

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY

August 2002

General Summary. August temperatures averaged 71.2° or 0.5° below normal while precipitation totaled 5.86 inches or 1.83 inches greater than normal. This ranks as the 50th coolest and 14th wettest August among 130 years of state records.

Temperatures. The hot weather pattern of June and July finally abated in early August but not before the temperature reached 103° at Glenwood on the 4th. Below normal temperatures prevailed on all but two days from the 6th through the 20th. The coolest day came on the 18th when Sheldon reported a morning low of 41°. Heat returned for the later part of the month as above normal temperatures prevailed every day from the 21st to the 31st. However, the late month heat was characterized by temperatures just a few degrees above normal with only a few locations reaching 90°.

Cooling Degree Day Totals. Home air conditioning requirements, as estimated by cooling degree day totals, averaged 18% less than last August and 10% less than normal. Thus far this season cooling degree day totals are running 7% greater than last year at this time and 11% more than normal.

Precipitation. The dry early and mid summer weather pattern came to an end over most of Iowa during August. Northwest Iowa received widespread heavy rainfall on both August 3rd and 4th while the very parched southwest corner of the state finally received widespread rain on the 12th. The wetter and cooler weather pattern brought very welcome relief from the drought across western Iowa. However, the rain came too late to revive the severely heat and moisture-stressed crops in some areas of the state. Overall this was Iowa's wettest month since May 2001. Torrential rain fell across much of Delaware and Dubuque counties of the night of the 21st with the Dubuque Airport recording 8.95 inches of rain. These heavy rains were centered upon the same region that saw major flooding in early June. However, the areal extent of the heavy rain was much smaller in August and came in the midst of a relatively dry period (Dubuque saw only 0.75 inch of rain during the remainder of August). While most of Iowa saw substantial rainfall during August much of south central and southeast Iowa was drier than normal for the second consecutive month. Monthly rainfall totals varied from 1.68 inches at Ottumwa up to 11.88 inches at Carroll. The Carroll rain total was an August record for that location (old record 10.04 in 1987). August rainfall records were also broken at Pocahontas (11.51 inches, old record 9.43 in 1962) and Sac City (11.26 inches, old record 10.66 in 1951).

Summer Summary. Temperatures during the three summer months of June, July and August averaged 73.5° or 1.4° above normal while precipitation totaled 13.69 inches or 1.10 inches more than normal. This ranks as the 26th warmest and 39th wettest summer among 130 years of state records. This was the warmest summer since 1995 and wettest since 1999.