Disaster Science Operations Center

VFTH

12/15/22

Anchor Intro: WKU’s recently opened Disaster Science Operations Center gives the university a more robust location to operate in emergencies and crisis situations.

Nothing highlighted the need more than the tornadoes that swept through Bowling Green just one year ago last weekend, as Amy Bingham reports in this week’s View from the Hill.

Supers:

:00 - :04 December 11, 2021 (UPPER LEFT)

:18 - :22 Dr. David Oliver \ Dir., Environmental Health & Safety

:36 - :40 Joseph Lewis \WKU Senior

1:05 – 1:09 Dr. Josh Durkee \ University Meteorologist

PKG – 1:48

“When the tornado hit last year it was that moment of this is why we need to have an operations center such as this.”

The DSOC, Disaster Science Operations Center, was still in the planning stages when a tornado struck dangerously close to campus on December 11th of last year.

“We were operational that night even though we didn’t have this space up and running. We were running virtually and immediately upon the tornado impact.”

After the tornados, meteorology students like Joseph Lewis sprang into action.

“We went out to the Creekwood subdivision and Moss Creek and saw all of the horrible damage and so we just got to do that, we got some hands on experience from John Gordon showing what it takes for a building at that level to be impacted by a weather system.”

Just over a month ago, the DSOC was officially opened in Environmental Science and Technology Hall or EST, offering applied learning in weather service forecasting, broadcast television and emergency management.

“That’s sort of the working triangle in the real world. We were missing that component so we added it and that became sort of the blueprint for this facility.”

Lewis and his peers have put this type of forecasting into action at events here on campus and at high profile events around the country.

“This year we got to go to the USA Games and forecast for that in Orlando and more recently we got to do the Chicago Marathon.”

The big dreams don’t stop there. Durkee says this interdisciplinary approach will only expand as interest in emergency management among meteorology students continues to grow.

“Everything has come together. We look forward to doing this well into the future now.”

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

ANCHOR TAG

Oliver says the DSOC is looking to expand partnerships with K-12 schools, business industry and others highly impacted by weather.

###