

National Storm Summary October 2006

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- *From:* "james.munley@xxxxxxxxxxxx" <james.munley@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
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NATIONAL STORM SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2006

1st–7th...Showers and thunderstorms moved through the Southwest and Great Basin on Friday, prompting flood warnings and severe thunderstorm watches in Utah, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. Some rivers experienced flash flooding, while others were expected to rise into the evening. Meanwhile, light to heavy rain fell in the Mid-Atlantic and southern New England throughout the day, sparking flash flood watches in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey.

Heavy Rain Forces Evacuations in Va.

A storm that dropped as much as 9 inches of rain forced the evacuation Saturday of about 100 people in a six-block section of the capital, caused scattered flooding in the southeastern part of the state and likely contributed to the death of two fishermen. Ferry service across the James River was temporarily suspended because of high waters; one ferry returned to service Saturday afternoon. In southeast Virginia's Isle of Wight, officials evacuated about three dozen people and reported widespread flooding after at least 8 inches of rain since Friday. The National Weather Service said rainfall since Friday ranged from 4 to 9 inches as a storm stalled over the state and a band of rain drenched central Virginia to Hampton Roads. Rain was forecast to taper off later Saturday. The latest evacuation involved approximately 100 residents, said Britt Drewes, a spokeswoman for the Department of Public Works. An emergency shelter was opened.

8th–14th...The nation's first major arctic outbreak of the season continued Wednesday as cold air sank into part of the nation's midsection. Strong winds produced high waves on Lake Superior and prompted flood statements in northern Wisconsin and Michigan. Rain and thunderstorms moved through the Upper Mississippi Valley, Ohio Valley and western New England, and there were even some severe thunderstorms in the Tennessee Valley.

A rare early October snowstorm left parts of the Great Lakes and Midwest blanketed with 2 feet of snow Friday morning, prompting widespread blackouts, closing schools and stranding travelers. The wet, heavy snow downed tree limbs and toppled power lines, leaving 350,000

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homes and businesses without electricity in western New York, officials said. Workers on snowmobiles delivered food and water to motorists stuck along the New York Thruway, which was shut down for more than 100 miles by the storm. Buffalo's normally busy downtown streets were deserted. "All the trees are down. No power," said resident Ron Pellnat, surveying the damage. "It's Friday the 13th, how about that?" The city's main airport was closed Friday morning as runways were cleared after at least 14 inches of snow fell, said Tom Paone, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. On Thursday, 8.3 inches of heavy snow set the record for the "snowiest" October day in Buffalo in the weather service's 137-year history, said meteorologist Tom Niziol. The previous record of 6 inches was set Oct. 31, 1917. "This is an extremely rare event for this early in the season," Niziol said. Detroit and Chicago also set records, for the earliest measured snow. On Thursday, Detroit broke the mark set on Oct. 13, 1909. Chicago beat a mark twice set on Oct. 18, in 1972 and 1989. Detroit's weather, among other factors, prompted Major League Baseball to move up the start time of Game 3 of the AL championship from 8:19 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday. The New York State Thruway was closed for 105 miles from Rochester to Dunkirk, southwest of Buffalo because of the storm. Highway spokeswoman Sarah Kampf said she did not know when the road would be cleared or how many motorists were stranded there.

15th–21st...Torrential rains and a tornado swept through Southeast Texas, killing three people trapped in the rising floodwater, destroying homes and shutting down numerous schools Monday. Two women were found dead in a sport utility vehicle in floodwaters at least 8 feet deep in Houston. Another body was discovered in submerged vehicle in Fort Bend County, on the southwest side of Houston. As much as 10 inches of rain fell in the Houston–Galveston area overnight. More rain was expected across Texas on Monday, although floodwaters were receding in parts of the Houston area by late morning. Parts of Interstates 10 and 45 were shut down around Houston, and the University of Houston and several other schools were closed. Twenty bayous overflowed their banks, but county officials said no evacuations were ordered. Some delays were reported at both of Houston's major airports. A tornado struck east of Houston near the Jefferson County town of China, not far from the Louisiana line, said emergency management spokeswoman Darlene Koch. The National Weather Service confirmed the tornado, and Koch said five mobile homes and two houses were destroyed. No injuries were reported. In the Texas Coastal Bend, as many as 20 homes were damaged as a suspected tornado roared through the small Lavaca Bay community of Magnolia Beach before daybreak Monday, Calhoun County Sheriff B.B. Browning said. The only injury reported in the small community 75 miles northeast of Corpus Christi was a cut thumb a man suffered from flying glass, he said. Parts of North and West Texas received as much as 4 inches of rain overnight, prompting flash flood warnings. National Weather Service meteorologist Stacie Hanes said the rain in North Texas was expected to dissipate by evening.

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In Louisiana, three people were hurt early Monday when strong winds blew through the fishing community of Leesville, 90 miles south of New Orleans, authorities said.

Moderate to heavy rain fell through much of the Northeast on Friday, prompting flood watches and warnings in many areas of northern New England. Strong winds combined with saturated soil created situations where trees could fall over easily. Snow showers were noted in parts of western New England.

Colorado Hit With Heavy Snow

22nd–28th...The biggest October snowstorm to hit Colorado in several years dumped up to 20 inches Thursday, grounding flights, closing highways, knocking out electricity and jump-starting the ski season. At one point, snow was falling at a rate of about 3 inches an hour in Denver. A 125-mile corridor from Colorado Springs to the New Mexico line was under a blizzard warning. The storm began late Wednesday and turned highways wet and slushy in cities from Pueblo to Colorado Springs and Denver to Fort Collins. Idaho Springs, about 25 miles west of Denver, reported nearly 20 1/2 inches. Some Denver suburbs received up to 10 inches. Denver International Airport, which got 5 inches, canceled more than 100 flights. About 25,000 Denver-area customers lost electricity after trees and branches snapped under the weight of the wet snow and brought power lines down.

Large October snowstorms are common in Colorado, but this was the strongest in several years, National Weather Service spokesman Carl Burroughs said. On Colorado's wide-open Eastern Plains, residents and emergency managers braced for blowing snow and wind up to 45 mph. Red Cross officials sent supplies to Byers, about 30 miles east of Denver, in case the weather stranded travelers along I-70.

*Source: Washington Post, AP, New York Times