



The ArkLaMiss Observer



Winter 2006-2007 Edition

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2006: Year in Review

By: Lynn Burse,
Senior Forecaster

The year 2006 began on a warm and dry note. Several wild fires occurred that burned thousands of acres. The only red flag warnings issued during the year were issued this month for critical fire weather conditions over many areas. January went down as the 14th warmest January since 1896.

February brought more precipitation to the area, but in several forms. Large hail fell across widespread sections of the region on the 3rd when severe thunderstorms produced swaths of golf ball sized hail that damaged roofs and vehicles, and punched holes in siding. Colder temperatures brought winter weather during the week of the 18th and 20th as freezing rain left glaze from one quarter to one half inch thick across sections of north and central Mississippi and northeast Louisiana.

March marked the 40th anniversary of the Candlestick Park tornado, which occurred on March 3, 1966. This was one of the most devastating tornadoes in Mississippi history, killing 57 people and injuring more than 500. March 2006 was active in its own right with numerous reports of severe thunderstorm wind damage this month, including F1 tornadoes in Lamar and Jones counties.

The spring of 2006 was a busy severe storm season. On April 7th, hail to the size of baseballs fell over portions of north and central Mississippi. In addition to tennis ball size hail and damaging wind, F2 tornadoes were observed May 10th in Jefferson County and Catahoula Parish.

The rainfall deficit began to take its toll by early summer. Drought conditions developed over many areas during the month of June. By the end of the month, severe drought conditions were observed over many south Mississippi areas with extreme drought conditions

declared over some extreme southern sections of Mississippi, including the Mississippi coast.

A heat wave gripped the region during the middle of July. High temperatures ranged from the upper 90s to around 100 degrees for five days with overnight lows only cooling into the middle 70s. Some areas saw maximum temperatures between 100 and 102 degrees for two or more days. Also of note for July was the frequency of damaging lightning strikes reported. At least five days this past July saw damage or injury from lightning strikes, including a lightning fatality in Lowndes County.

Unusually warm and dry weather continued in August. The entire forecast area was categorized as either in a severe or extreme drought much of this month. With an average monthly temperature of 84.0 degrees at Jackson, August tied for the 9th warmest August there since 1896. The monthly

rainfall total of 1.49 inches also set the month as one of the 13th driest on record.

Drought conditions began to subside in September and cooler weather developed for the region. After an unusually warm and dry August, weather was generally cooler in September. September 2006 tied as the 15th coolest September on record for Jackson.

A significant heavy rain and flooding event occurred on October 16th and 17th. Many areas received 4 to 6 inches of rain while some locations reported 6 to 10 inches. A swath over north and central Louisiana received 12 to 17 inches of rain. The drought had ended over all of the forecast areas by the end of the month.

November, noted as the secondary severe weather season for the ArkLaMiss, lived up to this title in 2006. An intense weather system brought widespread severe storms to many locations on the 15th of the

month, including an F3 tornado in Lamar County that resulted in six injuries and another F3 in Jones County that produced significant damage to over 25 homes and uprooted hundreds of trees.

2006 ended with a December full of a variety of weather. The month began with record breaking cold on the 9th when morning lows bottomed out in the teens and twenties. Record breaking high temperatures were observed at some locations on the 17th. Foggy mornings took the weather headlines later in the month before heavy rainfall developed during the last days of the month.

On a side note, the 2006 hurricane season was classified as near normal but was less active than most other seasons since the current active Atlantic hurricane era began in 1995. This reduced activity was primarily attributed to the onset of El Niño, which suppresses conditions conducive to hurricane formation in the Atlantic.

Here are the final Jackson statistics for 2006:

Mean Temperature:	65.9 deg
Departure from Normal:	1.8 deg above normal
Annual Ranking:	Tied for 27 th warmest on record
Highest Temperature:	101 on Aug. 9 th and 15 th
Lowest Temperature:	20 on Dec. 9 th
Number of days 90F or greater:	106
Number of days 32F or lower:	37
Total Precipitation:	51.21 inches
Departure from Normal:	4.74 inches below normal
Annual Ranking:	55 th driest on record
Maximum 24-Hour Precipitation:	3.72 inches on Oct. 16-17
Snowfall:	Zero

Review of a Freezing Rain Event that Hit the ArkLaMiss

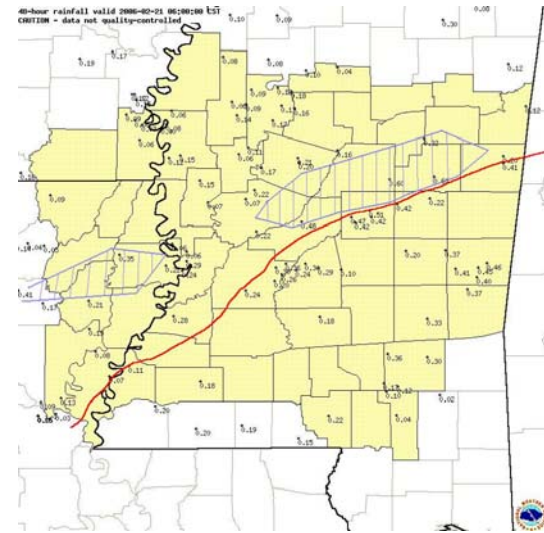
By: Davyon Hill,
Former Student Volunteer and
ULM Student

