



National Weather Service

Cooperative  
Observer  
Program



# PRESS RELEASE

National Weather Service Office  
La Crosse, Wisconsin

1-608-784-8275

09/20/2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Weather Service honored the Prairie Du Chien Water Department for 50 years of weather observations by presenting the staff a 50 Year Institutional Service Award. The award was accepted by Larry Gates of the Prairie Du Chien Public works department. Official weather observations of rain, snow, and temperature began at the water pumping station on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1961, with records for the Prairie Du Chien area dating back to 1893.

The award was presented by Randy Breeser, Data Acquisition Manager, and Brad Adams, Hydro-Meteorological Technician, both out of the National Weather Service office in La Crosse WI.

The daily precipitation, temperature and snowfall data collected by the water department becomes a permanent part of the climatic record for the local area and nation. These data are used extensively by many other sectors including the National Weather Service and state climatologists. This data is also used by numerous others in the public and private sectors for agricultural planning and assessment, engineering, environmental-impact assessment, utilities planning, and litigation. These records continue to acquire greater value with the passing of time.

The first network of cooperative stations was set up as a result of an act of Congress in 1890 that established the Weather Bureau, but many COOP stations began operation long before that time. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken without the benefit of instruments in 1644-45, are the earliest known observations in the United States. Subsequently many persons, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, maintained weather records. Thomas Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and George Washington took his last observation just a few days before he died.

The Nation owes a sincere debt of gratitude to the cooperative weather observers and organizations who have quietly and steadily built up what amounts to a priceless national treasure in the finest tradition of volunteer service to their country. The United States Government, the National Weather Service, State Climatologist, community and others greatly appreciate this service, and thank those who have worked to take accurate weather observations at the Water Pumping Station over the past 50 years.