

AWARDED AND
PUBLIC INFORMATION

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
COMMISSION ON ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL SYSTEMS
2101 Constitution Avenue Washington, D.C. 20418

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

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March 18, 1993

CONFIDENTIAL AWARD NOMINATION

TO: ✓ Archie L. Wood, Executive Director, CETS
Marlene Beaudin, Associate Executive Director, CETS

FROM: Mercedes Ilagan, Administrative Assistant, NWSMC

SUBJECT: Nomination of David S. Johnson for CETS Award for Outstanding Performance Award by a Board Director

With great enthusiasm, I nominate Mr. David S. Johnson, Study Director of the National Weather Service Modernization Committee (NWSMC), for the CETS Award for Outstanding Performance by a Member of the Exempt Staff. His contribution to the mission of CETS, of the National Research Council and of the Academies has been truly exemplary. This award will be a recognition of his superior personal achievement. It will also be a celebration of the entire CETS' commitment to professional excellence and service to the nation which Mr. Johnson embodies so well.

Originality and initiative in facilitating the conduct and completion of NRC commitments.

At the request of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the NRC established the NWSMC under CETS in January 1990 to conduct a long-term study of the modernization program of the National Weather Service. The Committee's mission is to help ensure the cost-effectiveness of underlying technologies of the modernization and to help ensure the successful demonstration and acceptance of the modernized NWS operations.

Mr. Johnson has organized and led all aspects of the study from its inception with singular success. Applying his vast expertise and life-long experience in meteorological operations, he has kept the study on track, under budget, and on time each and every year. He achieved this by fashioning a diverse and brilliant group of national experts into a cohesive and focused research and reporting team.

Totality of contribution rather than a single assignment or occurrence.

Mr. Johnson's high level of accomplishments have been consistent throughout his tenure with the organization. Under his leadership, the NWSMC has delivered on its mission year after year. The Committee's annual reports have been well-acclaimed by both the technical and bureaucratic audiences. The Study has produced a surplus carryover for each year of operation. Equally important, Mr. Johnson has steered the Committee safely and successfully through the technological, organizational and political complexities that arose from this program of major national import.

Dedication to NRC objectives.

In addition to his passionate commitment to professional and technical excellence, Mr. Johnson has constantly applied himself with genuine concern for institutional policy. He demonstrates uncommon leadership by his conscientious effort to always understand and comply with the policies of the organization. His integrity in this matter shines as a beacon for the entire staff.

Effectiveness in coupling individual and committee efforts to national and international needs.

One measure of Mr. Johnson's management skill is his success in bringing singular and simultaneous satisfaction to the needs of the study sponsor, congressional and national recipients, committee members and staff, and the NRC organization as a whole.

He has skillfully woven a strong and meaningful consensus within the nationally and globally significant study, from research design, committee deliberations, report writing, review process and publication. To quote Dr. Thomas Malone (RRC Monitor), "Dave Johnson has done a magnificent job in addressing the reviewers' comments." It is "one of the most responsive sets of emendations" he has ever seen.

With an unwavering attentiveness to his work, he masters the myriad details that comprise the committee's activities, plans and problem solving and harnesses them together toward productivity and accomplishment of mission.

Leadership in the development and guidance of other staff members.

During the year, the Committee established five panels to cope with the growing workload of the study. Even with the increasingly complex interactions arising from this structure, Mr. Johnson has continued to keep the Committee highly organized, efficient and effective. He accomplishes this through a well-honed sense of judgement in setting priorities and through an ability to elicit sustained motivation and contribution from those he works with. Always leading by example, Mr. Johnson is extremely diligent in meeting deadlines and adapting to resource constraints, thus earning the deep respect of the Committee, his staff and coworkers.

It is quite noteworthy, for example, that the Committee has not lost stride in its accomplishments in spite of two unexpected office moves within the span of a year and with little time to prepare.

Fulfillment of NRC service to the government and the public policy objectives.

The reports the Committee has produced through Dave Johnson's guidance have been well received by the sponsor. Dr. John Knauss, in his response to the Committee's report, wrote: "...the Committee members clearly understand the promise that the National Weather Service modernization and associated restructuring program holds for a dramatic improvement in weather services to the Nation, endorse the organizational approach and implementation philosophy of the NWS, and recognize the challenges that lie ahead. The number and specificity of the recommendations in the report are clear indications of the depth and thoroughness of the Committee's work." A clear sign of the report's relevance and importance is the sponsor's decision to reprint several thousand copies for national and international distribution.

Mr. Johnson has provided invaluable assistance to the U.S. Congress in connection with the NWS modernization and restructuring. Congressional interest has been intense, particularly on the role of the NRC in certification of weather station closures. He has provided assistance in drafting legislation (P.L. 102-567, Title VII: Weather Service Modernization Act) and meetings with Members and staff. He developed effective testimonies for House and Senate hearings and drafted several letters to Members of Congress.

The successes Mr. Johnson has achieved demonstrate his deep insights into the federal government's technical and managerial activities, his mastery of the operation of the NWS and of the state of the science and technology related to the NWS modernization. Coupled with the outstanding personal leadership qualities, these have served as a cornerstone of the Committee's success.

Attachment: EMail Message from Arthur Zygielbaum, member, NWSMC

[38] From: Arthur I. Zygielbaum at NRCREMOTE 3/16/93 7:41AM (2723 bytes: 51 ln)
To: Mercedes Ilagan at CETS1
Subject: David S. Johnson

----- Message Contents -----

Mercedes,

David Johnson is a uniquely qualified individual to be the Study Director for the NWS Modernization Committee. His technical background in the physical sciences, his understanding of weather and related processes, and his skill at relating the technical world to the very complex world of people make Dave extremely effective in facilitating the committee's work.

Dave's technical skills would clearly make Dave a premier member of the committee. He could, in fact, drive most decisions. But he recognizes his job as the Director and works hard to allow members to come to their own conclusions and to take directions required for their personal understanding. Dave's personality allows him to question, cajole, and focus in a manner that helps committee members to come to consensus and to explore areas of greatest return. There is little doubt that the success of the committee is directly due to Dave's skill at keeping us focused and on schedule without undue intrusion into accomplishing the work that needs to be done.

On the personal side, I have never worked with anyone as skilled in dealing with diverse personalities as Dave. He knows when he needs to take a stand, he can correctly filter the inputs from others. He can change opinions of others when necessary in a manner that makes them feel better for the process. Besides being likeable, Dave makes special effort to make those around him feel comfortable. He takes special pain to assure that new committee members, presenters, and guests, quickly become comfortable.

I have found my three year association with Dave to be stimulating and totally without any of the minor concerns and regrets that occasional mar professional relationships. I respect Dave as a scientist, as an administrator, and, I am pleased to say, as a friend.

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