

National Storm Summary March 2007

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NATIONAL STORM SUMMARY

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1st-3rd...A tornado struck southern Missouri, killing a 7-year-old girl and damaging homes and businesses Thursday, and another apparent twister struck an Alabama high school, authorities said. Students were inside Enterprise High School at the time, and there were early reports of injuries, state and weather officials said. Police were trying to determine if any students were trapped, state Rep. Terry Spicer said. The school "appears to have been right in the path," said Paul Duval, meteorologist with National Weather Service in Tallahassee, FL, which monitors southeast Alabama. In Missouri, Howell County Sheriff Robbie Crites identified the young victim as Elizabeth Croney. Her mother, father and two brothers were injured when a tornado hit their mobile home in a rural wooded area near West Plains, Crites said. In Caulfield, Rick Jarvis heard the storm ripping through his gas station around dawn. His home next door suffered just minor damage, but the twister shredded the business, ripping down its roof and back wall. At least four mobile homes, two houses and two service stations in Caulfield were damaged when the twisters hit around 6:30 a.m., and a tornado also touched down near an elementary school in Caulfield. Two more tornadoes were also reported in the area, said Mike Wade, a dispatcher at the Howell County Sheriff's Office. The tornadoes were part of a larger line of thunderstorm and snowstorms that stretched from Minnesota to Louisiana. In Nebraska, strong wind and heavy snow caused whiteout conditions in eastern Nebraska that forced the shutdown of 75 miles of Interstate 80. Tornado watches issued Thursday morning across Alabama led several school systems to close or dismiss students early. It wasn't immediately clear whether Enterprise was one of them. Spicer said local officials reported there was significant damage to the school, with the gym's roof heavily damaged. In Kansas' Linn County, along the Missouri state line, a tornado Wednesday night destroyed a power substation, and roofs and siding were torn from buildings, Linn County Emergency Management Director David Yates said. He said some minor injuries were reported. The storm also ripped out poles and electric lines, but power was expected to be restored by the

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end of the day, said Paul Norris, operations manager for Heartland Rural Electric Cooperative.

Heavy, wet snow and blizzard conditions hit the Plains and Midwest on Thursday, shutting down hundreds of miles of interstate highways. Schools closed in several states, and hundreds of flights were canceled. Two people were killed when their car overturned on a slick road in North Dakota, and snowplows were pulled off the roads in the western Minnesota because of strong wind and heavy snow. The storm moved into Iowa with rain and sleet but changed to snow around dawn. The western part of the state was hit with a blizzard that dropped visibility to a quarter-mile or less for at least three hours. By midday, as much as a foot of snow covered the town of Atlantic. A blizzard also hit eastern Nebraska, with a foot of snow in the Omaha area and up to 15 inches of snow expected in some areas before it dies off Friday. In North Dakota, a vehicle went out of control on the slick roads Wednesday, hit a ditch and rolled over, killing a couple on their way home from Texas. In suburban Milwaukee, part of a supermarket roof collapsed after a morning snowfall. Joe Foltz, who works at the Pick n' Save supermarket, said he heard a crackling shortly before the collapse.

"We thought maybe milk crates crashed on the floor," Foltz said.

"About 10

minutes later, it started going down. ... So I rushed everybody out of the

emergency exit door and, thank God, we got everybody out." In Superior, WI, Angela Jones decided to stay home with her two children after their day care center closed and a blizzard warning was posted.

11th–17th...The eastern third of the nation, a storm system produced scattered showers and thunderstorm across Florida, the eastern Tennessee Valley, and the Middle Atlantic states. This activity produced occasional lightning strikes, wind gust up to 40 mph, and localized heavy rainfall amounts. Farther north, a cold front produced scattered snow showers across the eastern Ohio Valley and the Northeast. Snowfall amounts of one to two inches were reported across the area, with localized higher totals in eastern New York and Connecticut.

18th–24th...In the East, showers and thunderstorms impacted most of the Ohio Valley, the Middle Atlantic, and portions of the southern Great Lakes region. A few of these storms produced periods of heavy rainfall with Muncie, IN 1.82, Columbus, OH 1.82, Dayton, OH 1.67, Peoria, IL 1.32, Newark, OH 1.26, Eagle Creek, IN 1.22. Across the central United States, scattered afternoon and evening thunderstorms impacted portions of the southern and central Plains, as well as the middle Mississippi Valley. Davenport, Iowa received 1.10 inches of rainfall from this activity, while Springfield, Missouri reported 0.92 inches of rainfall with Claremore, OK 0.96, Bartlesville, OK 0.80, Tulsa, OK 0.76. Isolated strong to severe storms impacted portions of western Texas as well, with nickel sized hail reported near Channing, Texas and Cactus, Texas. In the West, thunderstorm activity over western

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Texas spread westward to impact portions of the southern Rockies. Hail of up to 2 inches in diameter was observed near Queen, New Mexico, with hail of an inch in diameter observed for Hope, New Mexico and Whites City, New Mexico. Scattered rain showers impacted the central Rockies and the Desert Southwest in association with this activity as well, but no severe weather was observed.

