

Ariz. professor keeper of weather records

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An Arizona State University professor has been designated the official keeper of world weather records by the U.N. World Meteorological Organization.

Randy Cerveny, 48, got the idea for a world weather archive during Hurricane Katrina, when reporters -- incorrectly, he says -- kept calling it the worst hurricane in U.S. history, the Arizona Republic reported Sunday.

The inaccuracies opened his eyes to the need for a global record keeping track of extreme weather phenomena, like the 1900 Galveston Hurricane that killed at least 8,000 people.

A comprehensive record of such weather events will help scientists track climate shifts over time, the newspaper said.

It will also be the arbiter of barroom bets and bragging rights.

In 2003, for example, Cerveny was called upon to determine if a 7-inch hailstone found in Aurora, Neb., surpassed a Coffeyville, Kan., record set in 1970.

For the United States, a National Climate Extremes Committee is convened to consider weather records.

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