



Central Illinois Lincoln Logs

National Weather Service, Lincoln, IL

Fall 2005

Volume 8, Number 2

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Winter Weather Awareness Week is November 13-19



By Chris Miller, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

The weather is changing rapidly this time of year, and soon, snowflakes will be falling from the sky! To prepare the citizens of Illinois for the impending winter season, the National Weather Service (NWS) will be observing Winter Weather Preparedness Week, from November 13 – 19, 2005. This is a joint effort between the NWS, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the State Fire Marshall's Office, the Illinois Department on Aging, and the Illinois State Police.

Winter weather is often described as the "Silent Killer", because each year, nearly 80 people in the United States die from the effects of winter storms and extreme cold outbreaks. In fact, there has not been a winter in Illinois without a severe winter storm in the past century. On average, the state experiences five severe winter storms each year.

Now is the time to prepare your home, family, automobile, farm or business for the impacts of winter weather. Know the terms used in winter weather forecasts:

WINTER STORM WATCH – Severe winter weather, such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two. Prepare NOW!

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY – Winter weather conditions will cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists. Use CAUTION and be ALERT!

WINTER STORM WARNING – Severe winter weather is imminent or occurring. Stay INDOORS and LIMIT travel to emergencies only!

HEAVY SNOW WARNING – Snowfall of 6" or more is anticipated, resulting in very hazardous travel conditions.

ICE STORM WARNING – Heavy accumulations of ice (freezing rain) will create extremely dangerous travel, and damage to trees and power lines.

WIND CHILL WARNING – Life threatening wind chills of -25°F or colder are anticipated. **LIMIT** your time outdoors and **BE AWARE** of the dangers of frostbite and hypothermia.

For more information, visit the NWS Lincoln Winter Safety webpage at:
<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx/winter/winter.php>

Drought Contributes to Low Tornado Total

By Chris Miller, Warning Coordination Meteorologist



The persistent and expanding drought, which has gripped central Illinois from March through October this year, has resulted in a “silver lining” around the storm clouds (or lack thereof) – a greatly reduced number of tornadoes. Only five tornadoes were reported in the NWS Lincoln county warning area (which represents 35 counties in north central, central, eastern and southeast

Illinois) thus far in 2005. This compares with 31 tornadoes in the same region in 2004, and a phenomenal 63 tornadoes in 2003! On average, about 20 tornadoes occur each year in the NWS Lincoln county warning area.

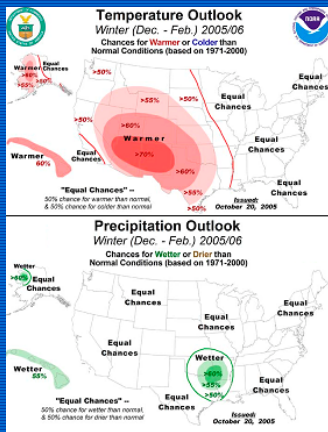
The same weather pattern that resulted in the drought was the reason for the low number of tornadoes this year. This pattern caused many of the spring and early summer thunderstorms to stay to the west and north of Illinois. The outcome was abundant rain in parts of the Plains states, along with a record number of tornadoes in the state of Wisconsin.

For a listing of the tornadoes in our area this year, go to the following webpage for details:
<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx/2005tornadoes.php>

Winter Weather Outlook

The latest winter weather outlook from the Climate Prediction Center is shown at left. It shows much of the nation west of the Mississippi River forecast to average above normal temperatures for the winter period. No particular trend is currently favored for Illinois, meaning a 50/50 chance of above or below normal temperatures.

The precipitation outlook is even less clear-cut. Only the lower Mississippi Valley, Hawaii, and northwest Alaska are expected to be wetter than normal. The remainder of the nation has equal chances of above normal or below normal precipitation.





NWS staff members working the registration table were Matt Barnes, John Parr, Dan Kelly, and Ed Shimon.



Bill Morris, hydrologist at the Chicago NWS office, explains how COOP observations are used for river forecasts.



Tom and Joan Smit of Princeville talk over lunch with John Parr of the Lincoln NWS, and Bill Nelson of the Chicago NWS.



Ernie Goetsch presents the Dick Hagemeyer Award to Dalias Price.

Cooperative Observer Appreciation Day a Success!

The Lincoln NWS hosted Cooperative Observer Appreciation Day on Saturday, September 10, in Effingham. Cooperative (COOP) observers and members of the Significant Weather Observer Program (SWOP) came together to meet each other, learn how their observations are used, and to have lunch provided by the NWS, in recognition of their efforts.



The highlight of the day was the presentation of the Thomas Jefferson Award to Dr. Dalias Price, observer at Charleston for the last 45 years. Dalias was one of 9 people nationwide to be honored with the most prestigious award given by the NWS to a COOP observer. The award was presented by Ernie Goetsch, the Meteorologist in Charge of the Lincoln NWS.

