

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES
April 11, 2014
ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL WEST, LAKEWOOD, CO
www.stanthonyhosp.org/ldc

Monthly Quote: “The smell of lead was so strong that it hurt your teeth and you could taste it in your mouth.” Emergency Management Agency Director Dan Fulsher commenting on a lightning strike to a 911 communications center in Logan County, Illinois. See Paragraph 6 below. On the web at: http://www.pantagraph.com/news/local/lightning-forces-logan-county-to-use-backup-plan/article_fb673424-072b-5d81-85d9-2af90b250654.html

1. Meeting began at 11:50 AM and adjourned at 1:05 PM. Members Present: Collier, Yarnell, Swanson, Wells, Stewart, Adler, Gravning (Damon and Heather), Neisler and Clark. Clark moderated the meeting.

2. I am pleased to announce the addition of four new members. They are:

Tova Adler, a Registered Nurse, who occasionally works with Phil Yarnell in the area of traumatic brain injury.
Damon and Heather Gravning, storm chasers and lightning photographers. They were at a previous meeting, but had not been formally introduced until now.
Lexi Neisler, a Wilderness First Responder.

Welcome to all of you to the Lightning Data Center. We look forward to seeing you at future meetings.

3. Phil Yarnell reports Dr. Cherington has pneumonia. Dr. Cherington, we wish you well and a speedy recovery.

4. As noted above, Lexi Neisler is a wilderness first responder with Alpine Search and Rescue, based in Evergreen, Colorado. To the best of her knowledge, she has not been involved in any lightning-related rescues. Lexi expressed a strong desire for lightning material to be used in Alpine Search and Rescue’s training materials. She said there is a need to know what the weather is doing during rescues to aid decision-making while on a mission. Members present referred her to the National Weather Service, National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), and other safety entities. One of the members said we should send her our safety poster. Lexi felt safety posters or safety messages would be appropriate, as Alpine Search and Rescue responds to a fair number of lightning strike victims. Steve Clark advised some of the safety poster content has been posted, in varying degrees, on some national Park websites, but not on trailheads. Alpine Search and Rescue meets twice each week, on Wednesdays for meetings and on Saturdays for outdoor exercises.

5. As part of the above safety discussion, Phil reminded us of the Boy Scouts struck by lightning in Utah. Two scouts were struck as they were heading back to their tents. One of the scouts died. Greg Stewart wondered if Boy Scouts of America has any guidelines for the safety of scouts. Heather Graving does not think so. She recalled a Boy Scout Jamboree in the eastern U.S. where scouts had to hike over some difficult terrain under hot conditions. One scout died from heatstroke and several others had heat sickness. Prior to the hike, the scouts did have to pass a physical exam. Heather questioned whether or not the scout leaders were adequately prepared to address heat-related problems before and during the hike. The Boy Scouts website does have weather-related safety tips, including heat and lightning, at: <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/Alerts.aspx>
6. Steve Clark presented an article about Emergency Management Agency Director Dan Fulsher, who was at a dispatch facility when lightning struck twice – once in 1993 and the other just recently in April 2014. In the 1993 strike, he was hurt and spent four days in the ICU, but recovered and returned to work. There were no injuries or fatalities in the later strike, but there was extensive damage to computer monitors and software.
7. There was further discussion regarding the photograph, which won an “Honorable Mention” in a National Geographic photography contest, viewable via this link: <http://www.businessinsider.com/winners-of-national-geographic-photography-contest-2013-12>. Karen Wells said Australian environmental experts noted the lake had algae blooms, which may have caused the milky green appearance.
8. Greg Stewart wondered how we might collect lightning strike data and present that information while maintaining patient confidentiality. Steve Clark said the Lightning Incident Report (LIR) is one method of collecting such data and is ready to be sent for approval by the appropriate departments at St. Anthony Hospital. The LIR will be used to collect data from lightning strike incidents and then hopefully, those data can be married to lightning data. Additionally, Phil said there are two other possible sources of lightning strike data: The Colorado Board of Health and the Colorado Spinal Cord Injury Registry.
9. Carl Swanson recalled Ron Holle’s interview with Atlantic magazine of 2-3 months ago. Ron had indicated the lightning fatality rate in the U.S. had fallen due to modernization and urbanization. Carl recently spoke with Ron and asked about the injury rate. Ron thought there should be no significant difference in the injury rate versus fatality rate.
10. LDC Disclaimer: These minutes do not represent official positions of the LDC or its members. They simply reflect the comments made at the meeting. Furthermore, the LDC does not implicitly or explicitly recommend or endorse any product or service. Any service or product presented in these minutes is done so for purposes of discussion and analysis. The merit (or lack thereof) is open for the consideration and review by the entire membership.

11. Next meeting: Friday, May 9, 2014 at 11:45 AM at St. Anthony Hospital West.
Conference Room TBA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven E. Clark, Consulting Meteorologist