

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 2006

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 24.5° or 0.3° above normal while precipitation totaled 0.35 inches or 0.63 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 56th warmest and 12th driest February among 134 years of state records. This was Iowa's driest month since December 2002 and driest February since 1996.

Temperatures. The very mild weather pattern that began in late December continued into the first three days of February with temperatures reaching 62° at Indianola on the 2nd. The statewide average daily temperature finally fell below normal on February 4, breaking a string of 44 consecutive warmer than normal days. Temperatures fell below zero at a few central Iowa locations on the morning of February 9 with a -8° reading at Webster City. Mild weather briefly returned at mid-month with 67° highs recorded on Valentine's Day at Little Sioux and Glenwood. However, the coldest weather of the winter came on the 17th and 18th. Estherville reported a wind chill of -38° on the morning of the 17th (-59° using the old wind chill formula in use prior to 2001). Elkader reported an actual temperature of -26° on the morning of the 18th. This was Iowa's lowest temperature recorded since Christmas Day 2000. Finally, very mild weather returned late in the month with Glenwood reaching 69° on the 27th.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 1% less than normal but 19% greater than last February. Heating requirements thus far this heating season (since July 1, 2005) are running 12% less than normal and 1% less than last season.

Precipitation. Monthly precipitation totals were below normal at all but 5 of 138 measurement sites. Totals varied from only a trace (less than 0.01 inch) at Bedford to 0.86 inches near Lansing. Record low February totals were established or tied at the following locations:

Location	Feb. 2006	Old Feb. Record	Years of Record
Bedford	Trace	0.11 1979	98
Beaconsfield	0.01	0.03 1970	51
Sidney	0.02	0.04 1977	64
Mount Ayr	0.05	0.05 1917	110
Red Oak	0.05	0.05 1904 & 1970	91

The majority of the month's precipitation came from one storm event on the 15th-16th. This storm brought two or more inches of snow to about the northern two-thirds of Iowa with greatest amounts reported at Britt (8.0 inches) and Lansing (7.5 inches). Monthly snowfall totals varied from only a trace at 10 southern Iowa locations to 11.5 inches at Britt. The statewide average snowfall of 3.7 inches was 2.6 inches less than normal and ranks 29th lowest among 119 years of state records.

Winter Summary. The three winter months of December, January and February averaged 25.4° or 3.9° above normal while precipitation totaled 2.59 inches or 0.58 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 24th warmest and 39th driest winter among 133 years of records.

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