



The High Plains Drifter

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
NORTH PLATTE, NE

SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS

Though summertime is already upon Nebraska, it is never too late to get prepared for severe weather. Thunderstorms are a common occurrence across the state, and if conditions are right, some will be come severe. Lightning, damaging winds, hail, floods, and tornadoes are all dangers for which you and your family need to be prepared. Remember that severe weather can strike at any time of the year, and at any time of the day.

Tornado Safety...

When a tornado warning is issued, it means a tornado has been detected by radar or reported by spotters, and you need to take shelter immediately. The best place to take shelter is in a basement, and under something like the stairs or a table to help protect you from debris. If that is not available, get to the lowest floor possible and near the center of the building, like in a closet or bathroom.

Lightning Safety...

Avoid being caught in a dangerous situation, if you can hear thunder you are close enough to be struck by lightning! Immediately move to a sturdy building, and if not available, a car with a solid metal top. Stay away from open areas and get out of the water. Inside, avoid using the phone, electrical appliances, or anything with plumbing.

Flood Safety...

On average, floods kill more people than any other severe weather hazard. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately! Act quickly to get to an area not subject to floods. Never attempt to drive through water, you do not know how deep it may be, and you could be swept away. Never walk, swim, or play in flood water. There could be debris and other dangers hidden in the water, and you could be swept away.

Before the storm...

- Develop a plan of action! Do you and your family know where to go when severe weather strikes?
- Know the name of your county and surrounding counties, towns, and landmarks. This information will be in any warnings issued.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards. This is the fastest way to get weather information, including warnings.
- Check the forecast if you are planning to be outdoors. Watch for signs of approaching storms, including darkening skies, increasing winds, thunder, and lightning.

NOAA Celebrates 200 years

More on the Web at

celebrating200years.noaa.gov



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Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Your feedback is very important to us!

More information about preparing for severe weather can be found at <http://www.weather.gov/om/severeweather/index.shtml>

SEVERE STORMS ARE KEEPING US BUSY

Doesn't it seem like we have had a lot of storms this year? Or does it just seem that way because last year was so quiet?

Checking back over the last five years has shown that we are not imaging things. There have been more storms this year than in the previous years. Here is a comparison of the number of warnings the National Weather Service in North Platte has issued between January 1st and June 8th each of the last five years:



Year	Number of Tornado Warnings	Number of Severe Thunderstorm Warnings	Number of Flash Flood Warnings
2007	73	283	41
2006	5	127	0
2005	29	259	17
2004	45	133	1
2003	16	76	0

It is not surprising that we have issued almost double the number of tornado warnings so far this year compared to the previous years since the tornadoes started in March!! Although we hope the tornadoes do not continue through the summer, we do hope the nice rain showers do.

NORTH PLATTE OFFICE TAKES AWARDS DURING NEBRASKAland DAYS PARADE

The National Weather Service entered a float in the NEBRASKAland Days Parade this year. The theme of the parade was "*The Tradition Roles On*" as NEBRASKAland Days was celebrating 125 years. The NWS office won **1st prize in the Commercial Float** division and also took home the **Best Float Overall**. The float showed the National Weather Service was first in North Platte in 1874, the first weather satellite was in 1960, the first weather radar was in 1942, and the first tornado warning was in 1947. The float also showcased NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) celebrating 200 years. The National Weather Service is one of many organizations that unite to form NOAA.



HOLM AWARD RECIPIANT

Recognizing more than 41 years of service, NOAA's National Weather Service has named Mason City Observer Joan Cox as a recipient of the John Campanius Holm Award for outstanding service in the Cooperative Weather Observer Program. The award is the agency's second most prestigious and only 25 were presented this year to observers around the country.

The award is named after John Campanius Holm, whose weather records taken in 1644 and 1645, without instruments, are the earliest known recorded observations in the United States.

Joan began her volunteer weather career as a secondary observer at Mason City on April 1, 1966, and became the primary observer on January 1, 1986. She reports daily temperature and precipitation data to the National Weather Service, and adds snowfall data during the winter months.

"Joan has provided exceptionally high quality weather observations for many years and has become the weather authority in her community," said Mark Byrd, OPL at the North Platte office. After 13 requests for support were mailed to local residents, "no less than 48 very enthusiastic letters of support were received. She exemplifies a dedication to values and a sense of duty other members of the community admire."



The award will be presented to Joan during an Open House planned for October at the North Platte office commemorating NOAA's 200 years of service and the recent installation of the new Upper Air observation equipment.

