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storm chaser

A GROUP OF
UNL STUDENTS
BRAVE SEVERE
WEATHER IN
THE NAME OF
SCIENCE

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY JOSH WOLFE

Every spring and summer, a few UNL meteorology students gather to search for Earth's most violent weather.

Led by graduate student Walker Ashley, the Nebraska Vortex Intercept Team chases storms across the upper Midwest every tornado season.

The purpose: to give students real-life experiences of the severe weather they study in class, which includes more than seeing the storms, but also forecasting where and when they will strike.

"Connective weather forecasting has exploded in the last 10 years," said University Nebraska-Lincoln Meteorology Professor Ken Dewey. "We can go out now and have a target area and usually find severe storms."

On May 17, all of ingredients to mix up a severe weather outbreak were present.

Hot, moist air had trekked its way up from the Gulf of Mexico to Nebraska, where two warm fronts were moving across the state. Combined with a dry line and upper level winds, everything looked right to Ashley and his team.

The following is an account of their storms case that day:

10:00 a.m.

Dewey and an assortment of other UNL chasers meet at Ashley's apartment.

Ashley had spent the morning at his desk next to a large tie-died cloth that hangs in his bed room, going over the weather data, making and remaking his prediction of where the storms would form and the best position for the team to intercept them.

Hastings looks like the place to head, considering the a National Weather Service was there. Taking four

Please see **CHASER** on 6

