

## Youth joins team of meteorologists

By Denise Ruttan

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A Stayton High School student is part of an online network of amateur meteorologists who broadcast local weather live over the Internet.

Andrew Poecker is a weekend meteorologist for SilverStar 8, a startup Web site managed by a team of young people across the country who consider keeping an eye on the weather a hobby. They connected with each other online, in Weather Channel fan forums, online role-playing games or by auditioning for the site.

"We have a virtual weather program that will give you your national forecast once daily and your local forecast," Poecker said. "People are also able to access severe weather coverage and national radar loops."

Visitors to the Web site can post stories on weather-related topics. A program that could be a desktop weather connection to SilverStar 8 is in the works, as are plans to add more regional features.

A 12-year-old environmental specialist from Michigan will have a "Going Green" series on the site, offering tips on how to reduce heating costs and insulate one's home.

Now the future meteorologists hope to get cable companies to subscribe to the service. Poecker would like to talk to local cable broadcaster Wave Broadband to start the process of migrating to TV.

"We want to use the SilverConnect weather network as a local weather forecast program," Poecker said.

The Web site and the weather program are free and not for profit.

Poecker, 16, joined the site when he got in touch with the site's founder, 15-year-old Jeremy from northeast Missouri, through his Gmail contact list.

"I said, 'Wouldn't it be nice if you had a little help with your program?' It just kind of happened," Poecker said.

Jeremy started the Web site in June. Then he met Poecker online. Now several team members, all younger than 18 and scattered across the country from California to Missouri, help out with graphics, broadcasting or programming.

From there it has taken off. The site gets about 700 hits each week, and broadcasting the



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Andrew Poecker, a student at Stayton High School, shows off the home page of the SilverStar 8 Weather Network, an online site updated by high school students across the country that provides local weather forecasts.

forecast on YouTube has increased traffic.

The site even uses the music that plays on The Weather Channel. Poecker contacted professional musician Trammell Starks, who records music for The Weather Channel, and received permission to use his music for free on the site.

Poecker said becoming a part of SilverStar 8 has been a good match. He's serious about the weather, and he's interested in computer graphics.

"I especially enjoy severe weather. It's fun to predict what's going to happen and to be out in it, looking to see if there will be any power outages. And I've been on a computer since I was 3," Poecker said.

Catch Poecker as the weekend forecaster on SilverStar 8's National Forecast.

The Web site is [www.silverstar8.com](http://www.silverstar8.com).