, a F4 tornado killed one and injured 100. The tornado was up to

150 yards wide and had no visible funnel. The Oak Lawn tornado left 33 dead and 500 injured. Mr. Allsopp stated that the Oak Lawn tornado had a 24 minute lead time with a tornado warning issued at 5 pm and tornado touchdown confirmation at 5:24 pm.