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Utah and Partners Kickoff Uintah Basin Winter Ozone Study

WHO: Experts from more than a dozen institutions – including NOAA, the EPA, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Utah State University, the Western Energy Alliance (an oil and gas industry association) and more will unveil the most comprehensive air quality study ever in Utah.

WHAT: The Division of Air Quality is leading a collaborative study of ozone pollution in the Uintah Basin to better understand why ozone levels soar above health-based standards in the winter. Scientists and officials involved in the work will kick off the study with a series of public events Tuesday, Feb. 7.

WHEN: 10-11 a.m. press conference, **Tuesday, Feb. 7**, followed by a launch of a study balloon carrying instruments.
5-7 p.m. open house at the Bingham Research Center

WHERE: Bingham Research Center, 320 N. Aggie Boulevard, Uintah Conference Center's main building. See map. (<http://mapq.st/yscneu>)

WHY: Last winter, surface ozone pollution levels in the region periodically rose to nearly twice as high as the federal health standard. Surging oil and gas exploration and production and other activities in and around the Uintah Basin may contribute to the pollution problems. The poor air quality episodes there have occurred when wintertime weather patterns called inversions trap cold air close to snow-covered ground. At high concentrations, ground-level ozone can cause severe respiratory effects in some people, and it damages crops, trees and other vegetation. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets air quality standards for ozone pollution in the United States.

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