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PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 21-104  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD  
130 PM EST Wed Dec 22 2021

To:           Subscribers:  
              -NOAA Weather Wire Service  
              -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network  
              -NOAAPort  
              Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From:         Douglas C. Young, Chief  
              Digital and Graphical Information Support Branch

Subject:      Deletion of Valdez-Cordova Census Area and Federal Information  
              Processing Standards (FIPS) Code and Addition of Chugach Census  
              Area and Copper River Census Area with New FIPS Codes,  
              Effective March 22, 2022 for NWS Products, Services, and  
              Systems

Reference:    SCN 21-102: Changes in NWS Public Zones, Fire Weather Zones and  
              County Warning Area and Hydrologic Service Area Boundaries,  
              Effective March 22, 2022

Effective on or about Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 2000 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), 12:00 PM Alaska Daylight Time (AKDT), NWS will no longer use the name Valdez-Cordova Census Area and FIPS Code 02261 in any NWS products or databases. The United States Bureau of the Census officially introduced new census areas, dividing the former Valdez-Cordova Census Area into the Chugach Census Area, FIPS Code 02063, and the Copper River Census Area, FIPS Code 02066. NWS will begin using the two new census area names and FIPS codes on March 22, 2022.

If March 22, 2022 is declared a Critical Weather Day, this implementation will be postponed until March 29, 2022.

A graphical depiction of this change is online at:  
<https://bit.ly/2Z3Av9A>

NWS partners and users should take the appropriate actions to ensure their systems will recognize the NWS' implementation of the two new census area names and associated FIPS codes.

Updated shapefiles are online at:  
<https://www.weather.gov/gis/Counties>

Since there may be NWS partners with systems associating NWS public zones with census area names and/or FIPS codes, a list of the affected public zones follows:

Table 1: Universal Geographic Codes for NWS zones (UGC-Z) and Public/Fire Zone Forecast Names

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 AKZ125: Western Prince William Sound  
 AKZ131: Northeast Prince William Sound  
 AKZ135: Southeast Prince William Sound  
 AKZ141: Copper River Basin

The updated NWS Zone-County Correlation File is online at:  
<https://www.weather.gov/gis/ZoneCounty>

Note that Universal Geographic Codes with three digit FIPS codes (UGC-C) are not used by NWS in Alaska in World Meteorological Organization (WMO)-formatted text products. However, all NWS partners and users who receive NWS products and parse exact text strings will need to change the Valdez-Cordova Census Area to Copper River Census Area and/or Chugach Census Area in their software and system operations.

In addition, NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) location codes are derived from FIPS codes. Therefore, on March 22, 2022, NWS will discontinue the use of SAME location code 002261 and will begin using the new SAME location codes for the Chugach Census Area and the Copper River Census Area, 002063 and 002066, respectively. The correct SAME location code is critical for receiving census area-specific alert notifications for Blizzard Warnings, Coastal Flood Warnings, Flash flood Warnings, Ice Storm Warnings, Non-Precipitation Weather Warnings, Severe Thunderstorm Watches and Warning, Tornado Watches and Warnings, Tsunami Warnings, Wind Chill Warnings, and Winter Storm Warnings.

All NWS partners and users and weather radio owners receiving products that rely on SAME location codes will need to reprogram their equipment no later than March 22, 2022. We recommend users program the new codes (002063 or 002066) at their earliest convenience, keeping the current code (002261) in their systems until March 22, 2022, and deleting code 002261 after the implementation.

Table 2: New SAME location codes used by NWR transmitters effective March 22, 2022

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Transmitter	Call Sign	Frequency	SAME location code
Cape Hinchinbrook	WNG532	162.525	002063
Cordova	WXJ79	162.400	002063
East Point	WNG530	162.500	002063
Glennallen	KPS503	162.550	002066
Point Pigot	KZZ93	162.450	002063
Potato Point	WNG527	162.425	002063
Valdez	WXJ63	162.550	002063
Whittier	KXI29	162.475	002063

SAME location code information for Alaska is available at:  
[https://www.weather.gov/nwr/county\\_coverage?State=AK](https://www.weather.gov/nwr/county_coverage?State=AK) and by calling a toll-free number: 1-888-NWR-SAME (1-888-697-7263).

Instructions on reprogramming your weather radio are in the owner's manual or available from the manufacturer of your radio, your local retailer, or online at the radio manufacturer's website.

For more information, please contact:

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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