

IOWA FINAL MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY JANUARY 2002

General Summary. January temperatures averaged 28.4° or 10.4° above normal while precipitation totaled 0.42 inch or 0.44 inch less than normal. This ranks as the 8th warmest and 15th driest January among 130 years of state records.

Temperatures. The very mild weather pattern that began in late October persisted through most of January as well. Daily temperatures averaged above normal on all but four days (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 18th) of the month. Daytime highs in the sixties occurred as frequently as overnight lows below zero (six days each in some part of Iowa). The month's warmest day was on the 26th when Webster City reached 72°. The Webster City reading was the highest January temperature ever recorded at that location and was only one degree shy of the state record for the month of 73° set at Keokuk on January 24, 1950. Monthly records were also set at Ames (67°), Atlantic (67°), Denison (68°), Hampton (65°), Rockwell City (70°), Sioux City (71°), Waterloo (65°) and Winterset (67°). On the other end of the spectrum Mason City reported the month's lowest temperature with a -9° reading on the 18th. Finally, temperatures over the past three months have averaged 35.6° or 9.5° above normal. This makes the November through January period the warmest on record for Iowa (old record 34.4° Nov 1913-Jan 1914).

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 18% less than last January and 23% less than normal. Heating requirements so far this winter season are running 27% less than last season through January 31st and 20% less than normal.

Precipitation. Iowa was on a pace to set a record for driest January until a large winter storm system moved into the state on the 30th. An average of only 0.08 inch of precipitation fell across the state during the first 29 days of the month, falling in the form of 1.2 inches of snow. However, snowfall averaged 6.6 inches with the storm of the 30th-31st with a water equivalent of 0.54 inch. Snowfall from the late month storm varied from only an inch and one-half in the extreme northwest corner of the state up to 13.2 inches at Leon and 13.0 inches at Bloomfield and Fairfield. Prior to this storm the largest precipitation event of the month was a 1 to 3 inch snow on January 16th which was restricted to the northern two tiers of Iowa counties. This was the state's driest January since 1987 with precipitation totals varying from only 0.08 inch at Mapleton up to 2.09 inches at Keokuk. NOTE: A portion of the late January storm precipitation fell after the last official January weather observation at many stations; thus some of this precipitation will be included in the February report.