OK-First is an outreach program of the Oklahoma Climatological Survey and Oklahoma Mesonet that serves the public safety community in Oklahoma. Since 1998, OK-First has provided:

- Certification classes for public safety officials on weather basics, radar, weather products, software, and more
- Access to weather data through a customized, password-protected decision support website as well as additional software
- Follow-up support for troubleshooting and content-related questions
- Connections to a large, knowledgeable community of trained users
- Required re-fresher training on old concepts as well as new concepts and technology (must attend every 18 months to maintain certification)

Participation in OK-First is limited to agencies and organizations that have jurisdictional responsibilities in maintaining public safety. OK-First participants include:

- Emergency managers
- Firefighters
- Police Officers
- Sheriffs
- Highway Patrol
- Military Officials
- Health Officials
- School Safety Officials
- State Agency Employees
- Non-profit Response Groups

Admission into the program is competitive and requires signed approval by an agency superior in order to be considered for the 4-day certification class.

As of the fall of 2012, a total of 214 separate agencies are actively involved in OK-First, representing 87 of the 77 Oklahoma counties. Approximately 500 public safety officials are actively involved in the program.

OK-First certification provides agencies with password-protected access to a multi-jurisdictional, multi-product decision support website as well as additional software and technology, updates, and lots of training to properly interpret various weather and radar products.

The educational methods available today are more diverse than ever before and range from more formal methods of instruction (certification programs, CEUs, COMET, FEMA, etc.) to more informal methods (short videos, YouTube, webinars, etc.). We as a community must continue to capitalize on these opportunities if we truly want to become a more Weather-Ready Nation.

Oklahoma Mesonet and Oklahoma Climatological Survey
University of Oklahoma