On February 16, 2006, the Jackson County Warning Area (CWA) experienced unseasonably high temperatures just ahead of an approaching cold front. Many areas from Northeast Louisiana to Northern Mississippi had highs in the mid 70s and lows around 60. Then on February 17, just after midnight, a very shallow, but strong, cold front pushed through the area, causing temperatures to dip in the 30s. Temperatures held in the upper 30s on February 17, and most of the day on the 18th, before finally dropping below freezing. Many places west and northwest of Jackson stayed below freezing for the next 24-36 hours.

By 7pm on Sunday, February 19, a series of upper level disturbances

tracking over the area, produced light rain and drizzle. With the shallow cold air in place and temperatures in the mid to upper 20s, the precipitation began to freeze on contact with any surface. Many of the elevated roads (bridges and overpasses) became treacherous to travel on. The icy road conditions Sunday night produced at least two fatalities – in Richwood and Delhi, Louisiana and more than 50 auto wrecks throughout northeastern Louisiana. Crashes included a pileup of as many as a dozen cars on a U.S. 165 overpass in Richwood and a six-car wreck on Interstate 20 just inside the western Richland Parish limit. Anywhere north and west of Jackson experienced similar accidents. The freezing rain event ended by 10 am Monday, February 20 as temperatures finally rose above freezing. This was the only

significant winter precipitation event in the ArkLaMiss in the winter of 2006.



A map of the County Warning Area (CWA). Areas north of the red line experienced freezing rain during the event with accumulations of ¼ to ½ inch. Places in the hatched areas received the greatest amount of freezing rain.

Severe Weather Awareness Week

By: Ashley Wester,
Journeyman Forecaster/Editor

In Mississippi, severe weather can literally strike any time of the year or any time of the day. Severe weather can strike with thunderstorms and hurricanes, and take the form of hail, flooding, lightning, strong winds, and of course, tornadoes. It is important

to be prepared when severe weather strikes. The week of February 19-23, 2007 will be designated as Severe Weather Awareness Week, which is a time set to remind everyone to practice safety precautions, so that you will not be caught unprepared in the event that severe weather strikes. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when preparing your plan of action

for severe weather:

- Tornadoes (and Strong Winds):**
1. If you live in a mobile home or trailer, get to a house or sturdy building. Even tied down mobile homes can be rolled over by weak tornadoes.
 2. Hurry to a room or hallway that has no windows and put as

many walls as you can get between you and the outside of the building.

3. Stay away from windows and protect your head.

4. If you are in a car, do not try to outrun a tornado. Get out of the car and lie flat in a ditch or other low area and try to protect your head.

5. Do not take cover under roadway overpasses. Tornado winds are too strong and can easily pull you out or hammer you with glass, wood, or metal. It is safer to lie flat in a ditch or ravine away from your vehicle.

REMEMBER: Think about getting as LOW as you can, getting to the CENTER of the building, and most importantly cover your HEAD!

Lightning (The #2 Weather Related Killer in the United States!)

1. Get in a building that has water pipes or electrical lines. These will lead a lightning strike away from the building and into the ground.

A very unsafe building for lightning has only a roof or a roof and walls but no wiring or pipes extending into the ground.

2. Do not take a bath or shower. Use phones ONLY in an emergency. Try not to use electrical appliances except for getting weather information.

Telephone lines, electrical wires and metal water pipes can carry electricity from lightning.

3. If you see lightning and can not get to a sturdy shelter, get inside a hard top car (not a convertible) and keep the windows up.

4. If you are in a boat or swimming, get back to land immediately.

5. If you can't find shelter, find a low spot away from trees, fences, and poles.

6. If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees.

7. If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stands on end, lightning may soon strike nearby. Squat low to the ground on the balls of our feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Try to make yourself the smallest target possible with only the balls of your feet touching the ground.

REMEMBER: If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning!

Flooding (The #1 Weather Related Killer in the United States!)

1. Do not cross a flowing stream on foot where water is above your ankles. Only 6 inches of water can knock a person off their feet!

2. If you are driving, don't try to cross water-filled areas of unknown depths. Only 2 feet of water can carry any vehicle off the road.

3. If your vehicle stalls, abandon it immediately and go to higher ground. Rapidly rising water may sweep the vehicle and its occupants away. Many deaths have been caused by attempts to move stalled vehicles.

