

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES
FEBRUARY 12, 2010
ST. ANTHONY CENTRAL HOSPITAL, DENVER, CO
www.stanthonyldc.org

Monthly Quote: “Fundamental Principle: **No** place outside is safe if a thunderstorm is in the area”. From: “Recent Updates in Lightning Safety”. On the web, URL listed below.

1. Meeting began at 11:50 AM and adjourned at 1:10 PM.
2. Members present: Wachtel, Clark, Gift, Cui-Gift, Collier, Langford, Stewart, Nibbe, Mary and husband, and Noel. Clark moderated the meeting.
3. **PLEASE NOTE:** The March LDC meeting will be held in the Birch Room on the Ground East Wing, at the usual time.
4. The LDC officers have approved a new Mission Statement for the LDC. It reads: “The Lightning Data Center is an interdisciplinary organization focused on studying lightning and related phenomena. By employing research, information exchange, education, and advocacy, we strive to improve the medical treatment of the lightning injured patient, and to promote lightning safety and awareness, in order to minimize lightning fatalities and injuries.”
5. Clark brought in a Time magazine article entitled: “The Problem With Football: How To Make It Safer”. This article came not two weeks after the January LDC meeting. Howard Wachtel again noted that the early onset of dementia is greater among professional football players than the general population. Howard also wondered what the dementia rate is among electrical workers that get mild shocks during the course of their careers. Al Nibbe noted back in the 1950s, the patients were given electroshock multiple times and suffered long-term memory losses. Here’s the link to the Time article:
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1957046,00.html>
6. Greg Stewart mentioned a paper by Bill Roeder entitled: “Recent Updates in Lightning Safety” (20th International Lightning Detection Conference, Tucson, AZ, 2008). Stewart summarized the contents, emphasizing Roeder’s observation: “Lightning safety public education requires that meteorologists present consistent information.” Among the discussed changes by the Lightning Safety Awareness Week (LSAW) working group was revision of the “30-30 rule”. From section 2.2: “Thunder as Cue”: “The lightning safety community now recommends seeking a safe place when you hear thunder, rather than the previous guidance of the first ‘30’ of the 30-30 Rule.” As explained, “The first ‘30’ in the “30-30 Rule” advised people to already be in a safe place when the time between lightning and its thunder was 30 seconds or less. This 30-second time interval corresponds to a distance of about 6 miles, which is close enough for lightning to be a danger. Unfortunately, many people were remembering this as: ‘go to a safe place at this time’, not ‘be in a safe place’”. For hazard data, a highly-developed approach to

teaching lightning safety, training slogans and other key changes to safety guidelines, see the paper at:

http://www.vaisala.com/files/Recent_updates_in_lightning_safety.pdf

7. Noel Mullan recounted how he had once sought shelter up against a stone wall while playing golf at Estes Park. He was at the farthest end of the course when a storm arrived and could not get to the clubhouse or a car. Ken Langford wondered about the wisdom of seeking shelter against a concrete wall, as it could be wet from the rain and thus be a better conductor of electric current.
8. Rich Collier asked about the LDC's idea of a "lightning bag". Ken explained the idea of the lightning bag comes from the firefighter's "shake and bake" bags that can be used as quick, temporary shelter during a wildfire emergency. Along the same lines, a person being threatened by lightning could crawl into the bag, using it like a portable Faraday cage. Ken thinks while the idea has some merit, finding human guinea pigs to test the concept would be difficult, not to mention the legal troubles that would ensue if a lawsuit was filed.
9. Al Nibbe asked whatever happened to the woman that told the LDC back in March 2008 of health problems she thought were being caused by EMF from two buried distribution loops near her home. Ken stated he and Mike Foley recommended she contact Ronk Electrical or Vitatech for potential solutions to her problem. It is unknown if she ever acted on those recommendations.
10. Robert Gift announced the annual CHASECON storm chasers conference was being held at the Red Lion hotel on Quebec Street here in Denver on Feb. 12-14. Robert also announced he will be taking a trip to China, and while there, he will photograph some of the lightning protection devices on some of the buildings. Greg Stewart commented buildings in Japan tend to have a single large rod on them, rather than smaller devices around the perimeter of the roof.
11. Ken Langford said he will be talking to Deb Thomas and expects to have some updated information regarding the safety poster project. Stay tuned.
12. These minutes do not represent official positions of LDC or its members. They simply reflect the comments made at the meeting.
13. NOTE! REMINDER. Please remember: Change of venue for the next meeting: Friday, March 12, 2010 at 11:45 AM in the Birch Room on the Ground East Wing at St. Anthony Central Hospital. Subject: TBA.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven E. Clark, Consulting Meteorologist