Thanks Bruce and good morning everyone!

It is a great pleasure to attend this Friends and Partners of Aviation Weather Vision meeting, the 7th in this particular series. The FPAW Annual meeting to be held in Las Vegas in October will be the 14th in that series. Who said that Bruce Carmichael isn’t a glutton for punishment!

While I don’t have the exact numbers, it appears that over 80 different organizations have been represented by over by 400 individuals. So let me ask you a few questions.

[slide with questions]

These FPAW meetings had their origin due a number of reasons, and I’ll quickly highlight the main ones. First, the FAA convened a meeting in 1993, the FAA Aviation Weather User’s Forum.

The attendees of that meeting produced a rather long list of requirements that was nearly impossible for the FAA to address.

Second, budget cuts in the mid-1990s led to the eventual demise of the NWS Aviation Weather Branch. Third, there was an apparent lack of follow-through by the government on a 1995 FAA-funded National Research Council study: “Aviation
Weather - A Call for Federal Leadership”, which recommended that the FAA, not the NWS, should take the federal leadership role for aviation weather. Lastly, Ron McPherson, then Director of NCEP, had a vision that resulted in the creation of the Aviation Weather Center. Its activities led operational aviation users to shift their focus from NWS Headquarters to Kansas City, the site of the AWC.

The director of the AWC at the time, Dave Rodenhuis, found sponsors for an aviation weather-focused coordination meeting. Paul Smith, of the NBAA, Bruce Carmichael of NCAR and Carl Knable, retired Manager of Meteorology at United Airlines, worked with Dave to set up the first Friends of Aviation Weather meeting at the NBAA annual convention in Dallas in September of 1997. Here’s a list of attendees from that first meeting.

The purpose was to bring together government, academia and industry to build a strategy for aviation weather. The meeting lasted 3 days, and to say that the talks were rancorous is an understatement. It was so bad that it appeared that this would be the first, and only, Friends meeting.

But cooler heads prevailed and this became an annual forum. The first several of these meetings usually resulted in approximately 25 Action Items, most of them for the FAA, with the NWS getting many of the others.

So think about it for a moment......would you have rather been an Aviation User, who would come to these meetings and tell the FAA and the NWS what was wrong with the aviation weather system and demand fixes to those problems? In NextGen jargon, we Users were the Publisher of Issues or Action Items.
Or would you have rather been one of the government people, who were on the receiving, or Subscriber, end of these impossible Action Items, looking forward to coming back to these meetings year after year with a different explanation of why the Action Items weren't completed? I can only imagine how the government people felt at the conclusion of the FPAW meetings. So the early Friends meetings were largely contentious, but in spite of that it seemed that we still got along with each other.

I'm going to show you just a few examples of the Issues, or Action Items, from the early FPAW meetings.

Note that the Internet Policy Issue was resolved in comparatively short order. All of them were going to be that easy, weren't they? It turned out that getting issues resolved that quickly was the exception, not the rule. Here are a couple of other examples.

The atmosphere of the meetings gradually evolved into one that was much more collegial. This was probably due to a number of factors, with the most important one being that nothing much was getting done in the harsh environment that existed at the first few FPAW meetings. A second factor was probably the steady increase in attendance by commercial weather information providers, industry trade groups and government contractors so the line between Customer and Provider got blurred pretty quickly.

Another significant change that has shaped the FPAW meeting as we know them today was the realization that we were “preaching to the choir”. The attendees of early FPAW meetings were almost all meteorologists, and we did a pretty good job
of convincing ourselves that weather was the center of the aviation universe! We realized that we needed to invite people who actually dealt with the impacts of weather.

An increasing number of controllers, dispatchers, commercial and GA pilots, flight attendants, and others joined our ranks not only in the audience but as panelists. The value of their involvement can’t be overstated and the weather geeks among us really appreciate the insights that these people have given us.

So with the FPAW Annual meetings moving nicely along, why were Vision meetings started? I doubt that it was because Bruce Carmichael was getting bored and wanted something to fill his days, so there had to be other reasons. We can point to two. First, because of the operational make-up of the FPAW attendance, the Annual meetings were focused on near-term issues; those that we thought could be resolved within a year or two. And second, the NextGen initiative had taken firm root, and its focus was obviously going to a bit longer than two years!

So the first Vision meeting was convened at FAA Headquarters on September 12, 2005. And the meeting site moved to this location in the summer of 2008, generously provided by the NTSB through the efforts of Don Eick.

The agenda for the first Vision meeting contained terms that we’ve come to know all so well: Weather Information Integration, Weather Information Dissemination, Diagnosis and Forecasting, Weather Observations, Aircraft Weather Impact Mitigation, Aviation Weather Training and Aviation Weather Policies.
Subsequent Vision meetings have provided the opportunity to get into the underpinnings of these concepts. I’ll share one that I’m very familiar with since I’m a member of the JPDO Weather Working Group’s Policy Team. And it’s one that you’ll hear more about this afternoon. The concept of the Single Authoritative Source came up at that first Vision Meeting in 2007. And while the concept of the SAS hasn’t changed much since then, it has generated a lot of questions about Cube Governance that we’re still wrestling with. In fact, I like to use the analogy that working Policy issues is like peeling back the layers of an onion, only to find that the onion continually grows new layers!

Well, as I mentioned, this is the 7th FPAW Vision meeting and the focus of these annual get-togethers continues to evolve. That’s happening because of a disconnect between the groups of operational people, both government and industry, and those who became immersed in NextGen. Through the fairly recent efforts of some key folks who recognized this disconnect, the Vision meetings now address the common goals of everyone trying to work toward the NextGen world.

Have the FPAW meetings made a difference? In 1997, we didn’t even have the pretense of a good relationship between Customers and Providers, while we now enjoy a venue where we can enjoy a positive dialogue about aviation weather and its impacts among the public, private, and academic communities. We still face challenges, many of which are not technical in nature. Since these meetings don’t and can’t result in binding Action Items, they do provide a safe and neutral venue
where concerns can be openly expressed. And I want to thank Bob Lamond and the NBAA for their continued sponsorship of the FPAW meetings!

Speaking from the standpoint of someone who has attended all but one of the 20 FPAW Annual and Vision meetings...I missed the 2007 Vision meeting because my flight was canceled due to weather.

Thank you.