

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – MAY 2008

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 57.5° or 2.7° below normal while precipitation totaled 5.84 inches or 1.61 inches above normal. This ranks as the 32nd coolest and 24th wettest May among 136 years of state records.

Temperatures. Cool weather was the rule for most of May, but with relatively few extremes of temperature. Above normal temperatures were restricted to 10 days during the month with only one period recording more than two consecutive days of warmer than normal weather (5th-7th). Temperature extremes ranged from lows of 28° at Sheldon on the morning of the 3rd and at Audubon on the morning of the 4th to a high of 91° at Shenandoah on the afternoon of the 25th. Spencer Airport (31°) and Northwood (30°) reported the last freeze of the season on the morning of the 21st.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 186% greater than last May and 13% greater than normal. Season-to-date (since July 1, 2007) heating requirements are running 11% greater than one year ago and 5% greater than normal. This has been the coldest heating season since 2000-2001.

Precipitation. Wet weather was the rule through most of May. However, a very welcome dry period at mid month finally allowed spring planting to progress. A statewide average of only 0.08 inches of rain fell between the afternoon of the 11th and the evening of the 22nd. The heaviest rains of the month arrived on the 29th-30th when a statewide average of 2.04 inches of rain fell. Flooding was widespread during this event from west central to northeast Iowa where 3 to 5 inch rain totals were common. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 2.33 inches at Keokuk to 11.00 inches at Boone. The total at Boone was a new record for the month of May among 111 years of record at that location (old record 10.24 inches in 1990).

Severe Weather. The spring severe weather season had been rather quiet in Iowa until the afternoon and evening of the 25th when Iowa's first F5 tornado since 1976 struck Parkersburg, New Hartford and rural areas of Butler and Black Hawk counties. At least eight fatalities resulted from this tornado, the greatest tornado-related death toll in Iowa since the Charles City tornado of 1968. Additionally, damage from the storm was estimated at about \$100 million. An F-3 tornado a little later in the evening of the 25th resulted in three injuries in Buchanan and Delaware counties. Finally, an F2 tornado struck the town of Attica in Marion County before sunrise on May 30 resulting in 10 injuries and nearly one million dollars in damage. A total of 24 tornadoes were confirmed during May, Iowa's greatest monthly total since 28 tornadoes were reported in June 2004.

Spring Summary. Spring temperatures averaged 45.1° or 3.1° below normal while precipitation totaled 12.97 inches or 3.20 inches above normal. This ranks as the 19th coldest and 12th wettest spring among 136 years of Iowa records.

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