

MARCH 14, 1999 Heavy Snowfall

A major snowstorm dumped as much as a foot of snow over parts of far southern Illinois. The hardest hit area was the Marion-Carbondale area, where 11 to 12 inches was measured. Because most of the precipitation fell as rain further south, little if any snow occurred from Metropolis to Shawneetown along the Ohio River. There was a sharp division between no snow and heavy snow. For example, in Johnson County (between Metropolis and Carbondale), accumulations ranged from 1 inch in the southeast corner to 7 inches in the northwest corner of the county. The swath of heaviest snow extended from Carbondale to Mount Carmel, where 9 to 12 inches fell. Other totals included 8 inches in Mount Vernon and Du Quoin, and 4 inches between Cairo and Anna. Snowfall rates were 1 to 2 inches per hour for several hours.

This overtaxed the ability of most road crews to keep up with removal efforts. Interstate 57 was closed in the vicinity of Interstate 24 for several hours Sunday due to stranded tractor trailer rigs. In Johnson County, at least 30 vehicles slid off roads near Goreville. Drifting snow hampered road crews, forcing them to make several passes through previously cleared roads. Four-wheel drive vehicles and tractors were in high demand as smaller vehicles became stuck. Scattered power outages were reported due to heavy wet snow on power lines. Many schools cancelled classes the day following the storm. Many churches cancelled Sunday morning services. Carbondale's University Mall closed for the day. Numerous accidents occurred on area roadways, including Interstates 57 and 64. Only a few involved injuries. Rapidly warming temperatures began to melt the snow quickly within 48 hours.

Heavy snow, between 4 and 8 inches, fell over parts of southwest Indiana away from the Ohio River. Close to the river, the precipitation fell mainly in the form of rain. There was a sharp division between little snow and heavy snow. Amounts ranged from just an inch or so in the Rockport area of Spencer County to as much as 8 or 9 inches in the Princeton area of Gibson County. In Evansville, amounts were near 4 inches.

12 to 15 inches of snow fell over parts of southeast Missouri. The precipitation fell mainly as rain near the Bootheel, so little if any snow was reported from New Madrid to Charleston. There was a sharp division between heavy snow and no snow at all. Only one county to the northwest of New Madrid, 5 to 7 inches of snow fell from Dexter and Bloomfield to Benton. The jackpot of snow totals extended from Perryville and northern Cape Girardeau County to Greenville in Wayne County. In this area, where the rain changed to snow the soonest, around 14 inches of wet snow fell. Snowfall rates were 1 to 2 inches per hour for several hours. Relatively few travel problems were reported, mainly because the storm occurred on a Sunday morning, a time of relatively light traffic flow. Those vehicles that were on the roads encountered treacherous conditions. Several accidents occurred in Cape Girardeau. Some vehicles became stuck in drifts in areas that received a foot or more of snow. Many school systems, including Cape Girardeau, were closed the day after the storm. Many businesses were closed.