

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – JANUARY 2013

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 21.7° or 2.3° above normal while precipitation totaled 1.00 inches or 0.08 inches above normal. This ranks as the 44th warmest and 62nd wettest January among 141 years of records.

Temperatures. Temperatures were variable throughout the month with no extended periods of mild or unusually cold weather. The coldest weather came on the first and last days of the month, as well as on the 21st. Elkader reported the lowest official temperature of the month with a -15° reading on New Year's morning. The lowest wind chills were recorded on the morning of the 21st with a -34° reading at Mason City. Finally, the daytime maximum temperature climbed to only -2° at Northwood on the 31st. Mason City's wind chill on the 21st and Northwood's subzero high on the 31st were the lowest such readings in Iowa since February 8, 2011. On the other extreme, there were a few daily record high maximum temperatures set or tied over portions of southern and eastern Iowa on the 11th, 19th, 28th and 29th. Creston and Mount Ayr recorded the month's highest temperatures with 64° readings in the pre-dawn hours of the 29th.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 11% greater than last January but 6% less than normal. Degree day totals so far this heating season (since July 1, 2012) are running 9% more than one year ago and 5% less than normal.

Precipitation. The new year got off to a very dry start with a near-record low pace of precipitation into the 27th. There was one statewide rain event on the 10th-11th which brought up to seven tenths of an inch to Fort Madison and Keokuk. However a far more active weather pattern prevailed the last few days of January with two larger statewide rain events on the 27th and 28th-29th. Widespread freezing rain occurred on the 27th with glazing of one-quarter inch or more common over the northeast one-third of Iowa. Thunderstorms rumbled over most of the southeast two-thirds of Iowa the night of the 28th with rain amounts of over an inch common over eastern Iowa. There were even a few reports of large hail from Benton and Delaware counties on the evening of the 28th. A statewide average of only 0.7 inches of snow fell across the state through the first four weeks of January. However, heavy snow fell from south central through northeast Iowa on the night of the 29th into the 30th. Storm totals of seven to eight inches were common from Indianola to Guttenberg. Winds gusting from 35 to 45 mph accompanied the snow on the 30th resulting in dangerous travel conditions and forcing the closing of schools across much of the southeast two-thirds of the state. Despite the late-month storm the statewide average snowfall was only 3.7 inches or 4.0 inches below normal. This was the lowest January snow total since 2006 and ranks 19th lowest for the month among 126 years of records. January snow totals varied from only a trace at Swea City to ten inches at Guttenberg. Monthly precipitation totals were above normal across eastern Iowa and well below normal over the northwest. Totals varied from 0.14 inches at Castana to 2.75 inches at Le Claire.

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