

Winter Storm

December 22-23, 2004

2004

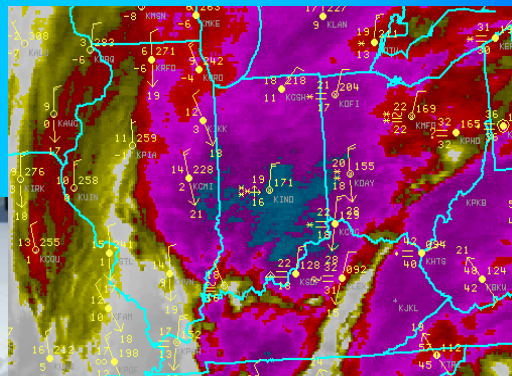


A snow-packed I-65 makes travel difficult near Seymour, IN.
Courtesy of The Seymour Tribune.

The joyful holiday season of 2004 was quickly tousel when mother nature threw in a curve ball just before Christmas. Winter Storm 2004 hammered the nation's heartland from the Texas Panhandle to the Great Lakes with heaping amounts of snow. This historic storm is remembered in the Indianapolis, Indiana area as one of the heaviest snowfall events in a matter of only 48 hours.

Winter Storm 2004 pounded the Ohio Valley with two heavy bursts of snow separated by only a few hours. Each storm curved southeast across the Texas Panhandle and then lifted northeast across the Ohio Valley blanketing central and southern Indiana with significant snow. Snow fell from Mitchell to North Vernon at rates approaching 4 inches per hour totaling up to 20-30 inches in southeast Indiana. A swath bounded by Vincennes, Terre Haute, Muncie, and Kokomo saw totals of 8-12 inches with snowfall amounts tapering off to just a few inches near Lafayette. In Indianapolis, about 10 inches of snow accumulated over the two day period. To top it all off, bitter cold temperatures as low as -21°F greeted area residents Christmas morning. The December 2004 winter storm is one residents in the Ohio Valley will not soon forget!

Snowfall Totals			
Station	County	IN Location	Accumulation
Seymour	Jackson	South Central	29.0 inches
North Vernon	Jennings	Southeast	26.0 inches
Greensburg	Decatur	Central	24.5 inches
Medora	Jackson	South Central	21.5 inches
Alpine	Fayette	East Central	20.0 inches
Brookville	Franklin	Southeast	17.0 inches
Stendal	Pike	Southwest	16.7 inches
Freedom	Owen	West Central	14.0 inches
Bluffton	Wells	Northeast	5.0 inches
Rochester	Fulton	North Central	4.0 inches
Michigan City	Porter	Northwest	2.5 inches



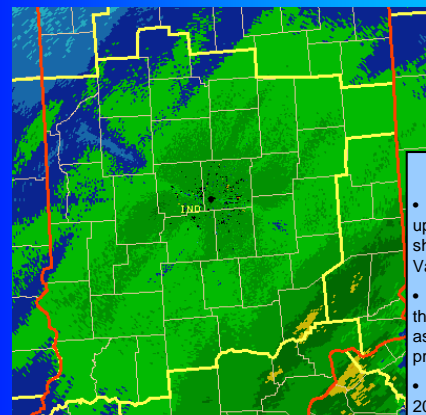
Enhanced infrared satellite image showing deep-layered clouds (purple/blue) producing heavy snow over central and southeastern Indiana. Surface observations plotted on top of the image indicated a strong cold front over eastern Ohio and eastern Kentucky with very cold air west of the front.



Heather Perry, a graduate student at Indiana University, attempts to clear the snow away from her car in Bloomington.
Courtesy of Chris Howell, Bloomington Herald-Times



Jack Fike, of South Washington Street in Bloomington, uses his snow blower to clear his driveway.
Courtesy of Chris Howell, Bloomington Herald-Times



NWS Doppler radar reflectivity image showing a band of very heavy snow (dark green/yellow) across parts of southeastern Indiana and another band of moderately heavy snow (medium green) over central Indiana (red lines are Indiana border).

Storm Impacts

- Very heavy snow accumulations and snow drifts up to 5 feet made travel extremely difficult and shut down interstates in parts of the Ohio River Valley: I-65 (10 hours) and I-74 (20 hours).
- Total property losses totaled \$255 million across the Ohio Valley. Locally some counties paid out as much as \$35,000 for snow removal and property damage.
- Local businesses felt the sting of Winter Storm 2004; some lost up to 80% of expected sales. Large communities saw profit losses up to \$100,000.

Courtesy of Illinois State Water Survey and Bloomfield Evening World



Fourwinds dock G, left, collapsed due to the heavy snow. Don Hawkins, right, who works at Fourwinds, waits at the gate to the docks on Lake Monroe south of Bloomington.
Courtesy of Jeremy Hogan, Bloomington Herald-Times