

October's Weather Ends Up Frightful, Not Delightful

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NORMAN - Northerly winds ushering in gray skies and high temperatures in the 30's and 40's – Oklahomans are accustomed to this type of weather during the Holiday season. Unfortunately, the calendar still reads the end of October, and Santa Claus still has a couple of months to get the sleigh ready for his journey around the world. Despite the date, for most Oklahomans, this October will be remembered as one of the coldest and wettest. In this case, that memory will be more fact than fiction. Data from the Oklahoma Mesonet indicate that the month was the 3rd-coldest and 17th-wettest October the state has experienced since record keeping began in 1892.

The statewide-averaged temperature finished 5.3 degrees below normal at 56.7 degrees. The month started rather warm with high temperatures in the 80s and 90s throughout the first week. However, a shift in the upper-level wind patterns to northwesterly flow has allowed a steady series of cold fronts to sweep across the state. Those cold fronts, combined with an influx of upper-level storms from the Four Corners area, plunged the state into a cold, dreary weather pattern that it has yet to escape.

That pattern is a welcome sight to some – notably, Oklahoma's farmers. Still feeling the effects of a year-and-a-half-long drought that plagued the area, many western Oklahoma farmers welcomed the abundant rainfall. Much of western and northern Oklahoma received greater than 250 percent of their normal precipitation totals for the month. The Panhandle, a region hit particularly hard by the drought, received an average of 4.17 inches of precipitation, 2.71 inches above normal. Statewide, the average rainfall for the month was 1.85 inches greater than normal at 5.13 inches. Northeastern and east central Oklahoma were the only areas of the state to miss the generous rainfall amounts, as both finished slightly below normal for the month. The Cherokee Mesonet site in north central Oklahoma reported the greatest monthly precipitation total with 12.77 inches. The Mesonet site at Nowata, in northeastern Oklahoma, had the lowest rainfall total for the month with only 1.58 inches.

According to preliminary data from the National Weather Service, Oklahoma City's weather mirrored that of the rest of the state. Oklahoma City's temperatures were below normal for much of October, culminating on the 24th with a record-low maximum temperature for that day of 44 degrees, which broke the previous record of 48 degrees on Oct. 24th, 1949. The average high temperature of 64.6 degrees for the month was 8.8 degrees less than normal. In all, Oklahoma City's average temperatures were below normal on 26 out of 31 days. The average temperature for the month of 56.9 degrees falls 5.1 degrees below normal, and ranks as the 6th coldest October on record in Oklahoma City. The excessive cloudiness and precipitation had one under-appreciated

benefit, however, acting as a thermal insulator for the surface. Despite the chilly weather, the average low temperature at Oklahoma City was 48.8 degrees – only 1.8 degrees less than normal. Oklahoma City’s precipitation total of 4.64 inches finished at 1.0 inch above normal.

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