25th–31st...A major snowstorm hit the central Rockies on Wednesday, causing a pair of interstate pileups in northern Wyoming, including one involving a school bus.

The bus was carrying 36 students from Tongue River High School to a competition in Cheyenne in the state's southeast when it was involved in a collision with two minivans on Interstate 90, school officials said. The wintry weather closed a 100-mile stretch of I-90 and 45 miles of I-25. Thirteen other state roads were closed. Winter storm warnings were posted for most of Wyoming, southeastern Montana, central Utah and the Colorado mountains. Blizzard warnings were posted for parts of northern Wyoming and southeastern Montana.

A quick wintry blast brought fierce winds and cold temperatures to normally mild Southern California, but did little to quench the parched region. Tuesday's storm startled residents, who watched as clear morning skies quickly darkened and gusting winds ripped roofs off several buildings, capsized boats and downed power lines and trees. "I've never seen weather like this," said Larry Prantner, manager of Cavi at the Big Oaks Lodge restaurant in the Santa Clarita community of Saugus. "It's March and I'm wearing a coat and starting a fire at the fireplace." The storm was created by moisture and cool air sweeping through warmer, dry air, meteorologists at the National Weather Service said. Warmer temperatures were expected through the rest of the week. While the weather system sprinkled snow and hail across mountain and high desert communities, it wasn't nearly enough to make a dent in the huge shortfall of rain so far this year. "In most places, we got zero or trace amounts of rain," Bonnie Bartling, a National Weather Service specialist, told the Los Angeles Times. "Even in the mountains, we didn't get a whole lot of rain. This was mostly a wind system."

Los Angeles is facing its driest year on record. Only 2.47 inches of rain have fallen in downtown Los Angeles since July 1. In a normal year, more than 13 inches of rain would have fallen by now. On Tuesday, winds tore off the roof of Orange County Fire Authority's aviation building in Fullerton and harbor patrol officers made numerous rescues involving capsized craft in Newport Bay and offshore. A large section of roof laminate and asphalt tile landed on four cars and caused minor damages, but no injuries, said Orange County fire Capt. Stephen J. Miller. He said fire crews also responded to numerous reports of downed trees and power lines.

Across the central portion of the nation on Friday, showers and thunderstorms developed over much of the area. Severe thunderstorms brought heavy rainfall, baseball size hail, tornadoes, and gusty winds to the southern Plains. Rainfall in excess of 6 inches were observed in southern Oklahoma, and numerous locations over the region reported

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flash flooding. More scattered storms and rain showers developed over the Midwest and northern Plains. In the West, heavy rain showers and mountain snowfall developed behind a low pressure system in New Mexico. Snowfall amounts were fairly light. Another area of snow developed in the northern Rockies throughout the day. Skies were otherwise partly cloudy with dry conditions over the Pacific Northwest, California, Desert Southwest, and Great Basin.

Another wave of storms swept through Texas and Oklahoma Friday, spawning at least three tornadoes in central Texas, dumping rain into swollen creeks and rivers and forcing an evacuation at an assisted living center. The storms come just days after dozens of tornadoes swept from the Rockies to the Plains, killing at least four people in three states. As the slow-moving thunderstorms moved into Oklahoma, more than three inches of rain fell. Authorities issued flash flood warnings in 10 counties in the southern and central parts of the state. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol sent its dive team to an accident site where a car plunged into the Illinois River, and there were numerous other wrecks, Capt. Chris West said. No deaths were reported. The most significant problem was proving to be flash flooding, National Weather Service meteorologist Forrest Mitchell in Norman, OK. Heavy rain and flooding forced the evacuation of an assisted living complex in Corsicana, Texas, where 7 inches of rain fell, authorities said. About 60 elderly residents were taken to a church on higher ground for safety, said Eric Meyers, Navarro County Emergency Management coordinator. The community is 52 miles southeast of Dallas. Elsewhere in Texas, heavy rains washed out five bridges and prompted authorities to perform a swift water rescue and two vehicle rescues, state authorities said. The same storm system dumped mountains of snow on Wyoming, causing highway pileups and closing large portions of three interstates. Roads there were still largely inaccessible Friday. Up to 70 inches of snow fell in the Wind River Mountains area since Wednesday.