

Fannin County severe storm program Tuesday

Written by Davy Moseley
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Jan. 27, 2011 - The 2010 severe storm season in North Texas was anything but typical, but was quite busy. There were tornadoes as early as Jan. 20, and tornadoes as late as Oct. 24. Hail storms, damaging thunderstorm winds, and flooding all had their turn across North Texas skies. The toll on life and property was significant, with many casualties and damage in the tens of millions of dollars.

The 2011 severe weather season is fast approaching. Are you ready for whatever this year has in store? Do you have a severe weather plan at your home and your workplace? Can you recognize the clues that suggest large hail, flash flooding, or a tornado is possible? Do you want to become part of the severe weather warning system in your county?

As part of its area-wide weather preparedness campaign, the National Weather Service in Fort Worth will answer these and many other questions at the Skywarn severe weather program on Tuesday, Feb. 1, from 7-9 p.m. The program will be held at the courthouse South Annex, located at 210 South Main Street in Bonham, and is held in partnership with Fannin County Emergency Management.

The 2011 program will discuss thunderstorm formation, severe weather production, and features associated with severe storms. The presentation will also review tornado formation and behavior, non-threatening clues which may be mistaken for significant features, and safety when thunderstorms threaten. The program will discuss spotter operations and recommended reporting procedures. The two-hour presentation will be in multimedia format, featuring numerous pictures of storms and nearly 25 minutes of storm video clips.

"We have quite a bit of new material for this year's spotter training program," said Mark Fox, Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the Fort Worth NWS Office. "We will present the information in the form of a checklist for the attendees to utilize. Most of the storm photos and video clips are different this year. We have reworked many of our graphics. We'll have more identification cases, and we'll discuss the operational aspects of storm spotters in detail."

The fundamental purpose of the spotter training - and of the storm spotter network as a whole - remains unchanged.

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"We could not do our job as well as we do without storm spotters," Fox said. "Radar is a great tool, but it only tells us part of a storm's story. Spotter observations complement the data we use to analyze storms. The combination of spotter reports and radar data gives us the best possible picture of the storms and what's going on inside them."

"By coming to this program, you will learn a lot about thunderstorms," Fox said. "Even if you don't become an active storm spotter, you will learn about how storms work and the visual clues you can identify when storms are in your area. We will discuss severe weather safety tips. This will better prepare yourself and your family for the threats that storms pose."

The program is free and open to the public and is one of over 60 that the Fort Worth NWS Office will conduct between January and early April 2011. The National Weather Service in Fort Worth provides forecasts, warnings, and weather services for 46 counties in north and north-central Texas. For more information on severe weather and the National Weather Service, visit the Fort Worth Forecast Office's website at <http://www.weather.gov/fortworth> and on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/US.NationalWeatherService.FortWorth.gov>.