

December 2, 2008

Dear Unidata GEMPAK/NAWIPS users:

The Unidata Program Center (UPC) understands the concerns of the GEMPAK community about the planned transition of GEMPAK/NAWIPS at NCEP. We want to update you on recent developments surrounding this issue and reaffirm our support for this package until suitable replacements are available.

We are pleased to announce that we hired Michael James in September to fill the vacant GEMPAK support engineer position. Michael hit the ground running and is working on getting the last NCEP release (NAWIPS 5.11.4) out to the Unidata community. There were significant changes to the underlying libraries between 5.11.1 and the current release which has slowed the process. We are looking at a mid-December timeframe for a beta release, with a full release around the first of the year.

During the review of the Unidata 2013 proposal, the review panel raised several questions about how Unidata is going to deal with the end of development of GEMPAK by NCEP. In response to those questions and concerns of the GEMPAK community, the following actions have been taken:

- Unidata plans to support the last version of the current GEMPAK/NAWIPS software for 18 months after the first official release of AWIPS II by NCEP to the National Centers and to the Unidata community. Currently, that release of AWIPS II is planned for the first quarter of 2011, so Unidata's support of GEMPAK would be continued until mid 2012. Although GEMPAK support from the UPC may cease at that time, the source code and documentation will still be available to the community so users can continue using GEMPAK after that date. Also, the gembud mailing list and related online forums will be kept active so GEMPAK users can provide support to each other.
- The Unidata Users Committee has been soliciting input from GEMPAK users on the features they use most. The UPC and the Users Committee will be prioritizing those features by the end of 2008. The UPC will use that list to prioritize the features that will be incorporated into the IDV and also provide that input to NCEP for their consideration in AWIPS II development. Based on those priorities, timelines for the development needed will be established and published on the Unidata web site.
- In addition, the UPC is soliciting new members to the IDV Steering Committee who are active GEMPAK users and are interested in ensuring that the IDV can support the needs of those users. At the same time, we recognize that some GEMPAK functions would be impossible or impractical to incorporate into the IDV. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Don Murray (dmurray@unidata.ucar.edu).
- In an effort to keep the GEMPAK community well informed and abreast of the latest developments, we have set up a web page (<http://www.unidata.ucar.edu/software/gempak/nawipsmigration/index.html>) with information about many aspects of the GEMPAK migration. It includes

a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section with answers to many important questions. If you have suggestions on additions to that page, please let us know.

At the October 2008 Unidata Users and Policy Committee meetings, considerable time was spent discussing the future of GEMPAK in the Unidata community. Summaries of those meetings are available on the Unidata website:

- User's Committee:
<http://www.unidata.ucar.edu/committees/usercom/200810Mtg/summary.html>
- Policy Committee:
<http://www.unidata.ucar.edu/committees/polcom/2008fall/summary.html>

Both committees expressed their support for the current plans and will continue to review them and provide guidance as needed.

In summary, the UPC reaffirms its commitment to support GEMPAK until an acceptable replacement is available to the university community. The UPC will continue to keep GEMPAK users updated on its plans and new developments. Please feel free to provide input on this process by sending an e-mail to nawipmigration@unidata.ucar.edu.

Sincerely,

Mohan Ramamurthy, UPC Director (mohan@ucar.edu)

Steven Businger, Chair, Unidata Policy Committee (businger@hawaii.edu)

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