2007 WEATHER OBSERVER AWARDS

Lester Olson for 10 years of Service 1 NE of Kilgore

Kenneth and Polly Swayne for 20 years of Service 6 N of Gordon

Darrell Fisher for 20 years of Service in Moorefield

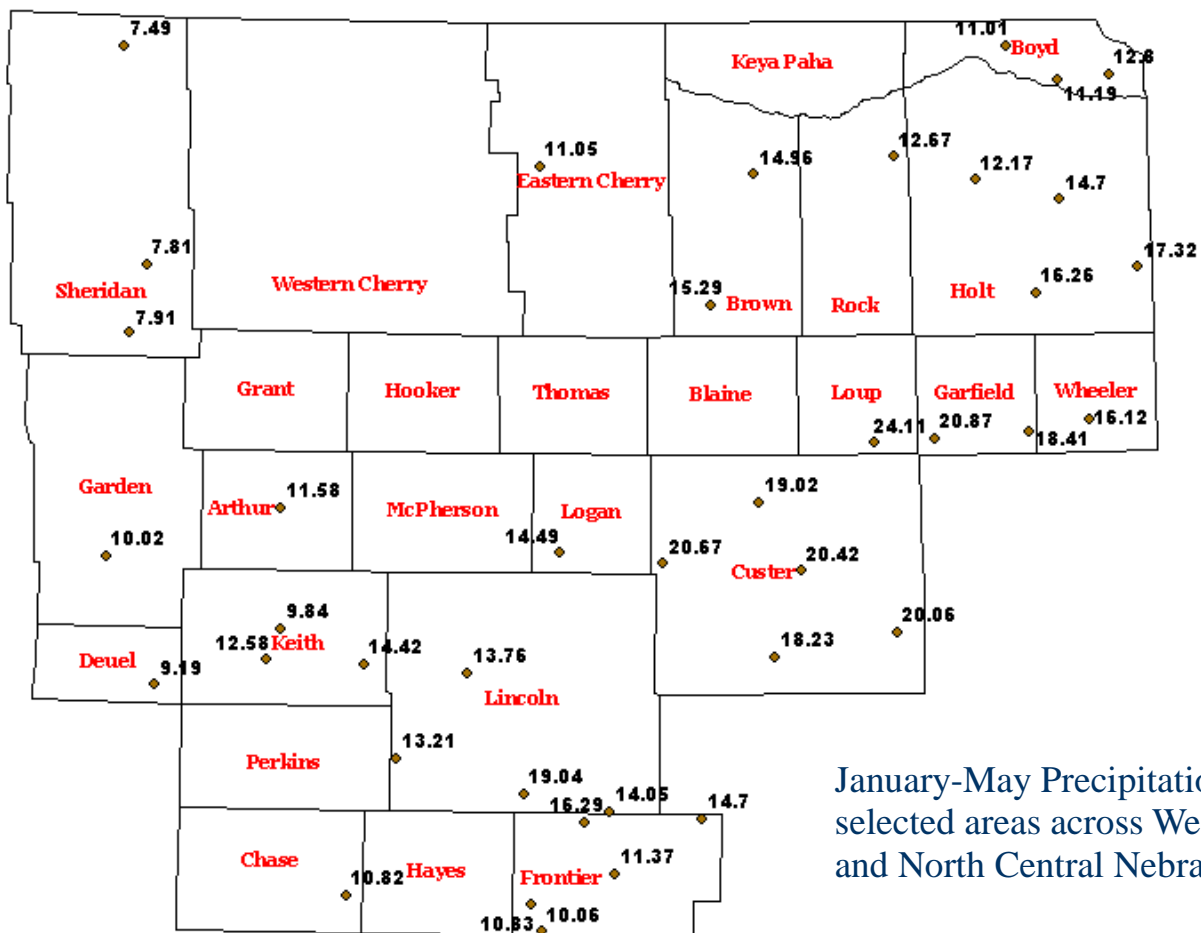
Scott Poesse for 20 years of Service in O'Neill

Glennie Batt for 35 years of Service in Lisco

University of Nebraska- North Platte Experimental Farm for 100 years
of Service

PRECIPITATION FOR THE YEAR AS OF MAY 31st

Above normal precipitation has been observed across western and north central Nebraska so far this year. In parts of the area, much above normal precipitation has been experienced. In fact, the much above normal precipitation amounts have helped to alleviate the drought situation. This is most true east of Highway 61, which runs north and south from the South Dakota-Nebraska border near Merriman, through Hyannis to Ogallala, then to the Kansas-Nebraska border near Benkelman. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor on June 12th, those areas east of Highway 61 have been cleared from the drought all together. Areas to the west, especially over the panhandle, are still experiencing moderate to even severe drought conditions. See page 8 for the current drought outlook map.



