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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Denton and UNT Partner to Conduct Full-Scale Disaster Exercise on Friday, May 3

Denton, TX (May 2, 2019) – The City of Denton and the University of North Texas (UNT) are collaborating to conduct a full-scale disaster exercise on Friday, May 3, 2019 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at UNT Apogee Stadium and Discovery Park. The exercise – named “Operation Thunderstruck” – will simulate a large-scale disaster to test the response capabilities and emergency operations of first responders, hospitals, and other agencies.

Annual Drill to Evaluate Crisis Plan and Response

The City of Denton engages in a full-scale disaster exercise each year to evaluate current response concepts, plans, and capabilities, and test response systems for strengths and needed improvements. Departments and agencies participating in the full-scale disaster drill include: City of Denton public safety departments, UNT Risk Management, Denton County, the National Weather Service, FEMA Region 6, Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas Department of Public Safety, Atrium Medical Center, Medical City Denton, Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital of Denton, The Heart Hospital – Baylor Denton, Wise Health Surgical Hospital in Argyle, and other regional police and fire departments providing mutual aid.

“The annual disaster drill is an excellent way to test our emergency response capacity and capabilities,” said Denton Fire Chief Kenneth Hedges. “It is important to ensure that we are prepared and ready to respond to the needs of the community. We are also thankful that our community partners, like UNT and local hospitals, join us in working together to help protect the citizens of Denton.”

Drill Components

Planned over the course of several months, the exercise will simulate a severe weather and tornado event impacting both Apogee Stadium and Discovery Park. It will involve simulated storm impacts, including victims and casualties, and evaluate the aspects of the response provided by and coordination between UNT, the City of Denton, and other emergency response partners.

Due to the locations of the exercise, members of the public are likely to see a significant police and fire presence at Apogee Stadium between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Friday, May 3. This

presence will involve personnel from multiple jurisdictions and include the use of aerial equipment such as helicopters and small unmanned aircraft systems (drones). The City of Denton will be notifying the public of the disaster exercise through its social media channels and, for residents who live near the two exercise sites, the CodeRED alert system.

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