

Ball Aerospace to Design NCAR's Next-Gen Weather Radar Antennas

BROOMFIELD, Colo., July 24, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Ball Aerospace has been selected to design the radio frequency front end system for the National Center of Atmospheric Research's (NCAR) Airborne Phased Array Radar (APAR) program, the center's next-generation tool for gathering critical weather data.

APAR will dramatically enhance the scientific community's ability to capture detailed observations of the formation and behavior of high-impact weather events like tornadoes, hurricanes and blizzards, ultimately allowing for more accurate forecasting models and improved alerts to the public.

"The data APAR captures will change the way atmospheric scientists are able to understand and predict severe storm systems, and it will serve as an essential tool to help protect our communities from danger," said Paula Burns, vice president, Tactical Solutions, Ball Aerospace. "As a long-time partner on this project, our team at Ball Aerospace is excited to help bring APAR's capabilities to the weather community."

Following years of studies in partnership with NCAR, Ball Aerospace will now be collaborating with NCAR on a proof of concept for the final system. When complete, the APAR system will consist of four C-band active electronically scanned arrays (AESAs) mounted onto the exterior of the National Science Foundation (NSF)/NCAR C-130 aircraft.

Once completed, the aircraft's mission will be to fly around high-impact weather events at a safe distance, gathering data on their structure, dynamics and microphysics from deeper inside the storm and at a higher spatial resolution than current radar technology allows, serving as the foundation for improved prediction models.

In addition to Ball Aerospace and NCAR, the APAR team includes the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Colorado State University, State University of New York (SUNY) Stony Brook, University of Massachusetts Amherst and the University of Oklahoma.

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