



Releasing balloon for upper atmosphere data, and airline pilots getting weather information. First photo courtesy Weather Bureau; second, Detroit Free Press.

What's the Weather

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In planning travel for business and vacations nearly every person thinks about the weather. This means in most cases that an inquiry is directed to the United States Weather Bureau or an effort is made to get the needed information from the forecasts and bulletins disseminated by the Weather Bureau by radio and in the newspapers. In recent years this has brought a big increase in work.

Since the war there has been a steep upward trend in the Nation's demands for weather information. This upward trend has reached a point where the Weather Bureau, using its facilities to the utmost, is overloaded with calls. As an example, automatic daily telephone calls for weather in the District of Columbia have increased from a prewar 10,000 to more than 60,000 daily.

A large share of this increased public interest in weather is a result of the high level of employment in the United States, the increasing interest in the effects of weather conditions on people going to and from work, and general public resumption of business, tourist, and vacation travel on an enlarged scale in the postwar years.

Also contributing is the growing appreciation of the need for weather information in agriculture, aviation, commerce, and industry. Every new application of weather forecasts to business gives rise to a flood of requests.

To meet this situation the Weather Bureau endeavors to make the greatest possible use of mass-communication methods.

Therefore, while it is not possible for the Weather Bureau to give each traveler a special forecast, the Bureau does endeavor to make the needed information available.

Public demand for weather information on the radio

has induced 186 radio stations to install microphones and direct connections to Weather Bureau offices in all parts of the country. At intervals of two to five times a day the weathermen, with their latest maps and reports, speak directly to large radio audiences. These are programs with high listener interest, especially so in agricultural States. They assure widespread receipt of important warnings when conditions impend which are dangerous to life and property. The traveler can pick up these broadcasts on his automobile radio as he passes from State to State.

In travel by air, of course, weather is vital. The Weather Bureau has offices at the larger airports where pilots can look at the latest maps and reports. At the same time reports are broadcast by radio range stations on the airways. Weather forecasts and information are supplied also for travel by rail and water.

In the 60,000 and more calls that come daily to the automatic forecast repeater on the telephone system in the District of Columbia each caller may be assumed to have a definite weather question in mind. While the question may or may not be fully answered by the generalized forecast, it is obvious that the weathermen in person cannot answer them all individually. The only workable solution is to give the forecasts in such a way as to satisfy the largest possible percentage of the inquiries.

Motorists or vacationers before taking a trip may be assisted by writing to the Weather Bureau offices along their route to get the latest weather broadcast schedules so that they may keep in touch as they go.