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Courtesy of The Oklahoma Daily—01/21/09

'Hi-def' radar comes to south campus

By: Clark Foy/The Daily

A new state-of-the-art radar system will be available on the south campus for hands-on student research and education in two months.

The radar, a \$2.5 million project, has been under construction for ten months. Students in meteorology, chemical and mechanical engineering will use the system in classes this semester, said John T. Snow, dean of the College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences.

"It continues to make our weather program grow, which is already the best in the nation, if not the world," he said.

"The radar is one of a kind," said Robert Palmer, director of the project and meteorology professor. "It has the highest resolution of any radar in the United States."

The radar, called the Polarimetric Radar for Innovations in Meteorology and Engineering (PRIME), will gather weather data much like the Doppler radar, but the data will be more accurate and in finer detail, Snow said.

"PRIME is a generation beyond current radars," Snow said. "It gives us much more details about what a cloud looks like inside and the rain drops themselves."

"Think of it as a higher definition television," said Tian You Yu, associate professor of the College of Electric and Computer Engineering.

The radar does not predict the weather, but it does give meteorologists the data they need to forecast it, Yu said.

Yu said also the higher definition allows for a better model to be seen and observed, which will allow meteorologists to gather more detailed data and a more accurate weather forecast.

The radar resembles giant golf ball and can be seen be seen from State Highway 9, east of the National Weather Center, Snow said. It will be used in several graduate and undergraduate classes for special projects and research, said Palmer.