

Recent Activities at Space Environment Center

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The past twelve months have been a very interesting time at the NOAA Space Environment Center. The unexpected budget cut of approximately 40% in mid February caused SEC to take a serious look at the products and services it produces, and to further assess the value of those services to the user community. This exercise has re-energized the important dialogue between the users and SEC, and has served to sharply focus recent activities at SEC. For example, the massive power outage in the Northeast United States on August 14, 2003, though not caused by space weather, was an example of a success for space weather services. As the system was being brought back in service on August 18, a strong magnetic storm occurred, and important space weather information was passed to the users in a meaningful way. Activity continued to bring relevant research into operations. The STORM Time Empirical Ionospheric Correction Model (Araujo and Husler), transitioned from a test product into a fully supported operational model in August 2003. This model's output is available online at <http://www.sec.noaa.gov/storm/>. Other important work included the update and further development of the SEC Forecast Verification Project (Doggett), also available online at http://www.sec.noaa.gov/forecast_verification/. This project lists verification scores for key SEC forecasts through September 2003. Finally, the recent scrutiny to better serve SEC customers has caused an inquiry as to a possible change of SEC's affiliation in NOAA. There is a very strong possibility that SEC will join the National Weather Service as a full partner, as one of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP). A description of what that new relationship may mean for future users of space weather services will also be given.