

## IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 2009

General Summary. February temperatures averaged 26.2° or 2.0° above normal while precipitation totaled 0.84 inches or 0.14 inches below normal. This ranks as the 43<sup>rd</sup> warmest and 56<sup>th</sup> driest February among 137 years of records.

Temperatures. Temperatures averaged 7.8° above normal for the first 13 days of the month with readings soaring into the 60's in parts of southern Iowa on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Fort Madison and Keokuk recorded the month's highest temperatures with 69° readings on the 7<sup>th</sup>. However, a brief interruption to the mild weather came on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> when temperatures averaged more than ten degrees below normal and included a low of -16° at Cresco on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>. Colder weather was much more frequent for the second one-half of the month with only four of the final 15 days of the month averaging warmer than normal. Nevertheless temperatures reached 63° at Keokuk, Keosauqua and Shenandoah on the 25<sup>th</sup>. February 2009 averaged 9.7° warmer than February 2008. This broke a string of eleven consecutive months with temperatures averaging the same or lower than the corresponding month of the previous year.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 23% less than last February and 6% less than normal. Thus far this heating season (since July 1, 2008) degree day totals are running the same as at this time last season and 2% greater than normal.

Precipitation. Iowa received a welcome break from heavy winter precipitation. The month was practically snow-free until the 13<sup>th</sup> when snow fell over the southeast one-half of the state with greatest amounts in central (7.6 inches at Des Moines) and southwest (7.3 inches at Underwood) Iowa. Over 200 traffic accidents were recorded in the Des Moines metro area where the heaviest snowfall corresponded with the Friday evening commute time. Snow fell across the northeast one-third of the state on the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> with 4.6 inches at Fayette the most reported. A strong storm system on the 26<sup>th</sup> brought thunderstorms to most of Iowa. Bloomfield reported 1.64 inches of rain with this system while up to one-half inch of sleet, with some freezing rain, was reported in Estherville and Mason City. Hail, up to one inch in diameter, covered the ground over parts of the Des Moines area and over Pottawattamie County. Finally, the month closed with snow over the southwest one-third of the state on the 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> with 5 inches reported at Randolph, Shenandoah, Sidney and Little Sioux. Monthly snowfall totals varied from only a trace at Primghar, Rockwell City and Sac City to 11.5 inches at Underwood. A statewide average of 4.1 inches of snow was recorded, or 2.2 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 36<sup>th</sup> least snowy February among 122 years of records. Precipitation totals varied from 0.16 inches at Onawa to 2.54 inches at Wapello. Precipitation was generally below normal over all but the far northwest and southeast corners of the state.

Winter Summary. Temperatures over the three mid-winter months averaged 18.9° or 2.6° below normal while precipitation totaled 3.54 inches or 0.37 inches above normal. This ranks as the 31<sup>st</sup> coldest and 54<sup>th</sup> wettest winter among 136 years of state records. Although this winter overall was colder and wetter than normal it was warmer and drier

than last winter thanks to the relatively mild February 2009 (one year ago Iowa recorded its third snowiest and 17<sup>th</sup> coldest February on record).

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