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New ice core to heat up research

By The Denver Post
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Researchers have pulled an ice core that measures 2,132 feet long from the Western Antarctic Ice Sheet Divide, the National Science Foundation announced Tuesday.

The effort eventually should result in an 11,300-foot column of ice — 2 miles long — that can be used to understand 100,000 years of Earth's climate history.

Bubbles of gas trapped in ice store climate information and are used to study ancient climates and improve computer models that predict future climate.

Data collected from the new ice core and from one collected in Greenland may help researchers understand how changes in one part of the world were affected — or were triggered — by climate changes elsewhere.

One of the project leaders is James White, a biogeochemist at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The new core will be sent by March to the U.S. Geological Survey's National Ice Core Laboratory in Lakewood.

Plan for more water stress in West

Western lawmakers need to begin incorporating climate change in policy decisions, a panel of Colorado researchers said Tuesday during the American Meteorological Society's annual meeting in New Orleans.

Even if people reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, the climate will continue to shift for decades, said Susan Avery, a climate researcher from the University of Colorado at Boulder and past president of the AMS.

That means Westerners need to plan for increasingly stressed water supplies, said Brad Udall, with the Western Water Assessment in Boulder.

And Colorado's tourism industry will likely be affected, said Roger Pulwarty of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, with a greater risk of forest fires and a change in the snowpack.

Denver Post staff writer Katy Human

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