

THE TEXAS TWISTER

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LUBBOCK FORECAST OFFICE SELECTS NEW WARNING COORDINATION METEOROLOGIST

Jody James has been promoted as the new Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Lubbock. Jody has served in various roles here at the Lubbock office dating back to 1994.

Jody's NWS career began as a Meteorologist Intern at the Port Arthur Office in 1992. Jody was quickly promoted to a General Forecaster at Lubbock in 1994 and then served as a Senior Forecaster from 1999 to 2007. Jody replaced Brian LaMarre who was selected as the new Meteorologist In Charge of the Tampa Bay, Florida Forecast Office.



2007 YEAR IN REVIEW

BY: MARK CONDER AND GARY SKWIRA

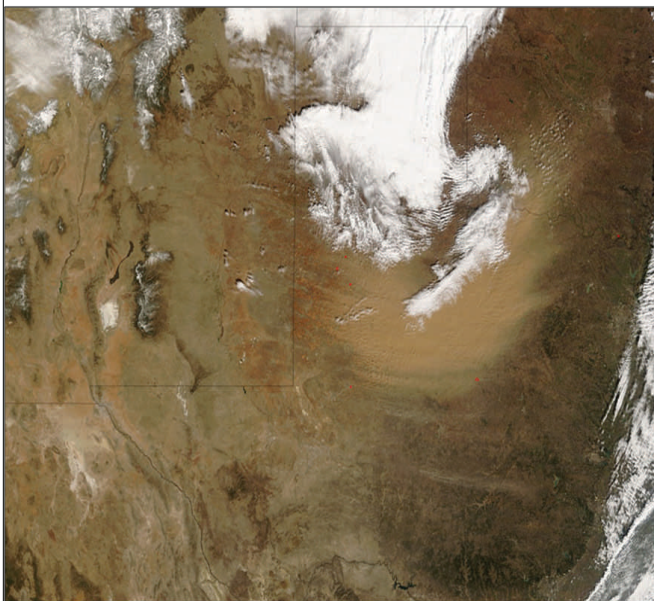
The year of 2007 brought a wide variety of weather to west Texas. The severe weather season kicked-off early in March. April brought a late freeze, affecting some agriculture. April also saw more tornadoes, including ones that hit Olton and Tulia.

Severe weather quieted down by May, although some heavy rain fell. The spring and summer seasons were also significantly cooler than normal. In mid-August, tropical storm Erin tracked across the Rolling Plains.

Fall generally brought drier and mild weather. The year ended on an interesting note, when a storm system brought a few weak tornadoes to the South Plains on December 27th.

FEBRUARY 24, 2007: STRONG WIND, BLOWING DUST AND SNOW

*The highest recorded
wind gust of 70 mph
occurred at the Texas
Tech West Texas
Mesonet station at Reese
Center.*



An intensifying storm system moved from the Texas Panhandle into southeast Kansas. Most locations across the southern Texas Panhandle, South Plains and Rolling Plains experienced sustained winds of 40 mph or more and gusts of 60 mph or greater. The highest recorded wind gust of 70 mph occurred at the Texas Tech West Texas Mesonet station at Reese Center, just west of Lubbock. The Lubbock International Airport recorded a sustained wind of 56 mph during the storm, with a maximum gust of 64 mph.

The image to the left shows a satellite snapshot of the dust plume in the afternoon after it had begun to advance into central Texas and Oklahoma.

MARCH 28, 2007: SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS SPAWN SEVEN TORNADOES

*The worst part of this
storm missed Silverton.*



The first tornado touchdown of the day was reported at 5:20 pm, approximately 10 miles southwest of Silverton. This storm continued to produce tornadoes as it moved northeast toward Silverton. The worst part of the storm missed Silverton before proceeding off to the northeast into Palo Duro Canyon, still occasionally producing tornadoes. Another Tornado developed over northern Floyd county at 6:06 pm. This supercell produced occasional tornadoes as it tracked northeast near Caprock Canyon State Park.

This picture of the tornado was taken by NWS employee Bruce Haynie approximately 2 miles west of the Highway 256/70 intersection north of Turkey.

APRIL 21, 2007: TORNADOES STRIKE TULIA AND OLTON

Around 7 pm, a supercell thunderstorm produced a tornado near Fieldton (southwest of Olton) and then moved just south and east of Olton, doing damage to several structures. The thunderstorm continued to move northeast and produced a long-lived tornado along with hail up to the size of tennis balls. Another tornado touched down in Tulia around 7:45 pm, causing major damage to portions of the west side of Tulia.

