National Weather Service
10159 E. 11th St., Suite 300
Tulsa, OK 74128

Oklahoma Climatological Survey
The University of Oklahoma
120 David L. Boren Blvd., Suite 2900
Norman, OK 73072

Media Advisory

Contacts:
Michael Teague, Data Acquisition Program Manager, National Weather Service Tulsa, OK, 918-838-7838
Gary McManus, Associate State Climatologist, Oklahoma Climatological Survey, 405-325-2541
Kim MacLeod, Director, City of Tulsa Communications Department, 918-596-7803

For Immediate Release
February 24, 2011

All-time Oklahoma Record 24-hour Snowfall and Record Minimum Temperature Officially Set in Northeast Oklahoma

The State Climate Extremes Committee (SCEC) was convened on February 17, 2011 to verify and officially approve two new all-time records for the State of Oklahoma.

The National Weather Service (NWS) Cooperative Observer in Spavinaw, OK measured 27 inches of new snow from the winter storm that affected the state February 8-9, 2011. This measurement breaks the previous Oklahoma record 24-hour snowfall of 26 inches measured in Woodward, OK and Freedom, OK during the March 28, 2009 blizzard. The snow began in Spavinaw at 11 pm CST on February 8 and ended around 6 pm CST on February 9. During the winter storm, a heavy snow band developed across northeast Oklahoma and remained nearly stationary for close to 9 hours. Snowfall rates of two to three inches per hour were reported at times within this heavy snow band.

The NWS Cooperative Observer Program consists of a network of volunteer observers who report temperature, rainfall, and snow to the NWS each day. These weather observations provide meteorological data in near real-time to support NWS forecast and warning operations, as well as provide information to define the climate of the United States and help measure long-term climate changes. The Spavinaw Cooperative Observation site is located at the Spavinaw Lake Permit Office, which is maintained by the City of Tulsa Environmental Operations Division of the Public Works Department. Michael Teague, Data Acquisitions Manager for the NWS Tulsa Office said, “City of Tulsa employees have been taking observations for the NWS at Spavinaw since October 1977, and we appreciate their effort in providing critical weather information to us every day.”

Spavinaw Lake Patrolman Bruce Trout was able to make it into work on the morning of February 9 and measured the record snowfall later in the day. Robert Brownwood, Water Supply Manager in the Environmental Operations Division of Public Works, said, "The City of Tulsa is fortunate to have employees who really went the extra mile to get to their assigned work areas during those early February snow storms."

- MORE -

Extremely cold temperatures followed in the wake of the winter storm and a new all-time record minimum temperature was set for the State of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Mesonet site in Nowata, OK, which is maintained by the Oklahoma Climatological Survey, recorded a minimum temperature of -31°F at 7:40 am CST February 10, 2011. This new record breaks the previous record of -27°F set in Vinita on February 13, 1905, in Watts on January 18, 1930, and in Guthrie on January 4, 1947. The Oklahoma Mesonet, Oklahoma's Weather Network, is a world-class network of environmental monitoring stations. The network was designed and implemented by scientists at the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University.

The SCEC was composed of representatives from the National Climatic Data Center, the NWS Weather Forecast Office in Tulsa, OK, the NWS Southern Region Headquarters, the Oklahoma Climatological Survey, and the Southern Regional Climate Center. After discussion of the measurement techniques used for these observations, as well as the meteorological conditions during this event, the SCEC unanimously approved both new Oklahoma state records.

The NWS Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Tulsa provides the official weather services for 32 counties in Eastern Oklahoma and Northwest Arkansas. The WFO collects meteorological data; prepares and disseminates routine weather and river forecasts; and issues severe weather and flood warnings to the public. For more information, visit http://www.weather.gov/tulsa. For additional information on this winter weather event, visit http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tsa/?n=weather-event_2011feb9 .

For more information about the Oklahoma Mesonet, visit http://www.mesonet.org/.

The State Climate Extremes Committee (SCEC) was created in 2006 in response to the need for proper and comprehensive evaluation of meteorological observations which may have tied or exceeded existing statewide all–time record values. Beyond their intrinsic human interest factor, climatic extremes are an important component of a location's climatology, used for, among other things, quality controlling meteorological observations, setting engineering limits, and helping authorities to develop climate related safety plans. For more information, visit http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/extremes/scec/.

###