4. Be especially cautious at night. It's harder to recognize water danger then.

5. Don't try to outrun a flood on foot. If you see or hear it coming, move to higher ground immediately.

6. Be familiar with the land features where you live, work, and play. It may be in a low area, near a drainage ditch or small stream, or below a dam.

REMEMBER: Turn around, don't drown!

Our challenge to you during the week of February 19-23, 2007 is to practice these drills. Make sure you know what to do in case severe weather threatens.

Practicing these drills will allow you to act calmly and quickly during severe weather, which may save your life! Be prepared!

In addition to practicing these drills, it is a good idea to teach the safety tips to children, as well. In an attempt to do this, each year the National Weather Service office in Jackson, MS holds a Severe Weather Awareness Essay Contest for middle school students. The object of this contest is to allow students to learn these safety tips while practicing their creative writing skills. The student will be required to write a creative story about severe weather, and incorporate some of the severe weather safety tips into the essay. If you are interested in participating in this contest, please contact Ashley Wester or Alan Campbell for more information at (601) 936-2189.

Big Change in Staff at NWS Jackson

By: Alan Gerard,
Meteorologist-in-Charge

A new face will be greeting visitors to our office in Jackson. At the end of December, Patsy Peden, our Administrative Support Assistant, retired after 22 years with our office, and 34 years with the federal government. Many of

you have talked with Patsy over the years, and she became a friend to many of our longtime customers and partners. Patsy won a number of awards during her distinguished career, and her presence in our office will be deeply missed.

The new person in the chair in our reception area is Karen Dungan. Karen comes to us after a 20-plus

year career in the Mississippi Air National Guard, from which she recently retired. She has extensive experience in administrative support as well as information technology. Karen is already doing a great job in this new role, and I know that she will be happy to help you out whenever you call or visit our office.

!!Fun Stuff for the Kids!!

Make a Thermometer: (Get Help from Mom or Dad)

Materials:

Water
Rubbing Alcohol (Do Not Drink This!)
Clear, Narrow-necked Plastic Bottle (1-ounce water bottles work well)
Food Coloring
Clear Plastic Drinking Straw
Modeling Clay

Procedure:

1. Pour equal parts of water and rubbing alcohol into the bottle filling about 1/8 to 1/4 of the bottle.
2. Add a couple of drops of food coloring and mix.
3. Put the straw in bottle (Do Not Drink Mixture!), but don't let the straw touch the bottom.
4. Use the modeling clay to seal the neck of the bottle, so the straw stays in place.
5. Hold your hands on the bottle to warm the liquid, or place the bottle in a warmer spot, and watch what happens to the mixture in the straw.

The liquid expanded when it was warmed. As it expanded, the colored mixture moved up through the straw. If the bottle were to get hot enough, the liquid would have come through the top of the straw.

Reaching Out to You!

*By Ashley Wester,
Editor/Journeyman Forecaster and
Alan Campbell,
Journeyman Forecaster*

Our goal here at the National Weather Service in Jackson, MS is to protect life and property. In an attempt to do this, we issue various types of watches, warnings, and advisories to alert you, the public, of impending hazardous weather that is either occurring or could possibly occur in your area.

Knowing that hazardous weather is possible in your area is one thing, but what should you do if hazardous weather is threatening you and/or your family?

When hazardous weather occurs, seconds can literally mean the difference between life and death. Staying calm and knowing the correct instructions to follow could save your life. This is why the National Weather Service in

Jackson, MS believes it is important to educate people about severe weather safety and preparedness. In our efforts to accomplish this task, we offer various forms of outreach, such as talks and setting up booths at area events, just to name a few. We provide these services for any community, school, public/private group, or business that is interested in learning about severe weather safety and how to prepare for it.

We also offer office tours that allow you to see what the National Weather Service is and what we do.

If you would like to schedule to have someone come and talk to your community, school, group, or business, or if you would like for us to set up a booth at your next event, please contact, Warning Coordinator Meteorologist Steve Wilkinson, Alan Campbell, or

Ashley Wester. If you would like to schedule an office tour, please contact Karen Dungan or Marty Pope. All can be reached at the National Weather Service in Jackson, MS at (601) 936-2189.



Cream: Jackson, MS service area
Blue: Memphis, TN service area
Purple: New Orleans, LA service area
Green: Mobile, AL service area

Some events in which we have recently participated:

-January 26, 2007: Meteorologists Alan Campbell and Ashley Wester participated as judges at the Brandon Middle School 7th grade science fair.

-January 20, 2007: Meteorologist Ashley Wester visited Tougaloo College to speak with high school juniors and seniors in the Upward Bound Math and Science Program. Topics discussed mainly focused on basic meteorology and severe weather safety.

Thank You!!!

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