In addition, Dalias also received the Dick Hagemeyer Award for his 45 years of service.

Additional photos from the COOP Appreciation Day are in the left margin.

New Climate Pages Online

The National Weather Service has standardized its climate pages on the Internet, with the intent of easily being able to go from one office to another without having to figure out where to find climate data.

The Lincoln NWS's climate page is at the following address:
<http://www.weather.gov/climate/index.php?wfo=ilx>

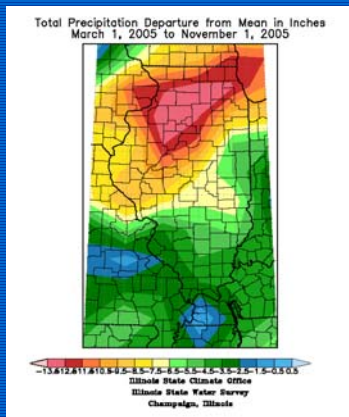
Much of the real-time data that was on our old climate page can be found in the "Observed Weather" and "Local Data/Records" sections of the new page. The "Observed Weather" section also features a longer database (going back a few years in some cases).

We have prepared a PDF file that explains the new layout, and where to find the data that you are used to seeing. It is available at the following address:
http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx/new_climate.pdf

Logan County Fair



Meteorologist James Auten, and Data Acquisition Program Manager Billy Ousley, staff the NWS booth at the Logan County Fair in Lincoln on August 5. Visitors to the fair were able to see displays of weather equipment, information on the summer drought, and Logan County historical tornado information. This was the 7th consecutive year the NWS participated in the fair.



Lincoln NWS Homepage Updates

The Lincoln NWS, along with the offices of the Central Region, have been working to improve the reliability of its homepages.

The Internet has become the primary method of weather information dissemination from the weather service to the public. Five years ago, one webserver and a slow T1 line (1.54 megabits per second transfer rate) was enough to meet the needs of the public. Today, 10 webserver, an entire backside network operation, and an OC3 line (currently at 100 megabits per second) are needed to keep up with public demand. The offices of the Central Region have gone from roughly 10,000 hits a day, to over 30,000,000 hits a day!

Additional servers have been deployed at the regional headquarters in Kansas City, and use of servers at other regions during busy periods (e.g. severe weather outbreaks) should help keep NWS homepages available at critical periods. The upgrades will also assist in security efforts, and more standardization in subject material between NWS homepages.

Because of these efforts, some of the links that you use may have changed. We have tried to keep as many of them intact as possible, but had to move some of them due to regional requirements, and the desire to reorganize some pages to improve efficiency. The Site Map that is available along the top menu (<http://www.weather.gov/lincoln/sitemap.php>) contains a breakdown of the left menu options, and links for these so they can be bookmarked.

Drought Update

Much of the northwest half of Illinois remained in drought conditions as the autumn progressed. On the map at left, courtesy of the Illinois State Water Survey, the red shades indicate total rainfall deficits of at least 11.5 inches since March 1 (as November began). Areas from about Peoria north and northwest were classified as being in extreme drought conditions; earlier in the summer, the extreme drought extending about as far south as Springfield and Decatur. Much of the southeast half of the state received beneficial rains in September and October from hurricane remnants moving across the area.

The Lincoln NWS continues to provide updates on its drought webpage at <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx/climate/drought05.php>. More detailed information is also provided by the Illinois State Water Survey at <http://www.sws.uiuc.edu/hilites/drought>.

Balloons in the Sky over Lincoln



The evening weather balloon was not the only balloon in the sky on August 27. Lincoln's annual hot air balloon festival was held at the Logan County Airport, in the NWS's back yard. The balloons took off on a picture perfect evening, shortly after 6 pm. NWS staff and their families gathered at the office for a picnic to watch the launch. Meteorologist Ed Shimon took this aerial shot of the NWS grounds from a balloon northeast of the office.

StormReady Certifications



StormReady Cities:

Champaign
Flora
Mahomet
Pana
Peoria
Savoy
Taylorville
Tuscola
Urbana

More information:
<http://www.weather.gov/stormready/>



The city of Pana (Christian County) was recognized as a StormReady Community by the National Weather Service in Lincoln on September 12, 2005. Attending the ceremony at Pana's City Hall was (left to right): Mike Crews - Christian county ESDA coordinator, Ernie Goetsch - NWS Lincoln Meteorologist-in-Charge, Ken Mueller - Mayor of Pana, Chris Miller - NWS Lincoln Warning Coordination Meteorologist, and (back row) the Pana City Council. Pana was the 45th location in the state of Illinois to be designated StormReady. *(Photo by Terry Rogers, Pana News-Palladium)*

The city of Taylorville was also designated StormReady on September 19. This brings the total list of StormReady cities in the Lincoln NWS coverage area to 9.

