

# THE ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR

*Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management*

## Experienced team returns to 2005 NDCMP

By Aaron Gilstad

The North Dakota Cloud Modification Project (NDCMP) in western North Dakota began the 2005 season on June 1. During this project, people from many different locations and backgrounds must learn quickly to work together and depend on one another. After three days of ground school and a few on-the-job training missions, field personnel are expected to conduct seeding operations with little additional assistance from North Dakota Atmospheric Resource Board (NDARB) staff. Over the past several seasons the NDCMP has seen only a handful of personnel with NDCMP experience return to work during the summer. This season, however, brings the most experienced NDCMP field crew seen in many years.

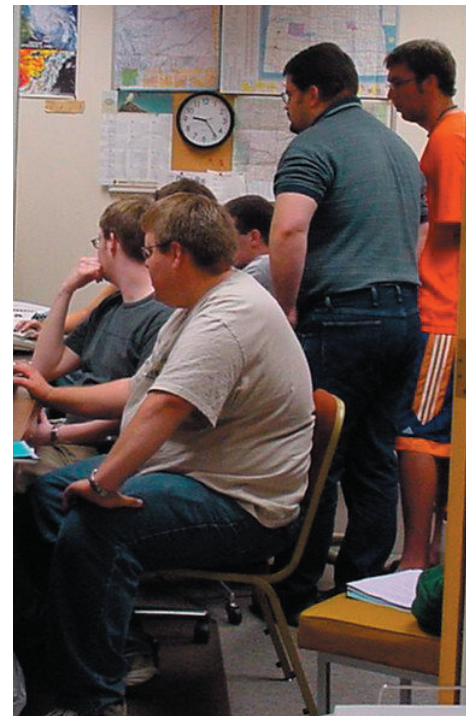
As in previous years, many different topics were covered in ground school by the NDARB and Weather Modification Inc. personnel. These ranged from the technical, including radar theory, cloud physics, and seeding methodology, to the administrative, including the rules, regulations, and safeguards in place on an operational cloud seeding project. In addition, new and returning personnel also reviewed previous project operations to get a feel for what can really be expected in the field.

With all supervisory personnel having at least one season of experience on the NDCMP, however, ground school took on a decidedly different tone. Instead of NDARB staff presenting case studies, returning meteorologists from the 2004

NDCMP presented case studies on seeding missions from their respective target areas. Experienced pilots added further depth to the case studies by making comments on the operations and other personal experience that will help prepare them for upcoming missions.

In an effort to contribute to the pool of experienced people available for the NDCMP, nine intern pilots and two intern meteorologists are employed each season. The interns, whether pilot or meteorologist, will have a wealth of knowledge to gain from their supervisors. Ground school was an effective refresher for returning personnel and a good training experience for newcomers.

Now that the team is ready and the strategy of aggressive cloud seeding has been thoroughly emblazoned in their minds, all the pieces are in place for another successful season on the NDCMP. All that remains is to await the storms that will call the team into action. Both meteorologists and pilots, relying on their previous season's experience, will be able to recognize and act upon seeding opportunities at an early stage. The refresher provided by ground school reminded returning personnel that no two storms are alike and that they must expect the unexpected. The 2005 NDCMP is in good hands with experienced personnel in both the pilot and meteorologist positions, who



will be prepared to react quickly to the occasionally unexpected and often rapidly changing weather conditions.

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