Information supplied by Weather Spotters and the Cooperative Observer to the City of Tulia and the National Weather Service resulted in ample warning time. As a result, what could have been a worse disaster was averted.

Image of Tulia tornado to the right. Photo taken by Erin Shaw.



Another Tornado touched down causing major damage to portions of the west side of Tulia.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007: A SEVERE WEATHER DAY IN AUTUMN

The combination of a warm and unstable airmass and numerous other meteorological factors were enough to generate a number of strong storms during the afternoon and evening hours. The tornado that occurred west of Cotton Center developed under a rapidly growing storm pictured to the right.

The image pictured to the right depicts the landspout tornado west of Cotton Center.



The tornado that occurred west of Cotton Center developed under a rapidly growing storm.

2007 RAINFALL STATS BY: JOHN LIPE

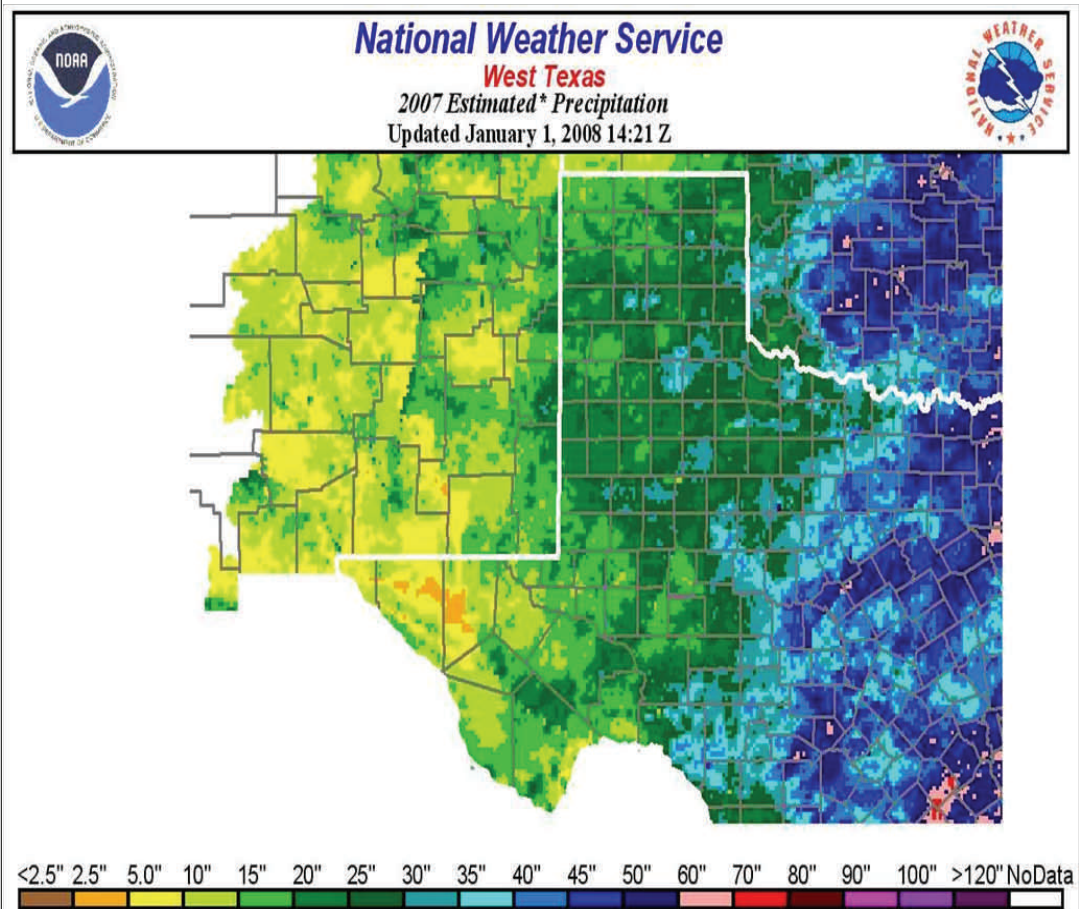
Rainfall over the South Plains, extreme Southern Panhandle, and the Rolling Plains was above normal in 2007. Data recorded by 66 of the NWS Cooperative observers showed that the average annual rainfall for the entire area was about 24 inches, which is above normal for the region. Records show that rainfall was most plentiful from January through September, then conditions turned dry during the Fall and Winter.

For the year, the wettest areas were generally over the Rolling Plains where a number of observers recorded over 30 inches for the year, including Aspermont 31.2", Benjamin 15W 31.0", Dodson 5S 30.1", Kirkland 1W 30.5", Jayton 30.8", Paducah 15S 31.1", Seminole 30.8", and Lake Alan Henry 30.7".

The driest spots were in the Northwest South Plains and Southwest Panhandle where a few locations including Muleshow, Dimmitt, and Hart were below 20 inches for the year. Hart was the driest spot with only 16.8 inches.

The image below is an estimate of 2007 annual precipitation over the region based on radar data, but adjusted using ground measurements. The scale is shown at the bottom, where locally the dark greens and blue colors show the greatest amounts.

Rainfall over the South Plains, Extreme Southern Panhandle and Rolling Plains was above normal for 2007.



FIRE WEATHER NEWS

BY: TODD LINDLEY

When South Plain's residents think about threatening weather, they may consider potential weather hazards including: tornadoes, hail, damaging winds, thunderstorms, dust storms, snow, and ice. Most folks, however, probably don't think about wildfires...*do you?*

Did you know that the majority of West Texas wildfires are sparked when winds arc or blow utility lines down into dry vegetation? A percentage are also caused by various human activities including: welding, vehicles, outdoor lighting systems, attempted controlled burning or arson, and even cigarettes. Dangerous wind-driven wildfires on the west Texas plains, however, are meteorologically driven and only evolve from accidental starts when favorable weather conditions are present.

Local research in fire meteorology has shown that 80% of all wind-driven wildfires on the South Plains occur when relative humidity's are less than 15% and when corresponding wind speeds are greater than 25 mph.

Your local National Weather Service Forecast Office will issue a Fire Weather Watch if conditions are favorable for rapid fire growth within one to three days. If conditions are occurring or are imminent, A Red Flag Warning will be issued. Criteria for both include: Expected 20 foot winds of 20 mph or greater, relative humidity values of 15 percent or lower, and a high fire danger.

Image below: Smoke billows as a 20,000 acre wildfire threatened Muleshoe on January 18, 2008.



*Most folks, however,
probably don't think
about wildfires...do you?*

WEATHER SAFETY FACTS

BY: JODY JAMES

TORNADO FACTS



- The average tornado moves from southwest to northeast, but tornadoes have been known to move in any direction.
- The average forward speed is 30 mph but may vary from nearly stationary to 70 mph.
- Tornadoes may appear nearly transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms within the funnel.

Interesting Weather Terminology

Anvil Crawler—An intra-cloud lightning discharge occurring within the anvil of a thunderstorm, characterized by one or more branches that appear to “crawl” along the underside of the anvil.

LIGHTNING FACTS



In the United States, an average of 62 people are killed each year by lightning. In 2007, 45 people were struck and killed by lightning in the U.S.; Of the victims who were killed by lightning:

- 98% were outside
- 89% were male
- 30% were males between the ages of 20-25
- 25% were standing under a tree
- 25% occurred on or near water

FLOOD FACTS



Avoid areas already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams.

Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.

Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

WEATHER CODER III

BY: JOHN LIPE AND JERRY ENGLISH

What is Weather Coder? In reality, it is a new Internet based system for entering and managing CO-OP data. Some of you have been using it for quite some time and really like the ease and simplicity that it allows when entering your data! It's very convenient if you have a computer with permanent internet connection via cable, DSL, etc., less convenient if you rely on a dial up connection, and not practical if you don't have (or want) a computer. Don't worry if you're in the category of don't have or want a computer...we're not asking you to change!!!

Currently 20 of our 65 or so Cooperative Observers enter their data using Wxcoder. This list includes; Denver City, Floydada, Flomot 2E, Guthrie, Lake Alan Henry, Levelland, Lubbock 9N, Matador, Muleshoe, Muleshoe Wildlife Refuge, Olton, Plains, Plainview Water Plant, Plainview Daily Herald, Post, Shallowater, Southland, South Camp, Tulia, Turkey, and White River Lake. The picture below is an image of the form where data is entered.

The screenshot shows the WxCODER web interface for entering weather data. The page title is "Observation for Abernathy". The date and time of observation are set to June 27, 2008, at 7 AM. The type of observation is "daily (24 hr values/totals)". The form includes sections for Air Temperature (Max: 89, Min: 64, At observation: 68), Precipitation (0.00), and Weather (Calendar day weather: Fog, Hail, Ice pellets, Damaging wind, Glaze, Thunderstorm). There is a "Remarks" field and a "Submit" button.

Weather Coder III works best if you have a computer with a permanent internet connection.

2008 TRANSITIONS

Mark Conder: Promoted to Senior Forecaster .

Jason Jordan: Promoted to Senior Forecaster (from Amarillo)

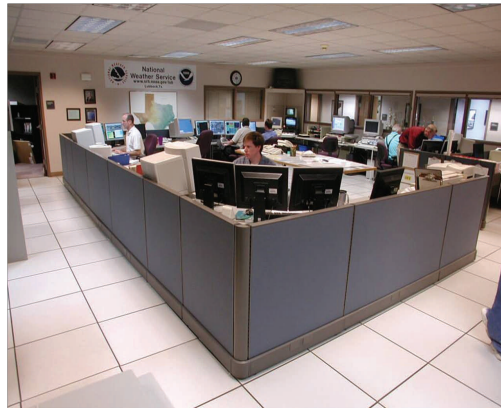
Andy Fischer: Promotion to General Forecaster (from Kansas City)

Joe Jurecka: Promoted to Meteorologist Intern (from Houston/Galveston)

Robert Robledo: Hydro Meteorological Technician retired on May 28th.

Marty Mullen: Transferred to the Cleveland, Ohio NWS Office.

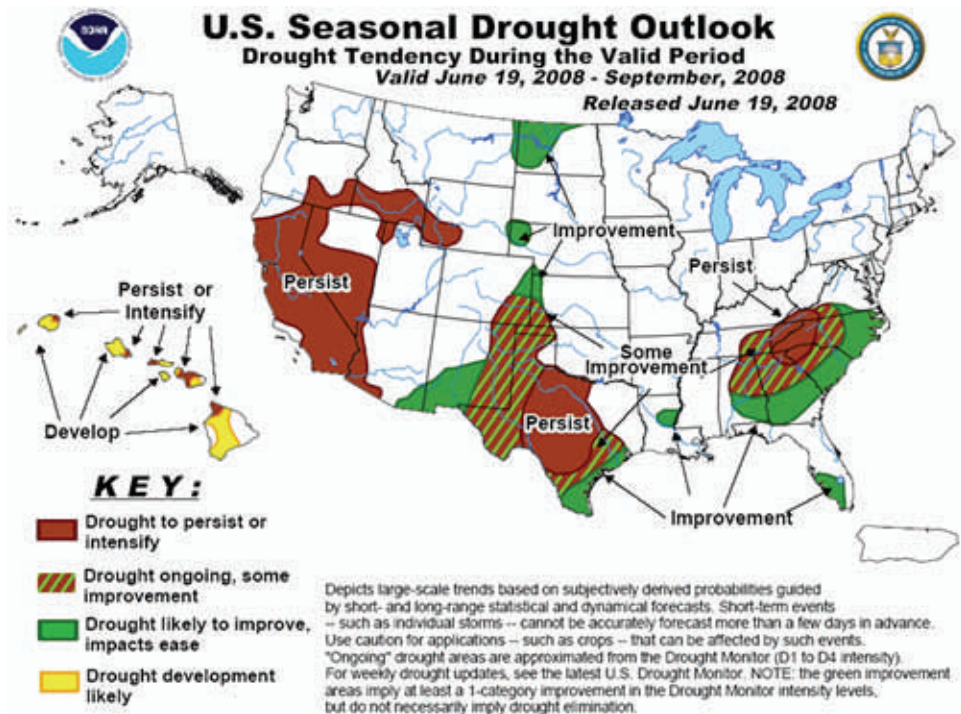
WFO LUBBOCK GETS A FACELIFT



This past April, the operations area and the operational staff cubicles of the NWS Lubbock office underwent a renovation to replace aging furniture as well as to provide a more efficient use of workspace. The picture of the operations area above on the left was taken just a few years ago, while the picture above on the right was taken in May 2008 after the remodeling.



MOISTURE OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER



Look for typical early summer weather to continue, with adequate rain in some areas and less than adequate rain in others. For more information about long range climate expectancies, visit the Climate Prediction Center homepage. <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>

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