

# December 2007 National Storm Summary

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## NATIONAL STORM SUMMARY

### DECEMBER 2007

1st-8th...In the East, a powerful frontal boundary pushing across the central Plains and Midwest, and into the middle Mississippi Valley and eastern Ohio River Valley, brought a wintry mix of precipitation to Illinois and Indiana by the early afternoon hours. Reports of light snow mixing with sleet and freezing rain was a common occurrence from the central Plains and eastward into western Ohio. Ice accumulations east of the Mississippi River remained under a tenth of an inch, with snow and sleet accumulations near three-quarters of an inch. In the central part of the nation, a powerful winter storm plowed through the northern and central Plains and into the Midwest. A quarter-inch to nearly a half-inch of sleet and freezing rain fell from northwestern Nebraska, into Iowa, and Illinois since early this morning. Heavy snow coupled with strong winds created near blizzard-like conditions north of this area of freezing rain. Snow accumulations ranged from 1 to 3 inches over North Dakota and northern Minnesota, to over 6 inches across northern Iowa, eastern South Dakota, and southern Minnesota, with sustained winds of 20 to 30 mph. In the western third of the country, moderate to heavy rain showers slowly pushed across the Desert Southwest, creating flooding problems in areas which have been recently burned by wildfires. Rainfall totals ranged from three-quarters of an inch at Iron Springs, Arizona, to over four inches in nearby Crown King, Arizona. To the north, heavy snow and blizzard conditions continued across the central Rockies, where total day-time snowfall accumulations are expected to exceed two feet at elevations above 10000 feet by late this evening. Overcast skies and light snow showers were reported across the northern Rockies and northern Great Basin, where snowfall totals have generally remained under two inches. Further west, a nearly stationary upper-level trough brought additional snow showers to the Cascade Mountains along the Pacific Northwest, with snowfall accumulations ranging from 1 inch to nearly 8 inches at the highest elevations.

In the East on Monday, a low pressure system located offshore produced rain and snow showers over the Northeast and Great Lakes. Snowfall was heavy in New England and Michigan. Some of the heavier snowfall

## December 2007 National Storm Summary

reported with Stannard, VT 11.8; Bear Lake, MI 10.0; Center Harbor, NH 8.4; Hope, ME 8.0; Pelkie, MI 8.0;

Bellows Falls, VT 8.0. In the West, a strong Pacific Storm system brought rain, snow and wind to the Pacific Northwest and northern Rockies. Rainfall was very heavy, with many areas in Washington reporting several inches in 12 hours. In Skokomish, Washington, 4.50 inches of rain fell in 9 hours. Strong gusty winds were also recorded over the area. Several locations reported winds in excess of 70 mph, however 80 and even 90 mph were measured in Montana and Washington, respectively.

In the West on Friday, a powerful storm system continued to generate widespread precipitation across much of the region. Moderate to heavy rain showers with embedded thunderstorms developed along portions of the Desert Southwest this afternoon, with rainfall amounts exceeding one-inch in some areas. Other rain showers impacted the valley floors in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Great Basin. Meanwhile, moderate to heavy snow showers were observed at the higher elevations of the Cascades, Sierra Nevadas and Great Basin, as well as the central Rockies. Six inches of snow was reported near Union, Oregon, while snowfall accumulations across Colorado have ranged from two inches 36 inches at Crested Butte, Colorado over the past 24 hours. Further north, skies began to clear early this evening across the far northern Rockies of Montana as high pressure settled into the area.

9th–15th...wintry storm caked the center of the nation with a thick layer of ice Monday, blacking out more than 600,000 homes and businesses, and more icy weather was on the way. At least 15 deaths in Oklahoma and Missouri were blamed on the conditions, with 13 of them killed on slick highways. A state of emergency was declared for all of Oklahoma, where the sound of branches snapping under the weight of the ice echoed through Oklahoma City. The National Weather Service posted ice and winter storm warnings Tuesday for parts of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Illinois. Missouri declared an emergency on Sunday and put the National Guard on alert. Oklahoma utilities said a half-million customers were blacked out as power lines snapped under the weight of ice and falling tree branches, the biggest power outage in state history, and utilities in Missouri said more than 100,000 homes and business had no power there.

