

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 30 SEP 2003		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2003 to 00-00-2003	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE National Weather Radar Testbed				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) National Severe Storms Laboratory,,1313 Halley Circle,,Norman,,OK,73069				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 3	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

National Weather Radar Testbed

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LONG-TERM GOALS

Provide the Nation with enhanced weather radar that improves the detection of severe weather resulting in increased warning lead times and the saving of lives and property.

OBJECTIVES

Build and operate the first surveillance phased array radar facility available on a full-time basis to the radar meteorological research community. The new system will be able to scan the atmosphere with more detail than the current radars. It will also be able to re-scan areas of severe weather very quickly, improving forecasters' warning capability. In addition, the new technology will gather storm information not currently available, such as rapid changes in wind fields; to provide forecasters with better conceptual storm models and to initialize stormscale forecast models.

APPROACH

Create a unique federal, private, state and academic partnership for developing the phased array radar technology. Participants and their contributions include NOAA's National Severe Storms Laboratory, host and operate the testbed, build facilities to house the testbed and provide funding; and National Weather Service Radar Operations Center, provide the transmitter; Lockheed Martin, build and integrate the system along with in-kind funding; U.S. Navy, provide the antenna and funding; University of Oklahoma's School of Meteorology, School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Cooperative Institute for Mesoscale Meteorological Studies, provide funding; Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, provide funding; the Federal Aviation Administration, provide funding; and Basic Commerce and Industries, provide support. The project - from research and development to technology transfer and deployment throughout the U.S. - is expected to take 10 to 15 years at an initial cost of approximately \$25 million for the facility in Norman.

WORK COMPLETED

The facility to house the phased array radar was completed in April. Installation and testing has been completed and the system will be turned over to the government around mid-October, 2003.



Figure 1. Picture on the left is the newly constructed National Weather Radar Testbed facility. The picture on the right shows the super structure that houses the SPY 1-A antenna and support equipment including the transmitter.

RESULTS

Research data are not yet available from the NWRT.

IMPACT/APPLICATIONS

Provide a test platform for testing phased array radar's potential for improving the detection of severe weather. The testbed will also provide a capability to test multi-uses such as simultaneous aircraft tracking, wind profiling and applications for homeland security.

RELATED PROJECTS

None