

'Star Wars' convention descends on Denver

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OREM DAILY JOURNAL

DENVER, Colo. — In spite of cold weather and unrelenting rain, thousands of fans from all over the country descended on Denver over the weekend for the Star Wars Celebration.

The celebration was only the second event of its kind to be sponsored by Lucasfilm, Ltd. and is considered the warm-up event for the much-hyped, much-anticipated the release of *Phantom Menace*, the first episode prequel of the *Star Wars* epic, which will be released May 19.

Advance tickets to the Denver

Celebration sold out several months in advance, while day passes sold out the first day.

Many of the participants stood in line for hours to listen to speakers as well as for admission to the main event.

"The convention organizers definitely didn't anticipate the large number of people that attended. Two or three hours in line to see the convention speakers was just a bit much," said Derek Sweet, an attendee from Denver.

Despite the wet weather, few

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'Star Wars' convention a success

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spirits were dampened. Many of the attendees had some previous association with *Star Wars* fandom, either through the Internet or through local fan club events, and this seemed to make for an instant rapport among strangers.

Not everyone was a fan in their own right. One woman from Missouri explained.

"I'm here with my 11-year-old son. It's been *Star Wars* at Christmas for the last three years."

The convention, held at the now defunct Lowry Air Force Base, was divided into three main sections: the main hangar, where exhibits such as a full size X-wing fighter, items from the

Lucasfilm archives, and a video game area were set up; auditorium A, which accommodated speakers and featured Anthony Daniels, the man who played the 'droid C-3PO in the first three *Star Wars* films; and auditorium B, which housed both an area for speakers and a dealers area.

The three-day event, which concluded Sunday, made what is sure to be a lasting impression on the participants. □