

C O M M U N I T Y N E W S**Meteorologist George addresses Hurricane Preparation Seminar**

Hurricanes, tornadoes, and current global weather patterns were among the many subjects discussed during an annual Hurricane Preparation Seminar, held July 20 in Bldg. 37 and sponsored by JSC Medical Sciences Division and Wyle Laboratories.

Guest speaker Chuck George, KPRC-TV meteorologist, shared his insights into this year's hurricane season and predictions for future activity.

According to George, were a hurricane to hit the Texas Gulf Coast, the most favorable place for it to make landfall, from the vantage point of Houston, would be in the extreme

southern part of the state and, secondly, to the north of the city. Wind around a hurricane blows in a counterclockwise direction, with the northeast quadrant being its "dirty" side and the southwest quadrant its "clean" side. On the clean side, ocean water is pushed away from the coast, thus minimizing coastal flooding. Although Houston would be on the dirty side of one that made landfall far south, its effects would most likely not be felt.

Forecasters are paying closer attention to the role that sunspots play in affecting weather patterns. "The current thinking is that sunspots affect the Earth's magnetic field, which in turn affects La Niña and El Niño, and that somehow affects the weather," said George. "In the future, if an increase in sunspot activity were to be seen, then forecasters might be able to predict that El Niño will strengthen within a year, and that six months thereafter there will be floods on the West Coast." El Niño led to heavy rainfall in the West Coast during the winter of 1998-99.

The other speaker at the conference, JSC Emergency Preparedness Manager Bob Gaffney, said that the frequency for a major hurricane is 1 in every 10 years and that 16 years have passed since the last major one hit Houston.

People can survive hurricanes if they make evacuation plans well in advance.

"Thirty hours in advance of when tropical force winds are expected to make landfall is the time when people should begin their evacuation plans," said Gaffney. People need to leave the Clear Lake area in the event of a hurricane because it is



Chuck George, KPRC-TV meteorologist, discusses current hurricane activity along the Texas Gulf Coast during the recent Hurricane Preparation Seminar.

JSC Photo S99-07648 by Bill Stafford

vulnerable to storm surge in a Level 4 or Level 5 storm.

Local communities will issue evacuation recommendations about 30 hours before expected landfall of a hurricane. The JSC hurricane rideout team captain will make recommendations to the center director on when the center should close based on community safety announcements and potentially unsafe conditions at the center prior to and during the storm. According to Gaffney, "If you haven't made evacuation plans 30 hours in advance of expected landfall, you are well behind the power curve."

Don't forget about cats and dogs. "Take your pets with you when you evacuate. Decide where you are going to evacuate and call ahead to see what animal shelters are available there," said Gaffney.

For more details, visit the Spaceflight Meteorology Group Web site at: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/smg/tropic.html>, Houston/Galveston National Weather Service Office Web site at: <http://www.sr.noaa.gov/FTPROOT/HGX/HTML/index3.html>, the National Weather Service hurricane information Web site at: <http://hurricanes.noaa.gov/> or the National Hurricane Center/Tropical Prediction Center Web site at: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/> ■

Snapp becomes first JSC employee to receive NASA fellowship

Lee Snapp, JSC's computer security manager, has become the first JSC employee to be selected for a NASA administrator's fellowship. The NASA Administrator's Fellowship Program, now in its third year, sends up to six employees annually on a two-year career development assignment that may involve research, teaching, and other special assignments.

During the first year of his fellowship, Snapp will live and teach on the Flathead Reservation in northwestern Montana. His principal task will be to develop a four-year engineering program for the Salish Kootenai College, one of 31 tribal colleges in the United States, while also representing NASA to the students, faculty, and local community. This small college of about 1,000 students is located in Pablo, Montana, and serves students from 25 Native American tribes. During the second year of his fellowship, Snapp will work in Washington, DC, under the sponsorship of the National Research Council.

"I look forward to a very challenging road ahead," said Snapp. "It's a real privilege to represent NASA both in the Native American community and in a part of the country that has had very little hands-on contact with our nation's space program. I especially want to thank the fine people throughout our JSC community who so kindly supported me during the NAFFP application and selection process. Without them, this assignment would never have been possible."

During the time of the fellowship, Dr. Frank E. Martin, the current JSC deputy computer security manager, will fill Snapp's job until his return to JSC the following year.

Snapp graduated from the U. S. Air Force Academy in 1969 with a

bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering. He holds a master's degree in astronautics from the Air Force Institute of Technology School of Engineering. He came to JSC in 1989 after retiring from active duty. Since coming to JSC, he has been a principal architect of JSC's computer security program and is

currently responsible for developing the policy and providing day-to-day oversight of the center's computer security program.

The NASA Administrator's Fellowship Program seeks to provide a crossflow of talented teachers and researchers from NASA into minority-serving colleges and universities across the country.

The National Research Council,

which manages the NAFFP for NASA, annually may select up to six NASA employees to teach at minority-serving colleges and universities and additionally may select up to six outstanding faculty members from minority-serving colleges and universities for 18- to 24-month research assignments at various NASA centers.

Not all positions are necessarily filled; this year's group consists of seven people, of which only two are NASA employees. Snapp's counterpart is Dr. Gregory V. Clarke from Goddard Space Flight Center who holds a doctorate in structural mechanics. Dr. Clarke will be teaching at Howard University in Washington, DC.

As Snapp departs, JSC also will gain one NASA administrator's fellow, Dr. Jean M. Hampton, a professor at Texas Southern University. Dr. Hampton holds a Ph.D. in environmental toxicology and will spend her fellowship working at JSC as a toxicologist in the Life Sciences Directorate. ■



Lee Snapp

Inspection 99 prepares for record attendance

Preparations are under way for Inspection 99, the continuation of JSC's annual event that brings the technological advances and knowledge base of the center together with the private sector November 3, 4, and 5.

Inspection provides an opportunity for representatives of industry, business, community, and education to take an up-close look at NASA-developed technologies for a broad range of applications, ranging from information technology and biotechnology to training and manufacturing. Last year, Inspection drew 2,700 attendees from more than 45 states and 21 foreign countries.

"Due to the tremendous success of previous Inspection Day events, we are expecting a significant increase in attendance this year," said Charlene Gilbert, Inspection 99 chairperson. "Our goal is to make efficient use of the guest's time and to have top-quality exhibits to show them."

Representatives who would like more information on Inspection 99 or are interested in registering, should be directed to the I99 Web site at <http://inspection.jsc.nasa.gov>.

