



Partners in Prevention

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Partner Spotlight – Steven Cooper

Congratulations to FLASH Board Advisor, collaborative partner, and friend Steven Cooper on his retirement from the National Weather Service after nearly 42 years of service. We thank him for his incredible legacy of service to FLASH over the years, from helping to define our mission to championing breakthrough programs like Turn Around, Don't Drown and *#HurricaneStrong*. His unbridled dedication has made a lasting impact on the disaster safety movement.

Steven served as the Regional Director of the NWS Southern Region – serving Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In addition to providing around the clock weather and hydrological forecasts and warnings, Southern Region employees provide support for the aviation community, spaceflight activities, the marine industry, fire weather, air quality, and the private meteorological community.

Cooper started his career as a student trainee in Augusta, GA. His first permanent assignment as an intern and forecaster in 1980 in Albuquerque, NM. In 1986 he assumed the MIC position in Tri-Cities, TN, before transferring to the MIC position in Amarillo, TX in 1988. He then accepted the position as Assistant Chief of the Meteorological Services Division at the Southern Region HQ until he became the Chief of the Climate, Water and Weather Division in 2000. After serving for four years in this position, he was selected as Deputy Regional Director for the Southern Region. During this assignment, he served as Acting RD and multiple temporary assignments in NWS HQ, including eight months in 2012 as the NWS Deputy Director. He served as the NWS HQ Implementation Lead in 2015 for the HQ reorganization. He was selected as the permanent Southern Region RD in early 2016.

Cooper led the SR Meteorological Services Division in the successful implementation of NWS modernization and restructuring across the southern United States during the mid-1990s. He and his team were subsequently recognized with NWS Modernization Awards in 1995 and 1996. He has received a Commerce Department's Bronze Medal for coordinating weather support for the 1996 Paralympics (Atlanta, Ga.), another in 2003 for his support in providing weather support following the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy, and a Bronze Medal for his 2005 support during the extremely active hurricane season. He was awarded the National Weather Service Southern Region Isaac M. Cline Award for Leadership in 2002.

He co-developed an innovative Southern Region leadership development program called BLAST (Building Leaders for A Solid Tomorrow). He was instrumental in launching the highly

successful Turn Around, Don't Drown ® flood safety program, earning him and his team a NOAA Administrator's Award in 2004 and the National Weather Association's Public Education Award in 2006. Cooper was also one of the principal developers of JetStream – a web-based educational program designed to help people learn about various weather phenomena and how to be prepared when hazardous weather threatens.

Cooper received a Bachelor of Science degree in Meteorology from Florida State University (1980) and a master's degree in Geography (Climatology) from the University of New Mexico (1985).