Focus Group Questions for Watch, Warning, Advisory System

Part I: Overview

- Where do you prefer to access your weather information and why?
    - Probe for channels (TV, website, preferred broadcaster, etc.)
- Do you seek out other or additional sources for a significant weather event
    - Probe for channels (TV, website, preferred broadcaster, etc.) ?

- When you are accessing your preferred weather source, how do you [learn about or differentiate] between a daily forecast and a significant weather event?
    - Are there special terms you are searching for?
    - Are there ways that your preferred source expresses (or describes) a significant weather event? [Probing for hazardous weather type warnings or watches to see if they are familiar with these terms]

- What types of weather events are most prevalent here?
    - For that type of weather event [Fill in from their responses], how would you like your preferred source to describe that event to you 48 - 72 hours before hand?
    - For that type of weather event [Fill in from their responses], how would you like your preferred source to describe the imminent nature of this significant event?
    - [Probing for language – If no one offers terms, get more specific]
    - If a meteorologist wants to explain that a [fill in relevant hazard event for that area] will start in 48-72 hours, what term(s) would you use to describe this?
        - Can you think of any other terms that would explain that hazardous weather may occur in the next 48 hours?
        - What word or phrase would spark you to begin preparing?
    - If a meteorologist wants to explain that a [fill in relevant hazard event for that area] is imminent, what term(s) would you use to describe this?
        - Can you think of any other terms that would prompt you to take action?
    - In the days to a week before an event, forecasters have some information available, although very uncertain. How would you prefer forecasters convey this information to you?
        - How soon do you want to know that a potential <<fill in hazard>> event may occur?
        - How would you explain the uncertainty of that event occurring?

Part II: Introduction of Watch/Warning

- What do you think about the term "watch"? What does it mean to you?
    - Placing this in context, what does a [fill in relevant hazard] watch mean to you?
- What do you think about the term "warning"? What does it mean to you?
    - Placing this in context, what does a [Fill in relevant hazard] warning mean to you?
- What do you think about the term "advisory"? What does it mean to you?
- According to the National Weather Service, a watch means hazardous weather is possible, anywhere from three days in advance to the next few hours, while a warning means that

hazardous weather has been observed, or is expected soon. An advisory highlights special weather conditions that are less serious than a warning. An advisory is issued for hazards that have been observed or are expected soon that may cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property.

- o Based on our discussion, are there other words or phrases that would better describe these definitions? Let's take watch first. Again, a watch means hazardous weather is possible during the next few hours.
- o Now warning. Remember that a warning means that hazardous weather has been observed, or is expected soon.
- o Now advisory. An advisory is issued for hazards that have been observed or are expected soon that may cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property.
- Should these alternative terms be used in addition to or instead of the current terms (e.g. watch, warning, advisory)?

Probing for visual designs ...

- [If they have pointed this out...] We know that the words watch vs warning are similar in spelling, and can also have similar definitions outside of the weather context, [as you have pointed out]. The NWS is considering keeping the language, but perhaps incorporating a visual design, such as a color scheme, numeric scale, or icons to help increase understanding.
  - o What are your thoughts on this?
  - o Do you have any visual suggestions? There are pieces of paper and colored pencils, if, as a group or individually, you would like to sketch some of your ideas.
    - Are there are other scales or color schemes that you encounter in your work or local environment? How could you apply that to this?
    - Do you have any ideas about how to combine color, numbers and icons?
- Specifically, how do you feel about colors associated with a watch? Recall that it means [... fill in blank]. What colors do you associate it with it?
- How do you feel about colors associated with a warning. Recall that it means [...fill in blank]. What colors do you associate with it?

Part III: Weather.gov

- How many of you have heard of weather.gov, the official website for the National Weather Service?
  - o [For facilitators.... Explore whether or not the participants are confused about the nature of weather.gov and what institution is behind it (confusion with private sector partners, etc.)]
- How many of you use weather.gov to gather your local weather information?
- What do you expect to see when you click on your location on the map?
  - o Would it look different if hazardous weather (or whatever term you use to describe them) were expected in your area?
  - o Feel free to use the pieces of paper and colored pencils to sketch out what you would like to see and how you would like it to appear.
- <<Place weather.gov on a projector screen>> This is weather.gov. What are your initial thoughts on the design of this page?

- o Is there anything you find useful? Not useful? Why?
- This is a local page. What are your thoughts on this page?
  - o Is there anything you find useful? Not useful? Why?
  - o Is there anything missing from this page that you would find useful?
- This is a warning page. What are your thoughts on this page?
  - o Is there anything you find useful? Not useful? Why?
  - o Is there anything missing from this page that you would find useful?
- Are there any features to this entire website – the homepage, local pages and warnings – that you would like to see changed? Why?
- What other websites do you use? Why do you seek out these sites? [Probe for what they use/prefer on these sites. Provide them with a list of their preferred websites from earlier]
  - o Are there any features from these other sites that you would like to see incorporated into weather.gov?

- <<Demonstrate how a user can interact on the homepage, local page, and warning page>>
  - o What are your opinions about the interactivity [usability?] of the website?
  - o Are there any features missing that you would like?
  - o If this website were redesigned, what are some features that you would like to see remain?

Optional. Part IV: POSSIBLE Introduction of New Prototype

<<Give some background on Meteoalarm as the initial idea, etc.>> Now we would like to show you a potential new prototype of weather.gov and its associated local pages and warnings.

- Here's a possible weather.gov page
  - o What are some of your initial reactions?
  - o Let's start with the positive. What do you like about this design and why?
  - o What do you dislike about this design and why? What would you change?
- This page works similarly to the previous weather.gov. You can click on your area to enter your local page information. <<click on their local page>>
  - o What are your thoughts about this local page?
  - o What do you like about this design? Why?
  - o What do you dislike about this design? Why?
  - o What would you change?
- Just like before, when there are warnings they will be posted on your local page. You can click on the warning to gather more information. <<click on the warning>>
  - o What are your thoughts about this new warning page?
  - o What do you like about this design? Why?
  - o What do you dislike about this design? Why?
  - o What would you change?

this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Stephanie Fauver, NOAA Coastal Services Center, 2234 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina 29405-2413. **Stephanie.Fauver@noaa.gov.** Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.