

IOWA WEATHER SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 2012

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 28.8° or 4.8° above normal while precipitation totaled 1.74 inches or 0.69 inch above normal. This ranks as the 24th warmest and 17th wettest February among 140 years of records.

Temperatures. As has been the case all winter, above normal temperatures were the rule for most of February. Temperatures averaged below normal on only six days during the month (10th-12th, 24th-25th and 27th). The warmest weather came at the beginning and end of the month with Creston reaching 62° on the 1st and Keokuk and Keosauqua also climbing to 62° on the 26th. Subzero temperatures were recorded on only four dates (8th, 11th, 12th and 25th) with Atlantic the cold spot at -13° on the morning of the 12th.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 13% less than last February and 9% less than normal. Degree day totals so far this heating season (since July 1, 2011) are running 14% less than one year ago and 12% less than normal. This has been the mildest heating season-to-date in ten years.

Precipitation. A series of five storm systems brought most of the past month's precipitation. The first event on the 3rd-4th affected only the southern one-half of Iowa with rain changing to snow. Greatest snow amounts fell over west central and southwest Iowa where five to nine inches fell. The other storms were all focused more upon northern Iowa and brought welcome relief from severe drought conditions in the northwest. The storm of the 13th-14th brought snow statewide with greatest amounts over the northwest where 3 to 5 inch totals were common. The next event on the 20th-21st brought mostly rain with amounts to nearly an inch at a few northwest Iowa locations. Another storm system on the 23rd-24th began as rain but turned to snow statewide with a few northwest and northeast locations seeing more than six inches of snow. Finally, the largest event of February came on the 28th-29th with rain falling statewide. Some freezing rain accumulated over the north on the 28th with an inch or two of wind blown snow over the far north on the 29th. Rain totals between one and two inches were reported across the northwest. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 0.55 inch at Toledo to 3.21 inches at Bedford. This was the wettest February since 1962 over the northwest climate district.

Severe Weather. The primary severe weather event of the month was the late winter storm of the 28th-29th. This storm brought the first widespread thunderstorms of the new year to Iowa on the night of the 28th and was followed by widespread high winds on the 29th. Carroll Airport reported the highest official wind speed at 58 mph on the morning of the 29th with gusts of 40 to 50 mph common across the state.

Winter Summary. Temperatures for the three winter months of December, January and February averaged 27.9° or 5.8° above normal while precipitation totaled 4.52 inches or 1.18 inches above normal. This ranks as the 11th warmest and 19th wettest winter among 139 years of records. The last warmer winter came in 2001-2002. Snowfall for these three months averaged 16.5 inches or 6.4 inches below normal. This ranks as the 40th lowest total among 125 years of records. This

winter has been a huge contrast to recent ones in Iowa as it was preceded by five consecutive snowier than normal winters and four consecutive colder than usual ones.

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