"If you do the math, probably one out of three Oklahomans has no electricity at this point," said Gil Broyles, a spokesman for Oklahoma Gas & Electric, the state's largest utility. Roughly 11,000 customers were blacked out in southern Illinois and more than 5,000 had no electric heat or lights in Kansas, where Gov. Kathleen Sebelius declared a statewide state of emergency. At O'Hare International Airport, about 100 flights were canceled by Monday afternoon, with delays of about 45 minutes, said Chicago Department of Aviation spokeswoman Karen Pride. No flights were canceled at Midway Airport, but a handful of flights were delayed about an hour, she said. Ice was as much as an inch thick on tree limbs and power lines in parts of the region. Schools across Oklahoma were closed and some hospitals were relying on backup power generators. The Federal Emergency Management

## December 2007 National Storm Summary

Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers sent 50 generators and three truckloads of bottled water from Texas to distribute to blacked-out areas of Oklahoma. Tulsa International Airport had no power for about 10 hours and halted flight operations for the day, and most morning flights at Will Rogers World Airport in Oklahoma City were canceled because of icy runways. Greyhound bus passengers were stranded overnight at a shelter in a church in Tulsa, and were joined by some local residents who had no heat.

Portions of Interstate 35 and Interstate 44 were shut down early Monday afternoon in Oklahoma City after ice-laden power lines collapsed and fell into the roadways. Oklahoma utility officials said it could be a week or more before power was fully restored. The Oklahoma City suburb of Jones, a town of 2,500 people, had low water pressure because there was no electricity to run well pumps, and firefighters said an early morning fire destroyed most of the community's high school. The icy weather stretched into the Northeast, where many schools across upstate New York were closed or started late because of icy roads. On ice-covered Interstate 40 west of Okemah, Okla., four people died in "one huge cluster of an accident" that involved 11 vehicles, said Highway Patrol Trooper Betsey Randolph. Eight other people died on icy Oklahoma roads, and Missouri had two storm-related deaths one on a slippery highway and another when a tree limb fell on a 92-year-old man's head. In addition, a homeless person died of hypothermia in Oklahoma City, the state medical examiner's office said.

In the East on Tuesday, a wintry mix of rain, sleet, freezing rain and snow was experienced across the Great Lakes region and northern portions of the Ohio Valley. Ice accumulations were light thus far, with between a tenth and three-tenths of an inch reported. Across the central part of the country, a wintry mix of rain, sleet, snow and freezing rain were experienced throughout the central and southern Plains, the far southern portions of the upper Mississippi Valley and the middle Mississippi Valley. Major power outages continued across Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri with hundreds of thousands without power. Ice accumulations of between a quarter to a half of an inch have been reported. Elsewhere, scattered rain showers and thunderstorms continued to affect portions of Oklahoma and Texas.

A winter storm responsible for deaths in the Midwest blasted the Northeast on Thursday, dumping snow and sleet and clogging some of the nation's most heavily traveled highways. Some parts of the Northeast received up to a foot of snow. Schools, businesses and government agencies in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island. The resulting exodus choked highways and streets. Authorities reported hundreds of mostly minor accidents throughout the region. Some vehicles were stranded along roadways, preventing plows from getting through. While the traffic crawled along Interstates 95, 84 and 91, it also slowed at Northeast airports.

There were delays up to three hours for arriving flights at Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey, where more than 200 flights had been canceled by late afternoon, officials said.

Elsewhere, Boston's Logan International reported more than 100 flights

## December 2007 National Storm Summary

canceled, as did Bradley International near Hartford. No major problems were reported at New York's airports; some airlines allowed passengers to reschedule their flights for free. The storm was blamed for 35 deaths, mostly in traffic accidents, since it developed last weekend. In Oklahoma, about 342,000 homes and businesses still were without power Thursday, officials said. In Missouri, about 64,000 people were without electricity, including roughly 32,000 in the Kansas City and St. Joseph areas, state officials said. As the Midwest continued to emerge from the darkness, hundreds of snow plow operators in the Northeast were having a tough time getting out of traffic jams. In Albany, snowy roads slowed traffic to a crawl.

16th–22nd...In the East on Sunday, a large and powerful low pressure system brought moderate to heavy snow to the Great Lakes Region and Northeast, and a mix of sleet and freezing rain to portions of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Snow accumulations so far today have generally ranged between four and eight inches from Maine through New York and southwestward through Indiana. Locally higher amounts occurred. Ice accretions of 1 tenth to one third of an inch occurred over northern and western Pennsylvania, central and southeastern New York, Connecticut, and northern New Jersey. During the late morning hours, precipitation transitioned over to rain in southern New England, southeastern New York, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania. The storm system also generated gusty winds throughout the Northeast, Appalachians, Great Lakes Region, and Ohio Valley. Wind gusts of 30 to 50 mph were common. A cold front extending southward from the low produced rain and thunderstorms throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast this morning. Rainfall totals of half an inch to 1.5 inches were common. A few severe storms developed in Volusia and Seminole Counties in eastern Florida this morning. These storms produced damaging wind gusts, which knocked down tree limbs. In the central United States, snow fell across Missouri and Illinois early this morning in association with the storm system centered over the East. Snow accumulations of 4 to eight inches occurred in Illinois, with lighter amounts in Missouri. The snow came to an end a few hours after sunrise as the system moved further east. Meanwhile, overcast skies, light flurries, and fog and freezing fog prevailed across the Upper Midwest so far today. A ridge of high pressure brought tranquil weather conditions to the Central and Southern Plains.

