

## IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 2004

General Summary. February temperatures averaged 22.3° or 1.9° below normal while precipitation totaled 1.21 inches or 0.23 inches above normal. This ranks as the 62<sup>nd</sup> coldest and 44<sup>th</sup> wettest February among 132 years of state records.

Temperatures. February began with colder than normal weather prevailing on 15 of the first 17 days of the month. The month's lowest temperatures were -17° readings reported at Spencer, Sheldon and Sanborn on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and again at Atlantic, Guthrie Center and Osceola on the 8<sup>th</sup>. The month's lowest wind chill reading was -33° at Spencer on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The last 12 days of the month were all warmer than normal with no subzero temperatures recorded after the 17<sup>th</sup>. Burlington reported the warmest temperature with a 65° reading on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 8% greater than normal and 2% less than last February. Heating degree day totals so far this winter season (since July 1, 2003) are running 3% less than normal and 2% less than last season at this time.

Precipitation. Large snow storms struck the state on the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. Both storms dropped an average of 6 inches of snow statewide. This, combined with another large storm on January 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, produced a statewide average of 18.8 inches of snow in just 13 days. The first February storm dropped 8 to 10 inches of snow across a wide area from southwest into north central Iowa, as well as a coating of freezing rain on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> in southeast Iowa. The second February storm dumped the greatest amount of snow in south central Iowa where Osceola recorded 10.2 inches. Snow cover peaked at an average depth of 14.9 inches on February 6. At that time snow depth varied from 6 inches at Tipton up to 28 inches at Onawa. A greater snowpack had not been recorded in Iowa since the winter of 2000-2001 when the statewide average snow depth peaked at 16.3 inches on December 31, 2000. However, an average of only 0.4 inches of snow fell after the 6<sup>th</sup>. This brought the monthly snow total to 12.2 inches or nearly double the February normal of 6.3 inches. This was the ninth snowiest February among 117 years of record and snowiest of any month since December 2000. Almost all of the snow cover had melted by month's end with only some patchy snow cover remaining in northern Iowa. Monthly snowfall totals varied from 6.0 inches at Keokuk to 19.5 inches at Perry. Finally, February precipitation totals varied from 0.60 inches at Castana to 2.15 inches at Boone.

Winter Summary. The statewide average temperature for the 3 winter months of December, January and February was 22.7° or 1.2° above normal while precipitation totaled 3.59 inches or 0.42 inches greater than normal. This ranks as the 62<sup>nd</sup> warmest and 49<sup>th</sup> wettest winter among 131 years of state records.

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