

## IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – JANUARY 2010

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 13.2° or 4.6° below normal while precipitation totaled 1.33 inches or 0.38 inches above normal. This ranks as the 28<sup>th</sup> coldest and 37<sup>th</sup> wettest January among 138 years of records.

Temperatures. The new year began with exceptionally cold weather. Temperatures averaged 16.0 degrees below normal over the first 12 days of the month. At Spencer Airport the temperature fell to -37° on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> while wind chill readings dropped to -53° at Estherville. The Spencer temperature extreme was exceeded just a year ago when Coggon reported -40° on January 16. However, the Estherville wind chill reading was the lowest recorded in Iowa since February 1, 1996. After the very cold start to the month, the statewide average temperature was above normal every day from the 13<sup>th</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>, averaging 9.7° above normal for this 13 day period. Highest temperatures were 45° readings recorded at Ankeny, Donnellson, Keokuk, Keosauqua and Leon on the 13<sup>th</sup>, Keokuk and Keosauqua on the 14<sup>th</sup> and again at Burlington, Shenandoah and Sidney on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. A lower statewide calendar month maximum temperature has been recorded only twice in the past 138 years (40° maximum in both January 1979 and December 1983). Colder weather returned with temperatures averaging below normal on each of the last six days of the month with Spencer and Sheldon recording lows of -17° on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 10% more than normal and the same as last January. Degree day totals thus far this heating season are running 3% more than normal and 1% less than last season at this time.

Precipitation. January brought only near normal snowfall totals, but much of it came from only two strong storms. The first event on the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> brought a statewide average of 5.3 inches of snow and was accompanied by wind gusts of 35 to 45 mph. Greatest snow fell from northwest, through central, into east central Iowa where up to 8 inches accumulated, while the highest winds were over the northwest. The second storm brought a statewide average of only 2.1 inches of snow. However, the storm was accompanied by widespread wind gusts over 40 mph with Sioux City reporting winds to 55 mph. Meanwhile another storm brought freezing rain to nearly all of Iowa on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Rain amounts exceeded an inch over parts of far southeastern Iowa but the worst icing conditions were over west central and central parts of the state where lower temperatures allowed an icy glaze of about one-half inch thick. The ice, along with wind gusts over 35 mph, brought down many tree limbs and power lines. Another storm on the 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> brought an average of nearly one-half inch of rain to the state with greatest amounts exceeding an inch over some far eastern Iowa locations. Fortunately temperatures were mostly above freezing with this storm. However, these two rain events created a very icy crust on the considerable snowcover that remained over the northwestern two-thirds of Iowa. This icy surface may have enhanced the blowing snow conditions of the storm that came on the 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>. This again resulted in blizzard conditions over most of northern and central Iowa. There was a statewide average of 8.0

inches of snowfall during January. This total is 0.2 inches less than normal, yet ranks 45<sup>th</sup> greatest January total among 123 years of records. Thanks to the near-record December 2009 snowfall, the season-to-date statewide average snowfall amount stands at 32.7 inches or 13.3 inches above normal for the fourth highest total of record at this point in the season.

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