

## **IOWA FINAL MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY**

### **February 2002**

**General Summary.** February temperatures averaged 29.3° or 6.0° above normal while precipitation totaled 0.94 inch or 0.02 inch more than normal. This ranks as the 21<sup>st</sup> warmest and 62<sup>nd</sup> driest February among 130 years of state records.

**Temperatures.** The very mild weather pattern that began in late October continued through most of February. Cold weather briefly followed the snowstorm of late January with below normal temperatures on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. The coldest weather thus far this winter arrived on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> when subzero temperatures covered the northwestern three-fourths of the state. The month's lowest temperatures were reported at Spencer Airport and Sheldon with -16° readings on the 4<sup>th</sup>. However, mild weather prevailed through most of the month with temperatures averaging above normal on each day from the 6<sup>th</sup> through the 24<sup>th</sup>. A strong cold front moved across Iowa on the 24<sup>th</sup> and brought an end to this period of exceptionally mild weather. Temperatures soared to 70° at Rock Rapids on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and to 72° at Keosauqua on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Finally, the late month cold allowed temperatures to fall to -6° at Sibley on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Heating Degree Day Totals.** Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 25% less than last February and 15% less than normal. Thus far this heating season (since July 1) heating degree day totals are running 26% less than last season and 19% less than normal.

**Precipitation.** Most of February's precipitation arrived in only two storm systems. A total of 3 to 5 inches of snow fell across far northwest Iowa on the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> while a half inch or more of rain fell in parts of central and northeast Iowa. The second storm system provided about one-half of the month's precipitation total, nearly all in the form of rain, from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>. Finally, 1 to 2 inches of snow fell across a small part of northeast Iowa on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> with similar amounts in far eastern Iowa on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 0.18 inch at Spencer up to 2.14 inches at Oelwein. Statewide snowfall averaged only 4.2 inches or 2.5 inches less than normal. February snowfall totals ranged from only a trace at Lamoni, Mount Ayr and Rathbun Dam to 12.0 inches at Little Sioux.

**Winter Summary.** The three winter months of December, January and February averaged 29.4° or 8.0° above normal. This ranks as the fourth warmest winter among 130 years of state records and is the warmest winter in 71 years. Precipitation over this three month period averaged 2.20 inches or 0.85 inch less than normal. This ranks as the 17<sup>th</sup> driest winter on record and is the driest Iowa winter in 12 years. Statewide average snowfall through the end of February has averaged only 10.5 inches or 13.3 inches less than normal. Only in the winter of 1965-1966 was less snow (7.6 inches) recorded through the end of February.