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NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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JIM BELLES TO OVERSEE NOAA NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE FORECAST OFFICE IN MEMPHIS, TENN.

Jim Belles has been appointed meteorologist-in-charge of the NOAA National Weather Service Forecast Office in Memphis, Tenn. Belles replaces Jim Duke who retired January 3. The Memphis office is one of 122 NWS Weather Forecast Offices in the nation and one of 32 in the NWS Southern Region. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

“A meteorologist-in-charge is the front line officer carrying out the National Weather Service mission of serving the American public by helping protect lives and property,” said Brig. Gen. David L. Johnson, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), director of NOAA’s National Weather Service. “We are proud to have Jim Belles serving in this important role.”

As meteorologist-in-charge, Belles will be responsible for ensuring the citizens of west Tennessee and portions of Missouri, Arkansas and Mississippi receive timely and accurate weather warnings, forecasts and climate information. Belles responsibilities also include maintaining close working relationships with NWS partners, including the emergency management community and the media, and providing severe weather awareness, preparedness and safety education for the public.

Belles launched his NWS career as a meteorologist intern at the NWS office in Rochester, Minn., in 1990. Three years later, he became a forecaster at the office in Des Moines, Iowa. Belles then served as the warning coordination meteorologist for the WFO in Grand Forks, N.D. (1995 – 2000) and the WFO in Memphis (2000 – 2003). Belles spent the last two years as MIC at the WFO in Quad Cities/Davenport, Iowa.

During his career, Belles has gained considerable experience in dealing with a wide range of weather events including tornado outbreaks, major floods and blizzards.

Some of the major events include the great Midwest Flood of 1993; the Northern Plains spring flood in April of 1997 and the deadly Veterans Day Weekend Tornado Outbreak of November 2002.

Belles is the recipient of several regional awards as well as Department of Commerce Silver and Bronze medals. A member of the National Weather Association and American Meteorological Society, he has conducted extensive research in severe weather communications and preparedness with the emergency management community. Belles is also a frequent presenter at numerous professional conferences.

Belles received a bachelor's degree in Meteorology from the State University of New York at Brockport (1987) and earned a master's degree in Meteorology from Penn State University in 1990. He lives with his wife Jean, who is also a former NWS meteorologist. They have four sons, ranging in age from nine months to seven years.

The NOAA National Weather Service is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. The NWS operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>

National Weather Service Southern Region: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov>