



# Central Illinois Lincoln Logs

Volume 5 Issue 4

Winter 2002

## New WCM at WFO Central Illinois is Chris Miller

### Notes from the WCM

by Chris Miller, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

**T**his is my first contribution to this newsletter as the WCM, so I'll take a moment to introduce myself. I am very new to the position of Warning Coordination Meteorologist because I have only been on the job for less than 4 weeks. However, I am not new to the Lincoln NWS office, or central Illinois. I have been in central Illinois my entire 14 ½ year career with the NWS. I spent 7 years at WSO Peoria as a meteorological intern, and at times, the Acting Official-in-Charge. The past 7 ½ years I have been at WFO Lincoln as a journey-level forecaster and then lead forecaster. I have been able to meet many people in the emergency management, fire, law enforcement, HAM radio, media, business, education and volunteer sectors across this region. I look forward to working with all of you again in my

new position!

We have already had a brief taste of winter weather with a few inches of snow in some locations...especially south of Interstate 70...and temperatures dipping into the teens. This is the time to make those final preparations for the inevitable winter season. Winter Weather Preparedness week was November 17-23, but it is still not too late to review some important items:

- \* Know the difference between a Watch, Warning and Advisory
- \* Have a family protection plan in case you lose power or heat
- \* Keep in mind the dangers of snow shoveling - especially senior citizens
- \* Give your vehicle a check-up for winter weather temperatures and conditions
- \* When traveling, tell a friend or family member your route, and be cautious near snowplows

There was a change made dealing with the criteria the Weather Service uses for a Snow Advisory. If 4 to 6 inches of snow is forecast to fall...it will now be an advisory...rather than a Heavy Snow Warning. When snowfall is forecast to exceed 6 inches...a Heavy Snow Warning will be issued.

Another change made was the addition of a Freezing Fog Advisory. A freezing fog advisory

#### In this issue...

Notes from the WCM .....	1
From the Desk of the State Climatologist ..	2
AMS Conference .....	4
Joint WFO Cooperative Weather Observer Appreciation Day .....	4

is defined as a “very light ice accumulation from predominately freezing fog”.

Many types of winter information can be found on our homepage at: [www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ilx)  
Additional safety information can also be obtained from:

IEMA

<http://www.state.il.us/iema/>

Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org>

National Weather Service

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/winter/index.shtml>

Operation Ice Pack

<http://www.icepack.org/>

Latest Winter Watches and Warnings

<http://iwin.nws.noaa.gov/iwin/il/winterstorm.html>  
1

IDOT Road Conditions Website

[http://dot.state.il.us/operations/mo\\_state.html](http://dot.state.il.us/operations/mo_state.html)

or you can call 1-800-452-4368 for road conditions.

I have already scheduled several severe weather spotter talks in parts of central Illinois for February and March, 2003. I encourage emergency managers to contact me soon so we can schedule spotter talks before the peak severe weather season arrives in April and May. A goal of mine is also to expand the number of communities that are **STORMREADY**. Seven communities have been declared **STORMREADY** in central and southeast Illinois thus far, with another community, and a county nearing completion. The devastating and tragic outbreak of storms during the Veteran’s Day weekend in the Midwest and South was one of the biggest severe weather events, in terms of areal coverage and magnitude, in decades. The

town of Van Wert, Ohio was hit especially hard by a strong tornado that ripped through homes and businesses. There were injuries and fatalities, but it could have been worse...a lot worse. One of the main reasons casualties were held to a minimum was because Van Wert, Ohio is a **STORMREADY** community. They were prepared. They communicated accurate and timely information to their citizens which saved hundreds of lives. Preparedness...communication ...working together to save lives. That is why we are here, that is our mission.

## From the Desk of the State Climatologist

by Jim Angel, State Climatologist

I had a wonderful time at the Coop Appreciation Day at Starved Rock State Park in November. While there, I showed some graphs of how the temperature has changed in Illinois over time. The data used for the graphs come from a data set prepared by the National Climatic Data Center. The data set contains statewide average temperature records back to 1895 and is based primarily on cooperative weather records.

The average annual temperature for Illinois is shown in Figure 1. These are departures from the long-term average from 1895 to 2001 so that you can quickly see what periods were warm or cold. The average annual temperature shows a pattern similar to that of the US with a warming trend through the 1940s, followed by a cooling trend through the late 1970s and early 1980s, and finally a warming trend through the present. The big difference between the Illinois and US temperatures is that the warming since 1980 is much more pronounced in the US record. This figure illustrates many of the issues in the debate about the degree and manner of global warming due to increased greenhouse gasses. As already

Illinois - Temperature

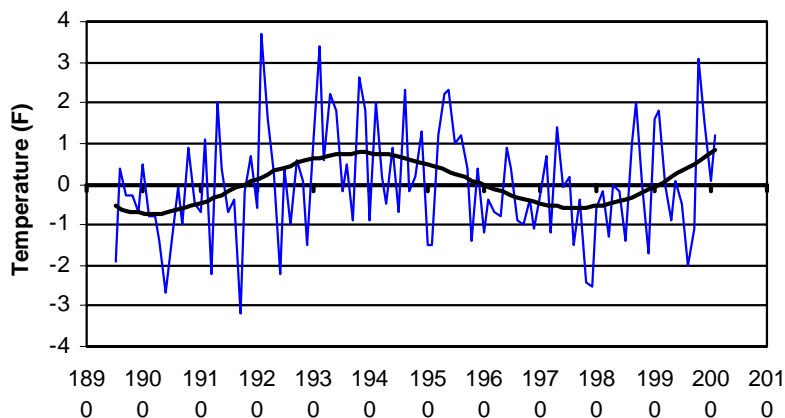


Figure 1

suggested, the pattern of climate change does vary from place to place, regardless of the causes.

The record for Illinois shows that our climate is not just about steady trends but appears to have a number of cycles in it. We are beginning to identify and understand more and more natural cycles in the climate system, many of them related to the ocean. Therefore, it is very hard to sort out what is part of the natural cycle and what

part is due to human influence.

Our warmest decades in Illinois were the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. While temperatures were running only 1 to 2 degrees warmer than the long-term average, it was a period noted for hot and frequent droughts. This suggests that relatively small changes in the average temperature lead to severe impacts in some cases.

Another thing you might notice about the figure is that the temperature bounces around from year to year. In fact, our coldest year in Illinois was 1917, followed four years later by our warmest year of 1921. The scatter in temperatures was highest from 1910 to 1940 and lowest from 1960 to the mid 1980s. It's interesting to note that most of our advances in agriculture production occurred during this so-called benign period between 1960 and mid 1980s when the weather was much more cooperative than either the 1930s or 1950s.

Most of the changes in the temperature in Illinois have occurred in winter with surprisingly little change in spring, summer, or fall. On closer examination, the changes in temperature in winter are largely due to February (Figure 2) with some contribution from January. February warmed by some 8 degrees before 1940, cooled about 3 degrees until the late 1970s, and warmed by more than 6 degrees since then. It is not clear why the changes are so strong and confined to this time of year.

February

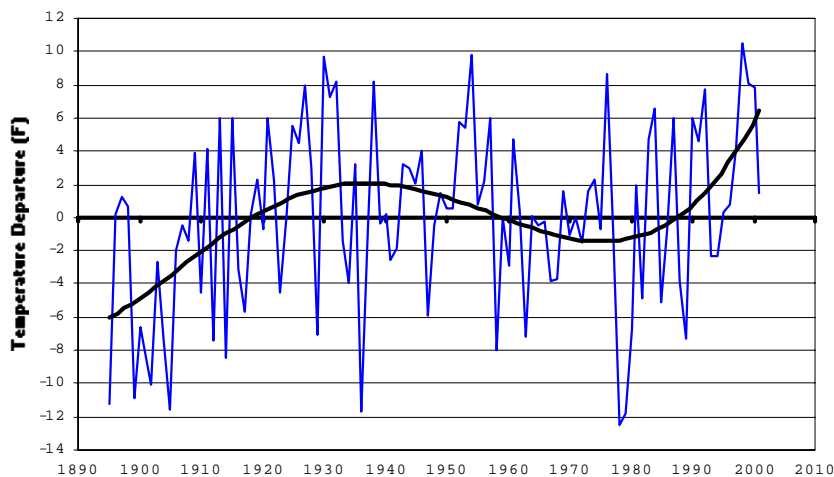


Figure 2

## AMS Conference

By Mike Tannura, Committee Chairperson

The Central Illinois Chapter of the American Meteorological Society is pleased to announce the Midwest Extreme and Hazardous Weather Regional Conference. The conference will take place in Champaign, IL on Friday and Saturday, October 18-19, 2003.

The Midwest region of the U.S. (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, and Minnesota) experiences a particularly wide range of severe weather conditions throughout the year. This conference offers an opportunity for forecasters, researchers, media, public officials, and the public to exchange critical information on these important weather phenomena. Talks are solicited on Midwest severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, flash flooding, snowstorms, ice storms, lake-effect snowstorms, lake-breeze storms, heat and cold waves.

The Conference will include talks of broad interest as well as break-out sessions on specific types of hazards. Information on registration and a call for papers will appear shortly in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society and at the conference web page [www.c-il-ams.org](http://www.c-il-ams.org). The Regional Conference Committee is soliciting topics for sessions and invited speakers. Abstracts are due June 15, 2003 with extended manuscripts due August 15, 2003. The pre-registration deadline is September 15, 2003. Please contact Committee Chairperson Mike Tannura for additional information (email: [conference@c-il-ams.org](mailto:conference@c-il-ams.org)).

## Joint WFO Cooperative Weather Observer Appreciation Day

by Billy Ousley, DAPM

National Weather Service Forecast Offices in Chicago, Lincoln, Ill.; and Davenport, Iowa; joined the Illinois State Climatologist and super station WGN to honor some 225 volunteer Cooperative Weather observers for dedicated service to Illinois residents on November 3, 2002. The event, held at Starved Rock State Park in La Salle county, Illinois, not only recognized the contributions of some 225 volunteer weather observers with a luncheon, social gathering and presentations by several speakers but also served as a training session and a forum to present several length of service and special service awards to participants.

Officials from National Weather Service forecast offices in Chicago (Bill Nelson, HMT), Lincoln, Ill. (Billy Ousley, DAPM), and Davenport, Iowa (Terry Simmons, DAPM); organized the event held in La Salle County, southwest of Chicago, to recognize the on-going efforts and sacrifices required of dedicated volunteer weather observers, according to data collection manager Billy Ousley of the Central Illinois office in Lincoln. "Volunteer weather observers serve a key role in the National Weather Service by providing weather data from remote sites, many of which are difficult to reach," Ousley said. "We organized this event to give them some well-deserved recognition and to provide them an opportunity to visit with and learn from their peers."

Speakers for the event included:  
WGN TV Meteorologist Tom Skilling, Illinois State Climatologist James Angel, NWS Cooperative Program Director Rainer Dombrowsky, WFO/LOT Robert Somrek.

WGN Meteorologist Tom Skilling, later presented with a special service award for his continued support of the National Weather Service, spoke to the assemblage about how weather data collected by cooperative observers is used by his station and other media. Rainer Dombrowsky of National Weather Service Headquarters in Silver Spring, Md., talked about the on-going modernization to bring more automation to the cooperative observer program. State Climatologist James Angel spoke on the importance of cooperative observations to the public and other weather product users. And, WFO/LOT Lead Forecaster Robert Somrek spoke on a new edition of the web-based WXCODER, called WXCODER II, demonstrated updates to the program and asked for Cooperative Observer volunteers to test the program.

Here are the awards that were given out...



DAPM Billy Ousley presented Morrisonville observer Dorothy Bullard with a 40 year Length of Service Award in November. Dorothy has been the Morrisonville observer since December 1962.



Varna observer Warren Chamberlain was presented with a 15 year Length of Service Award in November, by DAPM Billy Ousley. Warren has been the Varna observer since October 1987.



DAPM Billy Ousley presented Petersburg 2SSW observer Mary Ortgessen with a Special Service Award in November. Mary took frequent manual river readings of the Sangamon River at Petersburg during a near-record flood event in May, often having to travel several miles out of her way to reach the gage.



Lacon observer John Kenyon was presented with a 15 year Length of Service Award in November. John began taking observations in November 1987.

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.crh.noaa.gov/ilx>

Your comments are welcomed and can be addressed to either editor at our office. Spring Central Illinois Lincoln Logs Issue to be issued by the end of January 2003.

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