



u-blox AG
Zürcherstrasse 68
8800 Thalwil
Switzerland
www.u-blox.com

Phone +41 44 722 74 44
Fax +41 44 722 74 47
info@u-blox.com

Press Release

Hurricane Hunters use u-blox GPS Technology to Monitor and Predict "Katrina"

For immediate release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Source: NASA. This photo is available for downloading at http://www.u-blox.com/news/hurricane_NASA.jpg

Hurricane Hunters use u-blox GPS Technology to Monitor and Predict "Katrina"

Herdon, VA, August 31, 2005 – u-blox America today announced that the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) uses u-blox GPS technology to determine the strength, direction and speed of hurricanes. Most recently, close to 40 sondes have been employed to measure the characteristics of hurricane "Katrina" so as to study and predict its behavior.

NCAR, which works closely with the government's National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has designed a highly sophisticated GPS dropsonde that is used by the 53rd Air Force Reserve Weather Squadron (AFRES). Dubbed "Hurricane Hunters", the squadron's job is to fly airplanes directly into hurricanes, and drop GPS dropsondes attached to parachutes above the hurricane. During the free fall, the sondes take measurements relative to the behavior of the hurricane every half-second. The data is transmitted to the aircraft where it is recorded for later analysis. The GPS dropsondes provide high-resolution vertical profiles of temperature, pressure, humidity, and winds. This data is then used to predict hurricane intensity, severity and direction changes. The idea is that, by dropping small sensors contained in the GPS sonde into hurricanes, scientists can acquire data at high altitudes that will help them better understand the structure and dynamics of hurricanes. The sondes are also employed to observe and measure other equally challenging atmospheric phenomena such as severe thunderstorms and winter storm systems.

"u-blox GPS technology proved superior to any other commercial GPS solution we looked at for our dropsonde", said Terence Hock, Head of RF Engineering at the Atmospheric Technology Division of NCAR. "The true 4 Hertz update rate and the high position and speed accuracy are vital for our measurements. The more accurate the data we can collect during the fall of the sonde, the better our predictions can be. u-blox GPS technology's superiority was once more demonstrated last weekend, when we used almost 40 dropsondes to measure hurricane Katrina's strength and predict its path."

Accurate prediction of hurricane path and intensity can avoid human casualties and help save billions in damages. "We at u-blox are proud that NCAR has chosen our GPS technology for an application which helps save people's lives and advance meteorological knowledge on severe weather phenomena", said Nikolaos Papadopoulos, President of u-blox America.

Adds NCAR's Terence Hock: "And since our dropsondes are disposable, u-blox GPS receivers' low cost is just what we need".

About u-blox

u-blox is an international company headquartered in Switzerland, with sales organizations in the Americas, Europe and Asia. Founded in 1997, u-blox develops leading positioning products based on the Global Positioning System (GPS) for the automotive and mobile communications markets. For more information, please visit <http://www.u-blox.com/>.

###

u-blox Press Contacts

Georg zur Bonsen, Product Management
Phone: +41 (44) 722 74 44, e-mail: georg.zurbonsen@u-blox.com

Alicia Montoya, Marketing Communications
Phone: +41 (44) 722 74 86, e-mail: alicia.montoya@u-blox.com

Ref: MAC-PE-05011