## IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY - OCTOBER 2003

<u>General Summary</u>. October temperatures averaged  $52.4^{\circ}$  or  $1.5^{\circ}$  above normal while precipitation totaled 1.00 inches or 1.52 inches less than normal. This ranks as the  $54^{\text{th}}$  warmest and  $15^{\text{th}}$  driest October among 131 years of state records.

<u>Temperatures</u>. The month opened with unseasonably cold weather. A hard freeze was recorded across most of Iowa on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> when Mason City reported a low of 16°. This was the lowest temperature recorded so early in the fall in Iowa since Elkader reported a low of 15° on October 2, 1974. Temperatures climbed back above normal by the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup> with daytime highs reaching the 80's somewhere in Iowa on every day from the 4<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>. Cooler than normal weather briefly returned from the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> with Mason City reporting a low of 23° on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Above normal temperatures returned for the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 24<sup>th</sup>. Clear skies and very dry air allowed for huge swings in temperature. At Spencer, for example, a morning low of 35° on the 19<sup>th</sup> was followed by an afternoon high of 89°. Glenwood and Red Oak reported the month's highest temperatures with 90° readings on the 19<sup>th</sup>. These were Iowa's latest 90° readings since Sioux Rapids reached 90° on October 30, 1950. Temperatures averaged below normal during most of the last week of the month. Mason City reported October's lowest temperature with a 15° reading on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>.

<u>Heating Degree Day Totals</u>. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 33% less than last October and 12% less than normal. So far this heating season degree day totals are running 19% less than last season and 9% less than normal.

<u>Precipitation</u>. Most of October's precipitation came from two mid-month storm systems on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>. Nearly all of Iowa received between one-quarter and one-half inch of rain on the 11<sup>th</sup>. The second storm system brought little or no rain to far northwest Iowa but deposited one-half to three-fourths of an inch on much of the southeastern half of the state. The season's first snow flurries were reported in far northwest Iowa on the night of the 25<sup>th</sup>. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 0.17 inches at Estherville to 2.15 inches at Keokuk (still 0.89 inches below normal).

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