

## IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – MARCH 2003

General Summary. March temperatures averaged 34.6° or 1.4° below normal while precipitation averaged 1.24 inches or 0.97 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 61<sup>st</sup> warmest (yes that is right – it was warmer than the median but cooler than the mean) and 33<sup>rd</sup> driest March among 131 years of state records.

Temperatures. March began very cold with below normal temperatures experienced over the first 11 days of the month. Spencer reported the lowest Iowa temperature of the winter with a -21° reading on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup>. However, daily temperatures averaged above normal on every day from the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup>, nearly canceling the effect of the early month cold. Temperatures soared to 81° on the 15<sup>th</sup> at Clarinda, Corning and Glenwood and again at Glenwood on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Below normal temperatures briefly returned for the 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> with a 15° reading at Atlantic on the morning of the 30<sup>th</sup>. Finally, unseasonable heat returned quickly on the 31<sup>st</sup> with more 81° temperatures at Glenwood, Onawa and Sioux City.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by cooling degree day totals, averaged 4% greater than normal and 12% less than last March. Heating requirements for the entire 2002-2003 season (since July 1, 2002) are running exactly the same as normal but have been 18% greater than last season.

Precipitation. Snow fell statewide on March 4 with amounts exceeding one foot in a narrow band extending from southeast Franklin County to northern Clayton County. Snowfall amounts of 5 to 7 inches were also common across much of the southeastern one-third of Iowa with this storm. Rain fell statewide on the 20<sup>th</sup> with amounts averaging around one-third of an inch. Finally, the largest precipitation event of the month came on the 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> with a statewide average of about one-half inch. Rainfall exceeded an inch at a few northwest Iowa locations with this last storm while less than a tenth of an inch was reported at some southeast Iowa sites. For the month as a whole precipitation totals across the state varied from only 0.38 inches at Williamsburg up to 2.65 inches at Swea City. March snowfall totals ranged from 0.5 inch at Ida Grove to 12.3 inches at Allison. Statewide average snowfall was 5.2 inches or 0.4 inches greater than normal. This ranks as the 61<sup>st</sup> least snowy March among 116 years of records.

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