January-May Precipitation for selected areas across Western and North Central Nebraska.

ENHANCED FUJITA SCALE

NOAA's National Weather Service fully implemented the Enhanced Fujita (EF) scale to rate tornadoes on February 1st, 2007, replacing the original Fujita Scale. The EF scale will continue to rate tornadoes on a scale from zero to five, but ranges in wind speed will be more accurate with the improved rating scale.

"The EF scale provides more detailed guidelines that will allow the National Weather Service to more accurately rate tornadoes that strike the United States," said Brig. Gen. David L. Johnson, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), director of NOAA's National Weather Service. *"The EF scale still estimates wind speeds but more precisely takes into account the materials affected and the construction of the structures damaged by the tornado."*

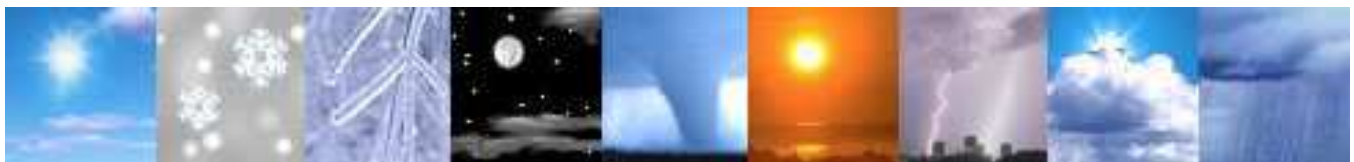
The Fujita Scale was developed in 1971 by T. Theodore Fujita, Ph.D., to rate tornadoes and estimate associated wind speed based on the damage they cause. The EF scale refines and improves the original scale. It was developed by the Texas Tech University Wind Science and Engineering Research Center, along with a forum of wind engineers, universities, private companies, government organizations, private sector meteorologists, and NOAA meteorologists from across the country.

FUJITA SCALE		OPERATIONAL EF SCALE	
F Number	3 Second Gust (mph)	EF Number	3 Second Gust (mph)
0	45-78	0	65-85
1	79-117	1	86-110
2	118-161	2	111-135
3	162-209	3	136-165
4	210-261	4	166-200
5	262-317	5	Over 200

...INCREASED ACCURACY IN DAMAGE ASSESSMENT...

Limitations of the original Fujita scale may have led to inconsistent ratings, including possible overestimates of associated wind speeds. The EF scale incorporates more damage indicators and degrees of damage than the original Fujita scale, allowing more detailed analysis and better correlation between damage and wind speed. The original Fujita scale historical data base will not change. An F5 tornado rated years ago is still an F5, but the wind speed associated with the tornado may have been somewhat less than previously estimated. A correlation between the original Fujita scale and the EF scale has been developed. This makes it possible to express ratings in terms of one scale to the other, preserving the historical database.

For more information about the new EF Scale visit
<http://www.spc.noaa.gov/efscale/>



WINTER WEATHER SUMMARY



Numerous snow storms moved across western and north central Nebraska this winter. Although little snow had fallen by the middle of December at North Platte (only 2.8 inches), the latter half of December through

February recorded several significant accumulating snow storms. This made for the snowiest 3 months of December, January and February on record; the three month total was 34.3 inches. Then March was virtually dry for snowfall as the warm temperatures resulting in rain instead of snow, with only a trace of snowfall recorded at North Platte. The trace amount tied for the least snowfall for the month of March on record (4 other years also recorded only a trace). One more snowstorm in April dropped another 4.9 inches of snow. The final tally of snowfall at North Platte for the winter of 2006-2007 was 42.0 inches. This ranks eleventh all-time with 121 years of recorded data. This was the first time since the early 1980s that North Platte recorded more than 40 inches of snow during the winter. The table to the right shows the top 15 snowiest winters on record.

Max Seasonal Snowfall (July - June) for North Platte		
Rank	Season	Snowfall
1	1979-1980	66.3
2	1948-1949	58.4
3	1983-1984	57.8
4	1886-1887	53.8
5	1885-1886	53.2
6	1957-1958	48.4
7	1911-1912	48.3
8	1969-1970	44.7
9	1970-1971	42.5
10	1887-1888	42.4
11	2006-2007	42.0
12	1914-1915	41.5
13	1916-1917	41.2
14	1960-1960	41.0
15	1959-1960	40.8

WARNINGS WITH GREATER DETAIL

The North Platte NWS has completed work on inserting various landmarks into its warning program, to provide better information about the location and path of severe weather in its warnings to the public.

