Memphis Center Weather Service Unit
February 5, 2014

My name is [redacted] and I was the Aviation Forecaster on duty at Memphis CWSU from 1:30pm-9:30pm CST, Monday February 3, 2014, during the time of the aviation accident near Nashville, Tennessee.

When I came on shift, I received a shift-change briefing from the morning forecaster. For the next 90 minutes, I prepared for the daily 3pm (2100Z) standup briefing by analyzing the weather situation that day: Weather across ZME airspace consisted of surface high pressure building in behind a cold front that had exited the region earlier that day. A stratus deck with ceilings around 700ft was in place, mainly across Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama, with large breaks in the clouds across most of Arkansas. Temperatures across the airspace were in the mid to upper 30s, with cooler temperatures around freezing noted in parts of western Arkansas. Upper air soundings taken at 12Z at Little Rock and Nashville showed that the cloud deck was nearly 10,000ft thick. However, current satellite imagery indicated an upper layer of clouds was quickly clearing out of the airspace, leaving a much thinner stratus layer at the low levels. Recent aircraft descent soundings around MEM confirmed this.

Forecast models did not indicate any widespread areas of precipitation, and no major forcing mechanisms were evident. However, most observing stations east of the Mississippi River reported IFR ceilings. An IFR AIRMET was not in effect at the time and neither was a MIS. I issued a MIS at 2055Z to indicate the widespread low ceilings in place across the region. About 15 minutes later I noticed that an IFR AIRMET had been issued. There was also no Icing AIRMET in effect. The potential for icing in this cloud layer was considered, based on forecast soundings over Memphis and Nashville. However, the cloud deck was thinning out at the time and forecast soundings at locations near Memphis and Nashville showed the stratus layer decreasing, especially above the freezing level. There was only one report of icing, which was Light Rime, which occurred at 2100Z, when I was giving the standup briefing. No icing concerns were indicated by the morning shift. For these reasons, icing was not expected to be a concern, but would be monitored.

Between 3-6pm, most of my attention was focused on Memphis Terminal weather for the overnight cargo push, which was expected to be affected by persistent low ceilings. Once I issued my forecast, I briefed the TRACON and the Center TMU so that they could plan for the cargo inbounds.