

July 21, 2009

For immediate release

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Weather Station Installed at Cape St. Elias

By ROB CAMPBELL

Oceanographer, Prince William Sound Science Center.

A newly installed weather station at Cape St. Elias is now providing mariners and aviators with better weather information in the Kayak Island area. The station was installed on July 16th by Joe Banta of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, and Rob Campbell of the Prince William Sound Science Center, with help from the Cordova Coast Guard air station.

The weather station was designed by Micro Specialties Inc. of Wasilla, and measures wind speed and direction, temperature, relative humidity, barometric pressure and solar radiation. The station reports hourly via a satellite link, and the data is then made available on the web at: <http://denali.micro-specialties.com/CapeStElias>. The station was purchased by the citizens' council following an incident where a Tesoro tanker was damaged by high winds and seas.

On December 10th 2007, the tanker, Seabulk Pride, fully laden with oil, left Prince William Sound with both wind and waves below the limits that force the tanker lanes to be closed by authorities to tanker traffic. About 12 miles southeast of Hinchinbrook Entrance, the vessel encountered sustained winds of 63 miles per hour (55 knots) and gusts up to 132 miles per hour (113 knots). The ship sustained damage to its

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deck fittings when a wave broke over the bow. Later analysis of satellite data showed that the sea conditions were due to a barrier jet that advanced very rapidly up the coast from the southeast.

Barrier jets are small, locally intense winds that can occur when the movement of air masses is blocked by terrain. They occur frequently in the region from Cordova to Yakutat, particularly in autumn and winter. They typically form within 60 miles of the coast and can cause wind speeds in the range of 46 to 115 miles per hour (40 to 60 knots). The onset of a barrier jet can be very rapid, with large changes in wind speed and direction over a few hours.

The citizens' council is an independent non-profit corporation of citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska Pipeline marine terminal in Valdez and the oil tankers that use it. The science center is a community-based non-profit committed and contributing to long-term monitoring and the scientific understanding of Prince William Sound, the Copper River and North Gulf of Alaska.

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Caption: The weather station was installed with the help of a Sitka-based air crew operating out of the Cordova air station. *From the left:* Aviation Electronics Technician Fernando delCid, Aviation Survival Technician David Paquin, Joe Banta, Lieutenant Nate Hudson, Lieutenant Commander Nate Coulter, Rob Campbell. Photo: *Aviation Electronics Technician Ryan Feldmei.*

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Caption: Two local residents inspect the weather station. **Photo:** David Weagley.

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