10th Anniversary of Lincoln NWS Office

September 27 marked the 10th anniversary of the full-time operations of the Lincoln National Weather Service office.

Construction began on the Central Illinois Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in December 1993. The office was part of the NWS's Modernization and Associated Restructuring (MAR) project, in which the functions of the Peoria and Springfield NWS offices would merge into a single office, to be located in Lincoln. Construction was completed in the fall of 1994, and the building was accepted by the U.S. government.



Office construction, June 1994



Installation of upper-air observing equipment, February 1995



Construction of Doppler radar, April 1995

In mid February 1995, the first weather balloon launch took place from the Lincoln office. From then until late September, this was the only official function of the office. As a result, it was not open full-time. As staffing gradually increased that spring and summer, the new employees were trained on the operations of the new Doppler radar.

It was on September 27 of that year that full-time operations of the Lincoln office commenced. Equipment from the Peoria and Springfield offices was moved to Lincoln. Operations of the NOAA Weather Radio network were transferred to Lincoln, and responsibility for severe weather warning issuances was also transferred to Lincoln. The Peoria and Springfield offices were officially closed on October 1, 1995.

As further training and staffing increases took place in Lincoln, forecast responsibilities were added to the Lincoln NWS office. On April 1, 1996, aviation forecast responsibility for airports in Peoria, Springfield, Decatur, and Champaign was transferred to Lincoln, from the Chicago office. On July 6, 1999, routine public weather forecasts were transferred to Lincoln for its 35 county warning area.

Staffing of the Lincoln office consists of 22 employees:

- Meteorologist-in-Charge;
- Warning Coordination Meteorologist;
- Science and Operations Officer;
- Data Acquisition Program Manager;
- Information Technology Officer;
- Electronics Systems Analyst;
- Administrative Support Assistant;
- 5 senior meteorologists;
- 4 full-performance meteorologists;
- 2 meteorological interns;
- 2 hydrometeorological technicians; and
- 2 electronics technicians.

To take a look at the history of federal weather services in central Illinois, we have a page set up at <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx/nwshist.php>

Record Atlantic Hurricane Season

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(8:30 am to 4 pm weekdays)

The Central Illinois Lincoln Logs is a quarterly review of NWS activities in Central Illinois and is available on our internet page at

<http://www.weather.gov/lincoln>

Your comments are welcomed and can be addressed to either editor at our office.

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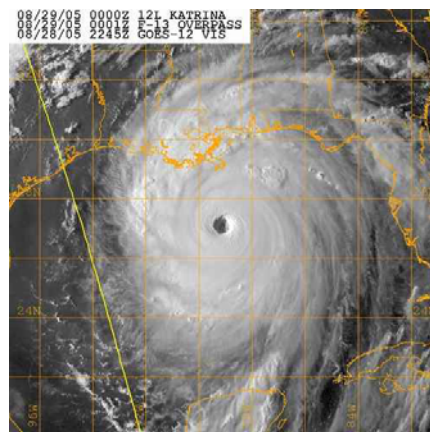
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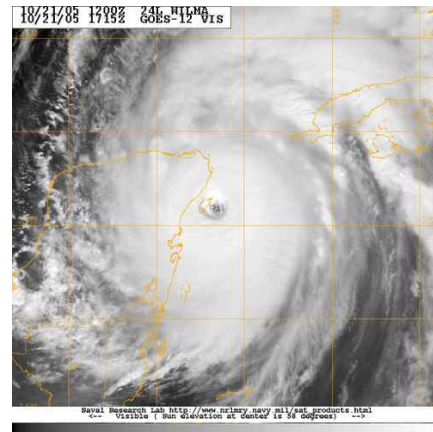
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2005 has established several "firsts" for the Atlantic Basin hurricane season (the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico are considered part of this basin):

- 23 named storms in one year (as of November 1) have broken the record of 21, set in 1933 (technically before storms were named).
- 13 of the storms became hurricanes, breaking the record of 12 set in 1969.
- The entire list of storm names was exhausted for the first time, requiring use of the emergency list of names based on the Greek alphabet.
- 3 hurricanes reached Category 5 strength, and set records in the process:
 - Hurricane Katrina's pressure fell to 902 millibars (26.64"), 4th lowest on record at the time.
 - Hurricane Rita intensified by 3 categories in 24 hours; its lowest pressure of 897 millibars (26.49") became the 3rd lowest on record, displacing Katrina down to 5th place.
 - Hurricane Wilma went from a tropical storm to a Category 5 hurricane in a little over a day. Its lowest pressure of 882 millibars (26.04") broke the Atlantic basin record of 888 millibars (26.22") set by Hurricane Gilbert in 1988, and further displaced the pressure rankings of Katrina and Rita.



(top left): Hurricane Katrina approaches the coast of Louisiana in the late afternoon of August 28.



(top right): Hurricane Wilma just off Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula at midday October 21.

Images courtesy of the Hurricane Research Division of NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory