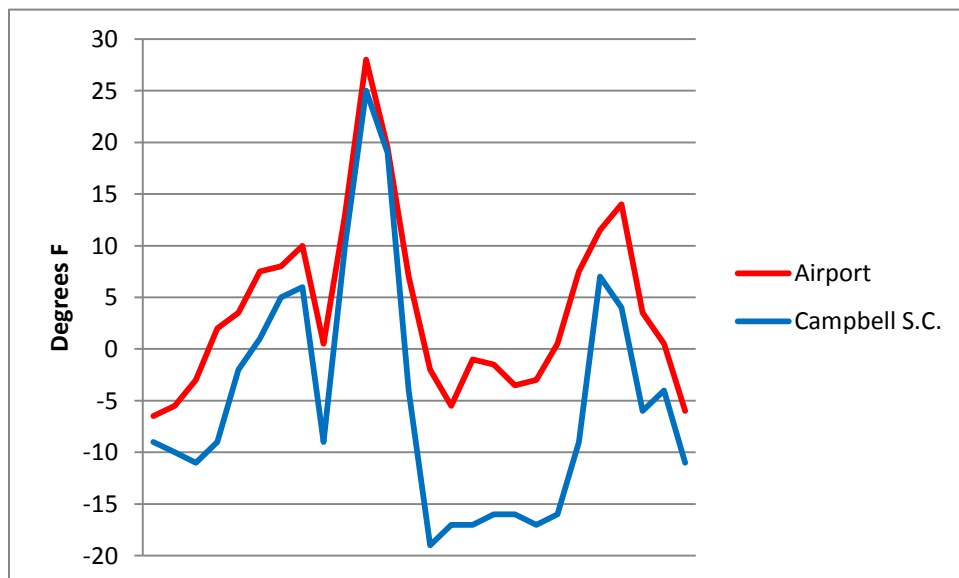


On the Cool Side- some preliminary thoughts on January 2012.

NWS Anchorage, Jan 26

You may have noticed that it has been rather cool (cold) so far in January around the greater Anchorage area. How cold? Through January 26th Ted Stevens International Airport has had an average temperature of 3.8°, which is well below normal. If this temperature were to remain unchanged for the next five days this would place Jan 2012 as the 4th coldest since the sensor was moved to the airport complex in late 1953. The older Anchorage temperature records which date back to 1917 were taken at various locations in the downtown area and Ship Creek-areas which tend to be cooler than the airport making it difficult to make exact comparisons. Nevertheless the coldest January on record for Anchorage was minus 1.0° in 1947. The last two cold January's occurred in 1996 (6.0°) and 1989 (3.4°).

As most everyone knows west Anchorage tends to be warmer in the winter months than most of the rest of the community. For example, temperatures at the Campbell Airstrip Science Center so far this month are minus 4.8°, almost 9° cooler than the airport. If we ignore the fact that the Hillside got hammered by high winds in December, then elevation does have some advantages; Glen Alps has been a balmy 8.2°, which is 13° warmer than at the base of the hill. In case you were wondering the coldest daily temperature typically occurs from 9-10 AM with the warmest in the 3-4 PM period. There were two brief warm spells the first on the 11th due to a modest windstorm and again on the 22nd-23rd.



East Anchorage tends to be colder than the rest of the town for two primary reasons: it is further removed from Cook Inlet, which despite its ice cover does add some heat into the mix. Secondly, in the absence of

wind, cold air tends to drain down the Hillside and pool up in Muldoon across to Bicentennial Park. This deeper pool of cold air tends to shield the ground from any light to moderate winds that may develop. The coldest stretch has been from the 14th-21st where the average

temperature at the airport was minus1° and at Campbell Airstrip minus 17°. The Palmer area has been on par with Anchorage, the Palmer Airport has an average temperature of 3.0° so far this month.

If you have been suffering through this cold period you might find some slight comfort in the fact that much of the state has been cold or colder as well. The average temperature in Fairbanks so far this month is on the order of minus 24° and Bettles minus 33°. Barrow in comparison has only been minus 19°. The current January temperatures are looking like they will rival January of 1989 which was one of the coldest on record for many stations around the state.

We will offer a more comprehensive review sometime in early February

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