In the West, rain and mountain snow showers occurred in the Pacific Northwest and parts of western Montana due to a Pacific storm system. Snow accumulations of 1 to two inches occurred in the mountains, with up to 0.25 inches of rain falling at lower elevations. Wind gusts of 20 to 40 mph accompanied the precipitation, with the strongest winds occurring along the coast.

In the East, snow finally wrapped up across northern Maine as a potent low pressure system moved into eastern Canada. Total snow accumulations of 5 to 12 inches occurred, while Caribou, Maine, set a daily snowfall record of 9.2 inches. Snow tapered off by the early afternoon hours as the system pulled farther away. Meanwhile,

## December 2007 National Storm Summary

scattered snow showers continued downwind of Lakes Erie and Ontario, affecting central and western New York, Pennsylvania, and northeast Ohio. Generally a trace to 1 inch of snow accumulated in these areas, but up to 3 inches of snow accumulated in northwestern Pennsylvania. Lake-effect snow activity continued into Monday evening, although intensity and coverage diminished considerably. Wind gusts of 25 to 45 mph were common, but gusts up to 60 mph occurred along the New England coastline. Wind speeds also gradually diminished toward Monday evening. In the West, a Pacific storm system brought moderate to heavy rain and mountain snow to Washington, Oregon, northern California, and Idaho. Generally, 4 to 8 inches of snow have accumulated across the higher elevations in these areas with some isolated higher amounts. At lower elevations, rainfall totals ranged from 0.25 to 0.75 inches, with some localized higher amounts along the Coastal Ranges of Oregon.

In the West on Wednesday, another surge of moisture moved on shore today. Heavy snows were common in the higher elevations from the Pacific Northwest through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Snowfall totals reached 6 to 12 inches in many locations. Heavy coastal and lower elevation rains fell once again, with locations such as Quillayute, Washington, receiving over an inch of rain today. Many locations along the coasts of Washington and Oregon have received 0.50 to 0.75 inches of rain, with isolated higher amounts. Wind gusts to 40 mph were seen today across these areas as well.

### The Nation's Weather

In the East on Friday, a complex of showers and thunderstorms pushed across the Southeast and the southern Mid-Atlantic coast. Beneficial rains fell across regions that have been drought-stricken for quite some time. Some of the rain was locally heavy. Rainfall totals were generally between a quarter of an inch and an inch and a-half. However, much higher totals fell in isolated spots. For example, an impressive 7.04 inches of rain fell in Savannah, Georgia. Flash flooding from this rain closed several roads in the Savannah area. Also, 2.23 inches of rain fell in Beaufort, South Carolina. Active weather continued across the West this morning. Areas of snow showers impacted the northern and central Rockies. Snow accumulations were light across the valley locations. However, several inches of snow fell across the mountains. Local wind gusts in excess of 40 mph created blowing and drifting snow in spots. Farther west, widely scattered light rain and mountain snow showers fell across the Pacific Northwest and northern California.

23rd-31th...Blizzard conditions plagued the Upper Midwest on Sunday. Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan all had the worst of this storm with heavy snow and howling winds that caused blowing and drifting snow. Many places in Wisconsin received more than a foot of snow. Holiday traffic was brought to a halt on some north-south oriented roads that were deemed impassible due to slippery roadways and whiteouts. Air traffic was also a nightmare in this section of the country, and the Chicago O'Hare International Airport had 300 cancellations due to strong winds. Wind gusts blew as hard as

## December 2007 National Storm Summary

68 mph in Chicago. Over 100,000 people were without power at the peak of the storm due to ice and the strong winds. As of Sunday night 60,000 people in Michigan were still blacked out, while Illinois still had 15,000 customers in the dark. Meanwhile, rain was being dumped farther south across the lower Great Lakes, the mid-Atlantic and New England. Some lightning and thunder accompanied the rain along the I-95 corridor and in upstate New York and parts of the Great Lakes. Gusty winds began to shift into the east in the afternoon and evening. Some thunderstorms also pressed through the Southeast before exiting the coast in the early evening, while the next storm dumped heavy rain and brought gusty winds in the Pacific Northwest. High pressure was ramping up to enter the West Coast and setup for yet another Santa Ana wind event. In the central part of the nation on Tuesday, a band of snow showers continued to affect the Upper Mississippi Valley, the northern Plains, and the central High Plains. Blustery winds caused areas of blowing and drifting snow, reducing visibilities at times. Snowfall accumulations up to this point are ranging from 2 to 5 inches from northern Nebraska, through southeast South Dakota, and into southern Minnesota. Snow reports of up to 5 inches were reported in Mission Hill, South Dakota. In the West, snow activity was locally heavy across Colorado, where widespread blowing and drifting snow was common. Gusty winds also continued to affect portions of Southern California, as the Santa Ana wind event continued. Wind gusts of up to 60 mph have been reported in many locations. Chilao, California, even reported a wind gust of 81 mph early this morning.

