FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WILD WEATHER STORMS THE BULLOCK MUSEUM ON FEBRUARY 23, 2013

February 6, 2013 Austin, TX   Flash floods, tornadoes, hail, and atmospheric mayhem will converge at the Bullock Museum on February 23rd from 10am - 3pm at the second annual WeatherFest event. Hopefully these phenomena will stay in simulated forms rather than literal but they will indeed be present.

Besides the weather simulations, activities range from demonstrating sophisticated technological advances in weather science and forecasting, educator training, latest storm-chasing vehicles and equipment, to creative activities for kids including art and science projects.

The breakdown of the day is as follows:

10:00am - 3pm (Grand Lobby, 2nd Floor Lobby, Classrooms)

Meet the weather community partner agencies who keep the public safe during storms:

- Austin Fire Department's Swift Water Rescue team (demonstrating a rescue boat)
- US Geological Survey (stream flow and flood monitoring)
- City of Austin's Watershed Protection department (with new flash flood simulator)
- Lower Colorado River Authority (monitoring the Colorado watershed & Highland Lakes)
- CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow network)
- Texas Floodplain Management Association with TADDpole (flash flood safety)
- Spotternetwork.org (storm reports & advanced tools for chasing tornadoes)
- CAMM (Connect a Million Minds) program from Time Warner Cable
- team of meteorologists from YNN Austin's Weather on the 8s

On the front plaza of the Bullock you'll see the University of Oklahoma's Shared Mobile Atmospheric Research and Teaching (SMART) radar truck, deployed out front to offer a hands-on tour. You'll also find today's best storm chasers showing off their high tech chase vehicles in the adjacent parking lot.

10:00am - 11:30am (Austin Room)

Session I - Skywarn Training

Paul Yura from the Austin-San Antonio National Weather Service Forecast Office presents Basic Skywarn stormspotter training. Skywarn is a national volunteer program. This workshop is for the general public – anyone who wants to learn about how storms form and move in Central Texas. Attend this session if you want to learn how to safely identify and accurately report severe weather threats so that watches and warnings can be issued ahead of the threat.

11:00am – 11:50am

Educator Weather Presentation "Central Texas Weather" (Texas Spirit Theater)

From ice in winter to tornadoes in spring to 100 degree days in summer, Central Texans face a wide range of weather elements throughout the year and many arrive without much notice. This workshop takes us through a pictorial view of local weather extremes and offers safety tips geared for all ages. Learn how flash flooding, one of the easiest severe threats to avoid, actually claims more lives than any other storm phenomenon in the Lone Star State. We'll also discuss how Austin sees one tornado every year on average. This session qualifies as one hour of continuing education for educators.

12:30pm

Free Screening of Wild Texas Weather (Texas Spirit Theater)

12:00pm- 1:00pm

Session II – Storm Chase Videos and Q & A with Storm Chasers (Austin Room)

Storm chasers show off recent chase videos and discuss tactics, equipment, and techniques they employ to get stunning images of some of nature's most violent moments. Videos will be limited to five minutes each. During this session, meteorologists and storm chasers will field questions from the audience.

1:30pm – 2:30pm

Spotter Training Safety Session (Austin Room)

This course offers a "method" to individual safety while storm spotting for both Skywarn and the Spotter Network. The course is designed for both new and experienced spotters. New spotters will learn the hazards they may face and methods for dealing with these hazards. Experienced spotters will find this a great review of how to stay safe in the field.

2:30pm

Free Screening of Wild Texas Weather (Texas Spirit Theater)

Kids' Activities throughout the Day

Creative play stations will be set up for all ages of children for learning about atmospheric conditions that lead to rain, snow, hail, and thunderstorms.

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