



## UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

120 David L. Boren Blvd

Norman, OK 73072

Phone: (405) 325-1819

Fax: (405) 325-1108

[www.weathersphere.org](http://www.weathersphere.org)

# Courtesy of The Norman Transcript—12/18/08

## **NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory looks to local community to help with research**

By: Keli Pirtle Tarp/NOAA

Are snowflakes fallin' on your head? Are you getting pinged by ice pellets? NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory is requesting observations of winter precipitation from volunteers in a 150 km radius of Norman.

More than 2,600 observations have been received during the past two years. In its third year, the successful project has a new name: W-PING, the Winter Precipitation Identification Near the Ground.

W-PING is looking for young, old and in-between volunteers (teachers, classes and families too) to watch for and report on precipitation. W-PING volunteers can spend a little or a lot of time making observations by clicking a link from either the NSSL Web page or the Norman National Weather Service Forecast Office home page on the Internet.

The report asks for the reporter's date, time, location, and precipitation type. Temperature, wind speed and direction reports are optional. There is no commitment, and no minimum amount of reports.

"With the added information from the public, we expect to improve our ability to use radar data for winter precipitation identification," explains NSSL researcher Kim Elmore.

NSSL will collect radar data during winter storm events within about 90 miles of Norman. Because the radars cannot see very close to the ground, NSSL will use public observations of what is actually happening at the surface to compare with what the radar has detected.

The information NSSL receives from W-PING volunteers will support scientists in developing new radar technologies and techniques to determine what kind of precipitation--such as snow, ice, or rain--is falling at any given location.

For more information, go to [www.nssl.noaa.gov/projects/winter/](http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/projects/winter/).