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March 1, 2014, 10:19 am

CSU to help NASA study climate in upper atmosphere

By Peter Dettmann
The Denver Post



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A new weather instrument in the works from a Colorado State University-led research team will help NASA study the climate in the upper levels of the earth's atmosphere, specifically ice particles in clouds — information useful to improving global climate models.

The Tropospheric Water and Cloud ICE (TWICE) will be designed to weigh just over 17 pounds, small enough to fit in [CubeSats](#), nano-satellites launched in conjunction with larger NASA satellite missions.

Once in orbit, TWICE will scan the upper troposphere measuring the size of ice particles and water vapor in clouds, collecting data to help researchers determine the effects of human-produced pollution on the climate. Dust, smoke from fires and general air pollution can influence the size of ice particles in clouds. When large amounts of these pollutants are present, clouds form smaller ice particles, resulting in less rain.

NASA awarded \$4.5 million to CSU electrical and computer engineering professor Steven Reising for the project.

"There is a lot of uncertainty about the effects of air pollution on clouds and climate," Reising said in a news release. "Our goal is to reduce this uncertainty to help improve climate predictions."

TWICE is expected to be completed over the next three years.

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