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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 27, 2014

**National Weather Service Honors Pat & Diane Thelander of rural
Oshkosh, Nebraska – for Outstanding Service to
Volunteer Cooperative Weather Observer Program**

Recognizing more than 31 years of dedication, NOAA's National Weather Service has named Pat and Diane Thelander, Cooperative Weather Observers who reside 10 miles northeast of Oshkosh, Nebraska – as a 2014 recipient of the agency's John Campanius Holm Award for outstanding service in the Cooperative Weather Observer program. The award is the agency's second-most prestigious, and is presented to deserving cooperative weather observers from around the country.

"Cooperative observers are a vital part of weather data collection and analysis," said John Stoppkotte, acting Meteorologist in Charge of NOAA's National Weather Service office in North Platte. "Weather forecasting and scientific analysis have grown considerably over the last 40 years, which resulted in better forecasts and warnings. Without these accurate weather observations which span over a century at many locations, taken by voluntary observers, the science of weather forecasting would not be where it is today. We thank Pat and Diane for their many years of selfless service to our country."

John Stoppkotte, acting Meteorologist in Charge of the North Platte office, will present the award at 200 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time, during a presentation to be held at the Lewellen Fire Hall. The Holm Award presentation will commence, with an open invitation to the public to attend. Observing Program Leader Steve Carmel from the National Weather Service in North Platte nominated Pat and Diane Thelander for the Holm Award.

The National Weather Service's Cooperative Weather Observer Program is a unique partnership between the National Weather Service and citizen volunteers in every U.S. state and territory. The cooperative observer program has given scientists and researchers continuous weather data since the program's inception in 1890. Today, more than 11,000 volunteer observers participate in the nationwide program to provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil temperature.

Pat and Diane Thelander began taking voluntary weather observations at their location, on June 1st, 1983. They have reported 24 hour rainfall, snowfall and average snow depth amounts to the National Weather Service North Platte office. Site reports have provided important data to NOAA forecasters and hydrologists and climate scientists. Over the years, the Thelander's have provided 11,434 daily reports to the National Weather Service.

A 30 Year Length-of-Service Award was presented in August 2013 to the Thelander's for their meritorious service. Pat and Diane are known for their timely reports during inclement or severe weather. They have a Fischer Porter-D automated rain gauge at their location, and also measure daily precipitation, snowfall and snow depth information. Even during calving operations in blizzard conditions, or atop a hill near his ranch, spotting tornadoes for Garden County and the National Weather Service - Pat, Diane, and their sons Beau, Shane and Jessie have all contacted the National Weather Service with timely reports.

For over 31 years, Pat and Diane have provided updates to the local radio station and newspaper, so it would be disseminated to the community. Pat has helped kids in the 4H programs with weather training, and as a long time weather spotter.

Pat and his wife Diane operate Blue Creek Feeds, along with his own farming and ranching operation. He has served on the Lewellen Fire Department as assistant Fire Chief, and been an officer in that organization. He has also served on the Garden County Sheriff's Posse, the Blue Creek 4H, and the Garden County 4H livestock committee. Pat and his three sons have been very active on the Blue Creek Fire Department. Diane is employed by Sandhills Natural Water, bottling water from Blue Creek.

Long and continuous records provide an accurate picture of a locale's normal weather, and give climatologists and others a basis for predicting future trends. These data are invaluable for scientists studying floods, droughts and heat and cold waves. At the end of each month, observers mail their records to the National Climatic Data Center for publication in "Climatological Data" or "Hourly Precipitation Data."

The first extensive network of cooperative stations was set up in the 1890s as a result of an 1890 act of Congress that established the U.S. Weather Bureau. Many of the stations have even longer histories. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken without benefit of instruments in 1644 and 1645, are the earliest known recorded observations in the United States.

Many historic figures have maintained weather records, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and Washington took weather observations just a few days before he died. The Jefferson and Holm awards are named for these weather observation pioneers.

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On the Web:

NOAA's National Weather Service, North Platte: <http://www.weather.gov/lbf>