In the East on Monday, rain showers and embedded thunderstorms continue to affect the Carolinas and push into the Delmarva and southern portions of the Northeast. This activity has produced occasional lightning strikes, gusty winds, and periods of heavy rainfall. Goldsboro, North Carolina continued to experience the heaviest rainfall with 2.46 inches reported. Oceana, Virginia also received 1.27 inches of rain, and 1.13 inches of rain fell at Chapel Hill, North Carolina as well. Areas of patchy dense fog affected portions of the Southeast this morning, dropping visibilities down to a quarter mile at times and making for hazardous traveling conditions. Otherwise, fair skies and dry conditions were experienced across the Great Lakes region, the Ohio and Tennessee valleys, and Florida. Across the central part of the country, a band of heavy snow showers continued to affect portions of the Upper Mississippi Valley. In fact, six and a half inches of new snow fell at Mankato, Minnesota, and five and a half inches of new snow was reported at Lakeville, Minnesota. Elsewhere, a line of rain showers and thunderstorm moved out of eastern Texas and into portions of Oklahoma and the Lower Mississippi Valley. A few strong thunderstorms produced frequent lightning, stronger winds, small hail, and heavy downpours. In fact, 0.85 inches of rain fell at Longview, Texas, and 0.66 inches of rain was reported at Conroe, Texas. Snow showers also fell across the Panhandles of both Oklahoma and Texas, and into western Oklahoma. Snowfall accumulations were generally around one to two inches, but three inches of new snow was reported at Adrian, Texas. Otherwise, partly to mostly cloudy skies prevailed across the rest of the region.

## December 2007 National Storm Summary

In the east on Friday, a strong low pressure system continued to produce rain, snow, and thunderstorms across portions of the Tennessee Valley, the Great Lakes region, the Ohio Valley, Mid Atlantic, and the Southeast. Snow mainly affected the Upper and Middle Mississippi Valley, and the Great Lakes region. Rain showers and thunderstorms were experienced across the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys, portions of the Mid Atlantic, the Carolinas, and much of the Southeast. Moderate to frequent lightning, gusty winds, small hail, and heavy downpours have been reported with this activity. Heavy rainfall of 1.91 inches fell in Andalusia, Alabama, and 1.88 inches of rain was reported in Atlanta, Georgia. Earlier today, the rain showers and thunderstorms affected the Southern Plains and the Lower Mississippi Valley. In fact, golf ball size hail was reported at Columbia, Mississippi, and quarter size hail was reported at Fulton, Mississippi and Tucker, Mississippi. Locally heavy rainfall was also associated with this activity, with 1.18 inches of rain reported at Rodgers, AR. Houston, Texas also reported 0.86 inches of rain, and 0.56 inches of rain fell in Columbus, Mississippi.

Heavy snow fell across northern sections of the Northeast on Monday, capping a December of unusually heavy snow. More than a foot of snow fell in central New Hampshire, the National Weather Service said, and the Albany area received 11 inches from late Sunday to midmorning Monday. \*Albany International Airport canceled two early morning flights, and getting to work was a chore for drivers elsewhere as the snow continued falling.

Some sections of major highways in New Hampshire were covered with several inches of snow at the start of the commute and police reported many spinouts and crashes. On some New Hampshire side roads, drivers had to slow to a crawl because the fluffy snow was higher than their bumpers and flowed up onto their hoods and windshields, causing personal whiteouts.

Snow blew sideways in Augusta, Maine, and flakes accumulated to as much as 7 inches deep in some southern sections of the state, falling at a rate of up to 1.5 inches per hour, the weather service said.

Nearly 6,700 Central Maine Power customers were without power, utility officials said. The storm added to an already snowy month in the region. In New Hampshire, Concord had 11 inches by 7 a.m., tying its December record – 43 inches in 1876 – then surpassed that record as more snow was still falling several hours later. Elsewhere in the state, Wolfeboro and Boscawen got 13 inches. In Maine, it was the snowiest December in more than a decade. The weather service said the Bangor area had more than 34 inches for the month as of Sunday, compared to a normal December total of about 13 inches. Only 2 1/2 inches fell in the area last year. Nearly 51 inches of snow had fallen in the Caribou area of northern Maine, compared to the normal 25 inches. Albany had its seventh snowiest December since 1795 as Monday's snow brought the December total to at least 31.1 inches, more than double the average of 12.3 inches, according to the National Weather Service.