For example, instead of hearing “*...the storm will be near rural southeastern Grant County at 7:30 p.m....*” in the warning, one could hear “*...the storm will be near Spring Valley Lake at 7:20 p.m. and Green Lake at 7:40 p.m....*”.



For details about each county’s additions in the program, including images, go to the following site:

<http://www.weather.gov/northplatte/?n=warningpoints>

NORTH PLATTE OFFICE RECEIVES BRONZE MEDAL

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT AWARDS BRONZE MEDAL TO NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE FORECAST OFFICE IN NORTH PLATTE, NEB.

The U.S. Department of Commerce has awarded its prestigious Bronze Medal to the staff of NOAA's North Platte, Nebraska, weather forecast office for efforts warning the public before and during the Nov. 27-28, 2005, ice storm and blizzard in the central United States. The Department presented the joint organization Bronze Medal to the staffs at North Platte and five other National Weather Service offices in Nebraska, Kansas and South Dakota for exemplary foresight in relaying life-saving information to the public during one of the busiest travel periods of the year.

"Saving lives and property is the central function of each National Weather Service forecast office," said Brig. Gen. David L. Johnson, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), director of NOAA's National Weather Service. "This Bronze Medal demonstrates the hard work of the staffs at North Platte and the five other forecast offices to accomplish this goal in a critical situation."

Retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator, on Friday, May 11, 2007 presented the award during a ceremony at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. John Stoppkotte and Arthur Patrick of the North Platte, NE office were present to receive the Bronze Medal. The Bronze Medal honors superior performance characterized by outstanding or significant contributions that have increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commerce Department.

The six weather forecast staffs provided exemplary service during "a winter storm ... that resulted in hundreds of miles of road closures and damages exceeding \$20 million," according to the citation. Hazardous Weather Outlooks highlighted the potential (of the storm) four days prior to the event and maintained a continuous flow of information to state and local officials, the media and the public. Now-retired Central Region Deputy Director Gary S. Foltz nominated the forecast staffs for the award.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

The National Weather Service Forecast Office in North Platte would like to thank all our Cooperative Weather Observers for your snowfall observations during the past winter. Without your snowfall reports, verifying these winter events would be hard.

