

review certifications after the public comment period had closed so their consultation would be with the benefit of public comments that had been submitted.

This notice does not include the complete certification packages because they are too voluminous to publish. Copies of the certification packages and supporting documentation can be obtained through the contact listed above.

Once all public comments have been received and considered, the NWS will complete consultation with the Committee and determine whether to proceed with the final certification. If a decision to certify is made, the Secretary of Commerce must publish the final certification in the Federal Register and transmit the certification to the appropriate Congressional committees prior to closing these offices.

Dated: December 31, 1996.

Elbert W. Friday, Jr.,

Assistant Administrator for Weather Services.

[FR Doc. 97-223 Filed 1-6-97; 8:45 am]

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Weather Service Modernization and Associated Restructuring

AGENCY: National Weather Service (NWS), NOAA, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and opportunity for public comment.

SUMMARY: The NWS is publishing proposed certifications for the automation and closure of the following Weather Service offices at the indicated FAA Weather Observation Service Level:

(1) Chicago-O'Hare (AV) Weather Service Office (WSO) which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Chicago Weather Forecast Office (WFO);

(2) Columbia WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future St. Louis, Kansas City/Pleasant Hill and Springfield WFOs;

(3) Detroit WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Detroit WFO;

(4) Flint WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Detroit WFO;

(5) Residual Moline WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Quad Cities WFO;

(6) Sioux City WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Sioux Falls and Omaha WFOs;

(7) Akron WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Charleston, WV WFOs;

(8) Allentown WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Philadelphia, Binghamton and Central Pennsylvania WFOs;

(9) Atlantic City WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Philadelphia WFO;

(10) Baltimore WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Baltimore, MD/Washington D.C., Philadelphia and Wakefield WFOs. As the only field office in Maryland, an evaluation of services to in-state users, included in the meteorologist-in-charge's memorandum recommending certification, has concluded that users in Maryland are receiving equal or better services from the future Baltimore, MD/Washington D.C., Philadelphia and Wakefield WFOs.

(11) Residual Boston WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Boston WFO;

(12) Bridgeport WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future New York City WFO;

(13) Residual Charleston, West Virginia WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Charleston WFO;

(14) Columbus, Ohio WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Charleston, WV WFOs;

(15) Dayton WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Cincinnati WFO;

(16) Hartford WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being

provided by the future Boston, New York City and Albany WFOs;

(17) Lynchburg WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Roanoke WFO;

(18) Mansfield WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Cleveland WFO;

(19) Norfolk WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Wakefield WFO;

(20) Residual Portland, Maine WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Portland, WFO;

(21) Providence WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Boston WFO. As the only field office in Rhode Island, an evaluation of services to in-state users, included in the meteorologist-in-charge's memorandum recommending certification, has concluded that users in Rhode Island are receiving equal or better services from the future Boston WFO.

(22) Residual Raleigh WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Raleigh/Durham WFO;

(23) Richmond WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Wakefield, Baltimore, MD/Washington D.C. and Roanoke WFOs;

(24) Roanoke WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Roanoke WFO;

(25) Toledo WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Cleveland and Cincinnati WFOs;

(26) Wilkes-Barre WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Binghamton and Central Pennsylvania WFOs;

(27) Williamsport WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Central Pennsylvania and Binghamton WFOs;

(28) Wilmington WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Philadelphia WFO. As the only field office in Delaware, an evaluation of services to in-state users, included in the meteorologist-in-charge's memorandum

recommending certification, has concluded that users in Delaware are receiving equal or better services from the future Philadelphia WFO.

(29) Worcester WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Boston WFO;

(30) Youngstown WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Cleveland and Pittsburgh WFOs;

(31) Residual Atlanta WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Atlanta WFO;

(32) Baton Rouge WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future New Orleans/Baton Rouge, Lake Charles and Jackson WFOs;

(33) Daytona Beach WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Melbourne and Jacksonville WFOs;

(34) Residual El Paso WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future El Paso WFO;

(35) Knoxville WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Knoxville/Tri-Cities and Nashville WFOs;

(36) Residual Lubbock WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Lubbock WFO;

(37) Montgomery WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Birmingham, Mobile and Tallahassee WFOs;

(38) Residual Oklahoma City WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Oklahoma City WFO;

(39) Residual San Antonio WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Austin/San Antonio WFO;

(40) Residual Tulsa WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Tulsa WFO;

(41) West Palm Beach WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and with services being provided by the future Miami and Melbourne WFOs;

(42) Residual San Diego WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future San Diego WFO; and

(43) Stockton WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Sacramento WFO.

In accordance with Pub. Law 102-567, the public will have 60 days in which to comment on these proposed automation and closure certifications.

DATES: Comments are requested by March 10, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the proposed automation and closure packages should be sent to Tom Beaver, Room 09356, 1325 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, telephone 301-713-0300. All comments should be sent to Tom Beaver at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Scanlon at 301-713-1698 ext 151.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with section 706 of Pub. Law 102-567, the Secretary of Commerce must certify that these automations and closures will not result in any degradation of service to the affected areas of responsibility and must publish the proposed automation and closure certification in the FR. The documentation supporting each proposed certification includes the following:

(1) A draft memorandum by the meteorologist(s)-in-charge recommending the certification, the final of which will be endorsed by the Regional Director and the Assistant Administrator of the NMS if appropriate, after consideration of public comments and completion of consultation with the Modernization Transition Committee (the Committee);

(2) A description of local weather characteristics and weather-related concerns which affect the weather services provided within the service area;

(3) A comparison of the services provided within the service area and the services to be provided after such action;

(4) A description of any recent or expected modernization of NWS operation which will enhance services in the service area;

(5) An identification of any area within the affected service area which would not receive coverage (at an elevation of 10,000 feet) by the next generation weather radar network;

(6) Evidence, based upon operational demonstration of modernized NWS operations, which was considered in

reaching the conclusion that no degradation in service will result from such action including the ASOS Commissioning Report; series of three letters between NWS and FAA confirming that weather services will continue in full compliance with applicable flight aviation rules after ASOS commissioning; Surface Aviation Observation Transition Checklist documenting transfer of augmentation and backup responsibility from NWS to FAA; successful resolution of ASOS user confirmation of services complaints; and an in-place supplementary data program at the responsible WFO(s);

(7) Warning and forecast verification statistics for pre-modernized and modernized services which were utilized in determining that services have not been degraded;

(8) An Air Safety Appraisal for offices which are located on an airport; and

(9) A letter appointing the liaison officer.

These proposed certifications do not include any report of the Committee which could be submitted in accordance with sections 706(b)(6) and 707(c) of Pub. Law 102-567. In December 1995 the Committee decided that, in general, they would forego the optional consultation on proposed certifications. Instead, the Committee would just review certifications after the public comment period had closed so their consultation would be with the benefit of public comments that had been submitted.

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Once all public comments have been received and considered, the NWS will complete consultation with the Committee and determine whether to proceed with the final certification. If a decision to certify is made, the Secretary of Commerce must publish the final certification in the FR and transmit the certification to the appropriate Congressional committee prior to automating and closing these offices.

Dated: December 31, 1996.

Elbert W. Friday, Jr.,

Assistant Administrator for Weather Services.

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