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NEWS RELEASE

January 17, 2017

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Air Monitoring Above Ground to Take Flight This Winter
DAQ & Partners Will Examine Winter Pollution aboard a Twin Otter

SALT LAKE CITY – One the most significant air quality studies in Utah begins today when the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and its federal partners set up an air monitoring station aboard an aircraft to collect data during winter conditions, especially inversions.

Media availability is scheduled between 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Friday, January 20 at the University of Utah's INSCC conference room, Room 110, located at 155 S. 1455 East. Researchers will provide an overview of the project and a tour of the research lab.

The study, "Utah Winter Fine Particulate Study" involves the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) specially equipped aircraft known as the Twin Otter, along with multiple ground-based observation sites. The aircraft will fly over the Cache, Salt Lake, and Utah valleys from January 17 to February 14, 2017, to survey the chemical conditions responsible for the formation of particulate pollution, known as PM_{2.5}.

"This study will help DEQ's Division of Air Quality (DAQ) understand the chemical reactions that take place in the upper portion of the pollution layer during these episodes, to determine the best ways to reduce the emissions that create PM_{2.5}," said Munkhbayar Baasandorj, scientist with DAQ. She and Dr. Steven Brown of NOAA are leading the study.

NOAA is providing airborne and ground-based instruments to help explore the atmospheric chemistry that contributes to the problem. The project is one of several ongoing NOAA field campaigns in the western United States.

"We always look forward to working with states like Utah to help improve understanding of important air quality issues." said Brown.

The research team also includes the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder (NOAA Partner), Environmental Protection Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, University of Utah, Utah State University, Brigham Young University, University of Toronto, University of Washington and University of Minnesota.

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Printed on 100% recycled paper

The Utah Legislature provided about \$130,000 as seed money to get the estimated \$2 million project going. NOAA, EPA, USDA and the Universities are donating equipment and expertise.

“EPA scientists are providing new and advanced ground-based technology to measure PM_{2.5} and other air pollutants that will complement those taken aboard NOAA aircraft,” said Dr. Dan Costa, director of EPA’s Air, Climate, and Energy Research Program. “The air quality study is one of the most comprehensive in the region and will help Utah’s efforts to reduce high levels of fine particle pollution during wintertime inversions,” he said.

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About DEQ

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality’s (DEQ) mission is to safeguard and improve Utah’s air, land and water through balanced regulation. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah’s air, land and water. For more information, visit www.deq.utah.gov, follow DEQ on Facebook ([utahdeq](https://www.facebook.com/utahdeq)) and Twitter ([UtahDEQ](https://twitter.com/UtahDEQ)), or call 1-800-458-0145.