



## **National Transportation Safety Board**

**Office of Aviation Safety  
Washington, D.C. 20594-2000  
April 24, 2012**

### **ATTACHMENT 7 to the METEOROLOGICAL FACTUAL REPORT ANC12IA024**

**Interview: Mr. Dave Eddy, Lead Forecaster – Alaska Aviation Weather Unit/National Weather Service [via telephone]**

**Represented by: Mr. Don Moore – National Weather Service**

**Date: April 23, 2012**

**Locations: National Transportation Safety Board headquarters, Washington, DC  
National Weather Service Alaska Region headquarters, Anchorage, Alaska  
Alaska Aviation Weather Unit, Anchorage, Alaska**

**Start time: 1730 EST**

**Present: Mike Richards - National Transportation Safety Board  
Jeff Osienky – National Weather Service**

Mr. Eddy stated that he has been a Lead Forecaster at the Alaska Aviation Weather Unit (AAWU) for 17 years, and that on the day of March 5, 2012, he was on duty from 1500 to 2300 Alaska standard time (AKST). Mr. Eddy stated that for viewing pilot reports (PIREPs) from his workstation, he uses a plotting program on the Advanced Interactive Processing System (AWIPS). Mr. Eddy indicated that this plotting program plots PIREPs geographically in relation to forecast zones. Mr. Eddy indicated that one must do a manual update/refresh to view new PIREPs when using this program. Mr. Eddy stated that occasionally the system will miss PIREPs (the AAWU will fail to receive them) but noted that he would not be a good person to ask about this issue. Mr. Eddy added that he had heard complaints about the AAWU not receiving PIREPs and about latency issues with some PIREPs they do receive. Mr. Eddy stated that there is often a 15-20 minute delay in receiving PIREPs. When asked if he ever receives PIREPs through sources not available on his workstation, Mr. Eddy indicated that sometimes the Center Weather Service Unit (CWSU) will relay PIREPs directly to the AAWU before the PIREPs become available in the system.

Mr. Eddy stated that the decision of whether or not to issue an AIRMET<sup>1</sup> or SIGMET<sup>2</sup> in a particular situation is a judgment call of the forecaster, however when dealing with the volcanic ash hazards, there is some more “exacting” guidance. Mr. Eddy indicated that the believability of data available to the forecaster factors into the decision of whether or not to issue an AIRMET or SIGMET in a particular situation.

When asked why, on March 5, 2012, he included an advisory for moderate icing in the Area Forecast and did not issue an AIRMET for moderate ice, Mr. Eddy stated that “isolated” conditions are not “AIRMETable.” When asked why he did not see the severe icing PIREPs at around 2200 AKST on the night of the accident<sup>3</sup>, Mr. Eddy stated that the National Weather Service did not receive the PIREPs until 2222 AKST. In addition, Mr. Eddy indicated that his journeyman forecaster received a call from who Mr. Eddy believed was the control tower at Ted Stevens International Airport (PANC) in Anchorage, advising of an accident at PANC. Mr. Eddy indicated that they did not, however, advise that this was a weather-related accident. Mr. Eddy indicated that he did not call the “ROC,” and also indicated that he did not call the control tower at PANC back because he did not want to “step on their toes.” Mr. Eddy stated that after the call from PANC, he spent time putting together paperwork and was preparing his out-brief for the next forecaster who was to relieve him. Mr. Eddy stated that he also had shift duties during this time.

Mr. Eddy stated that on the day of March 5, 2012, he was in his 6<sup>th</sup> shift out of 7. When asked about his situational awareness of freezing rain that evening, Mr. Eddy indicated that nothing had clued him in and that he did not know of freezing rain in the area until the relief forecaster arrived. Mr. Eddy stated that he learned from the relief forecaster that the relief forecaster had experienced significant freezing rain during his drive across town on his way to work that night, which included a stop to clear his windshield. Mr. Eddy stated that freezing rain is not a common hazard for the area and that it does not occur with much frequency.

Mr. Eddy indicated that it would be appropriate to look into the way PIREPs are delivered to the AAWU, as PIREP latency is an ongoing problem. In addition, Mr. Eddy indicated that there are times when the Federal Aviation Administration will call the AAWU to inform them of an event, but will not give details as to what happened.

**Interview ended at approximately 1815 EST**

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<sup>1</sup> Airmen's Meteorological Information

<sup>2</sup> Significant Meteorological Information

<sup>3</sup> This was stated by Mr. Eddy in the written statement he provided to the NTSB.