



From the Captain of the Port

Drill, Baby, Drill – Reading Weather Reports!

By Vincent Pica

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OK, how many “hurry-canes” can we get (60mph winds and driving rain that last 20 gut-wrenching minutes) before we start paying better attention to the weather? And if you had drilled down a little, maybe there was more information that you could have used to your benefit – and an appreciation of the forecaster.

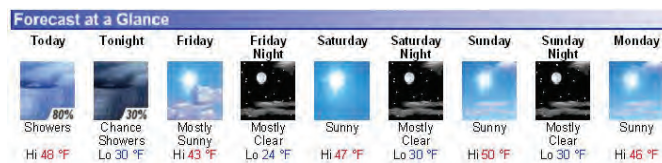
Weather on the Web

Clearly, the world is awash in web sites that can tell you the weather. Here is just a partial list:

- weather.com The Weather Channel
- accuweather.com AccuWeather
- weatherbug.com The Weather Bug
- wunderground.com Weather Underground
- forecast.weather.gov NOAA

And the information providers (AOL, Yahoo, etc.) all have a weather channel. Each portrays pretty much the same information that you can get by opening the newspaper over a cup of coffee at the kitchen table. And you may be surprised to know that they all likely get their weather data from the same source – the US’s NOAA – the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. NOAA (noaa.gov) is part of the Commerce Department, which says a lot about what government thinks affects business the most! If NOAA’s website has any fault at all, it is how much information you can get from it! But, as NOAA says, “NOAA’s weather programs touch the lives of every American. Every day, decisions are made based on NOAA weather information – from the mundane “should I pack an umbrella today?” to the most critical and potentially life-saving.” So, “more” is putting safety first. And that is where safety must be.

So...If all the services get their basic data from NOAA, why don’t you just go there and get the info? An example of what you can get directly from NOAA would be:



This probably looks amazingly similar to any of the weather reports you see in the paper or on your Internet provider. So, maybe we all just should go to NOAA. It is free, too!

But the real answer, going back to the intro of this column,

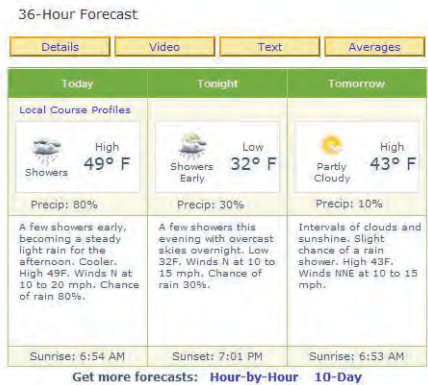
is that you want to be able to drill down, and not every weather service gives you that ability.

Drill, Baby, Drill!

On any given day, you can get a weather report what tells you that the chance of rain is 80%, such as March 19, 2009 did. So, if you are planning to do anything outside, you might cancel or move it to another venue. But the 80% covers the whole day, i.e., there is an 80% chance that it will rain sometime today... When?

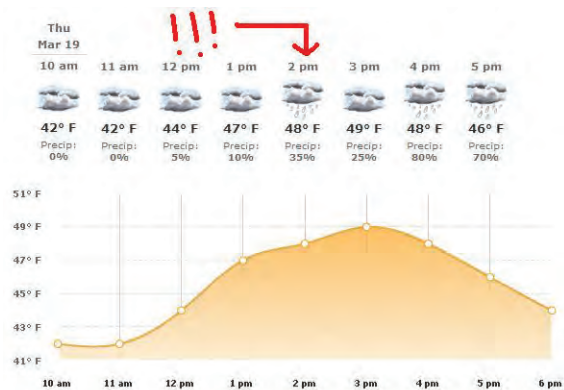
Here is what you can find at weather.com, as an example:

But there are two ‘buttons’ of interest. In the upper left corner it says “Details,” and along the bottom it says “Hour-By-Hour.” Hmm...If we try Details, we get:



Better, but what I really want to know is when the rain is likely to arrive and this still looks like all day! What happens if I drill down on hour-by-hour?

Bingo! If you look at the chances of precipitation (just above the graph of temperatures),



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you'll see that the chances of rain before 2pm are about 1 in 3 or less! Even by 3pm, it is even money that no rain has fallen!

Drill, Baby, Drill...and how about we get some fishing in this morning?!

If you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing." ♦

Captain Joe Vojvodich is the Captain of the Port and Sector Commander for US Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound. Captain Vojvodich is responsible for all active-duty, reservist and auxiliary Coast Guard personnel within the Sector. Vin Pica, Commodore for the First District Southern Region in the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, works closely with Captain Vojvodich and his staff to promote boating safety in the waters between Connecticut, Long Island and 200 nautical miles offshore. Sector Long Island Sound Command Center can be reached 24 hours a day at 203-468-4401.

Careers

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these student-built boats was one surprise outcome of the four-year-old program. The other, according to Phillips, is how much this program has been embraced by the local marine industry. "I can't believe how much the doors have opened for us," says

Phillips. Local marine companies have talked with students, invited them to tour their operations, and been generous with their expertise.

The Tiverton program follows a different curriculum from the two career-tech programs. Students hone their hands-on skills by building the skiffs. They also learn about the industry through talks with local business owners and field trips. RIMTA is helping Phillips roll his program into a six-week summer program. Several students in all programs have secured internship and work-and-learn opportunities in the marine trades.

Opening Up New Horizons

When students graduate from all three programs, they take a variety of routes. Some continue to get schooled at places like MTTI, NEIT and IYRS; some attend maritime academies; some go right into the workforce. The new Rhode Island Marine Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program will be a huge open door for students who do not want to continue in school but will benefit from the program's 205 hours of training to round out their skills.

All three instructors may be teaching students valuable hands-on skills. But the real work of these instructors is giving students an introduction to new possibilities for their futures. "The really exciting part," says Jarret, "is seeing what students decide to do after the program. Before entering the program, they have no idea of the breadth of the marine-trades umbrella. When they leave the program, many go in a direction they never even knew existed." For more information about these training programs, contact RIMTA at info@rimta.org. ♦

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