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University of Oklahoma Awarded \$3.8 Million NOAA-funded Project For Climate, Drought Assessments, Planning Tools

Climate risks throughout the southern United States will be studied by University of Oklahoma researchers with the recent award of a five-year, \$3.8 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“The award of this grant is further evidence of our academic strength and the ability of a university to engage in world class research,” said University of Oklahoma President David L. Boren.

Through NOAA’s Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments program, OU researchers will team with researchers from Louisiana State University to develop tools and resources for use by local and regional community managers in their long-range planning.

The study is under the auspices of the Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program, which is designed to increase knowledge and application of drought risk assessment, forecasting, and management within the context of numerous other climate-related hazards. The program will focus specifically on the six-state region served by the Southern Region Climate Center, which includes Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

The Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program will work closely with community managers to develop climate-risk profiles of communities, including risks related to drought, and assessment of how climate change might affect those communities. Through a unified hazards assessment Web site, community planners will be given drought information along with an extensive range of climate hazards to help communities assess risk and adaptation options in response to the varying and changing climate in the region.

Geographic Information System-based tools will allow planners to examine historical events in their communities, assess changes in hazards profiles over time, and view anticipated changes in those hazards consistent with climate change projections. In addition to long-range planning, these tools will help communities to meet immediate requirements for local hazard mitigation plans, one requirement for receiving grants under the Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

“This award will allow OU meteorologists to work with and support a multi-state audience with the very latest in drought monitoring, planning, mitigation services, continuing a nearly 50-year tradition of public service and support to communities,” said John T. Snow, Dean of the College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences.

The community-based approach aims to promote proactive vs. reactive adaptive behavior on different timescales. In partnership with regional, state, and local organizations, this new program aims to increase knowledge and application of climate and drought risk assessment, forecasting, and management as well as analysis of other

climate hazards across the diverse region so that communities may be better prepared for current and future hazards.

The program will coordinate with and act as an integral part of the evolution of the National Integrated Drought Information System.

The Oklahoma Climatological Survey, a research unit of the College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences at the University of Oklahoma, and Louisiana State University's Department of Geography and Anthropology are the lead research groups responsible for establishing the ninth and newest Regional Integrated Sciences Assessment project in the United States.

For more information on the Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments Program:
http://www.climate.noaa.gov/cpo_pa/risa/.

For more information about the Oklahoma Climatological Survey:
<http://climate.ok.gov/>

For more information about the NOAA Southern Regional Climate Center:
<http://www.srcc.lsu.edu/>