CLIMATOLOGICAL CALENDER

Climatological Data for January through May 2007

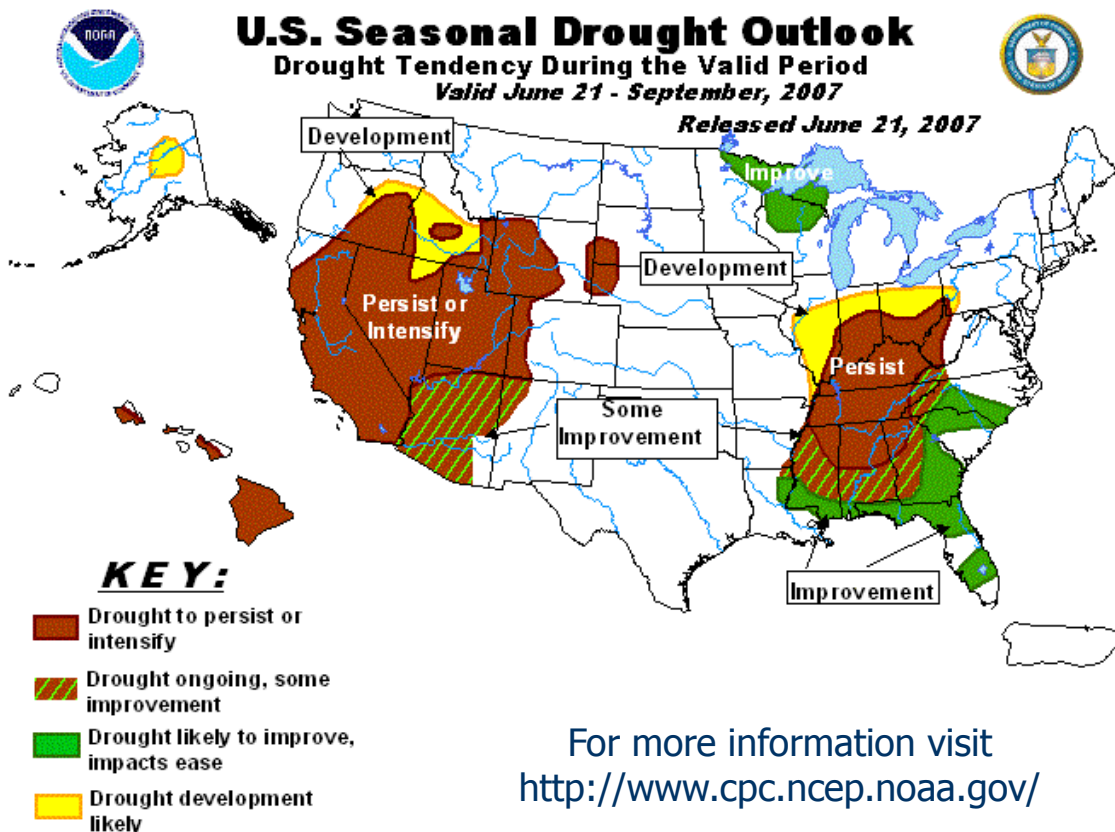
Location	Month	Average	Departure	Precipitation	Departure	Highest	Lowest
North Platte	January	17.2 °F	-6.0 °F	0.61 inches	+0.22 inches	44 °F (4th)	-12 °F (15, 16th)
	February	23.1 °F	-6.3 °F	0.81 inches	+0.30 inches	55 °F (21st)	-17 °F (15th)
	March	46.2 °F	+8.2 °F	1.56 inches	+0.32 inches	77 °F (12, 13th)	17°F (4th)
	April	46.1 °F	-2.0 °F	4.12 inches	+2.15 inches	86 °F (29th)	8 °F (7th)
	May	60.4 °F	+2.1 °F	6.49 inches	+3.15 inches	87 °F (13th)	37 °F (2nd & 8th)
Valentine	January	21.6 °F	+0.8 °F	0.25 inches	-0.05 inches	50 °F (25th)	-10 °F (15th)
	February	19.6 °F	-7.0 °F	0.90 inches	+0.42 inches	53 °F (18th)	-28 °F (15th)
	March	44.3 °F	+9.0 °F	2.05 inches	+0.94 inches	79 °F (12, 18th)	14 °F (3rd)
	April	45.1 °F	-1.0 °F	2.66 inches	+0.69 inches	83 °F (30th)	7 °F (8th)
	May	61.5 °F	+4.0 °F	5.56 inches	+2.36 inches	94 °F (13th)	37 °F (16th)

Normal High/Low Temperatures

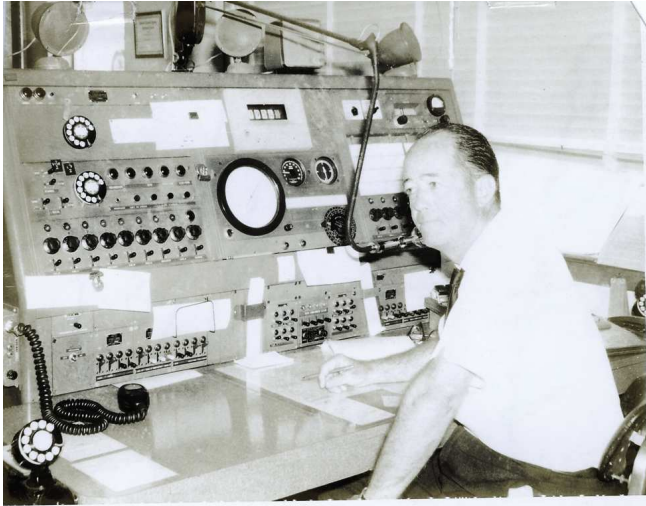
Location	June 1	July 1	Aug 1	Sept 1
North Platte	73/40	56/27	42/15	36/10

Normal High/Low Temperatures

Location	June 1	July 1	Aug 1	Sept 1
Valentine	71/39	54/26	40/14	34/8



For more information visit
<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>



National Weather Service Office During the 1950's

Lead Forecasters

Chris Buttler Cliff Cole
Kenny Roberg Mitch Power
John Springer

General Forecasters

Teresa Keck Matt Masek
Dennis Phillips Jim Connolly

Electronic Technicians

Alan Johnson Ernie Vasina

Hydrometeorological Technicians

Jim Sweet

Our Office Staff

Meteorologist in Charge

Brian Hirsch

Warning Coordination Meteorologist

Deb Blondin

Science & Operations Officer

John Stoppkotte

Electronics Systems Analyst

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Check out our website at

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