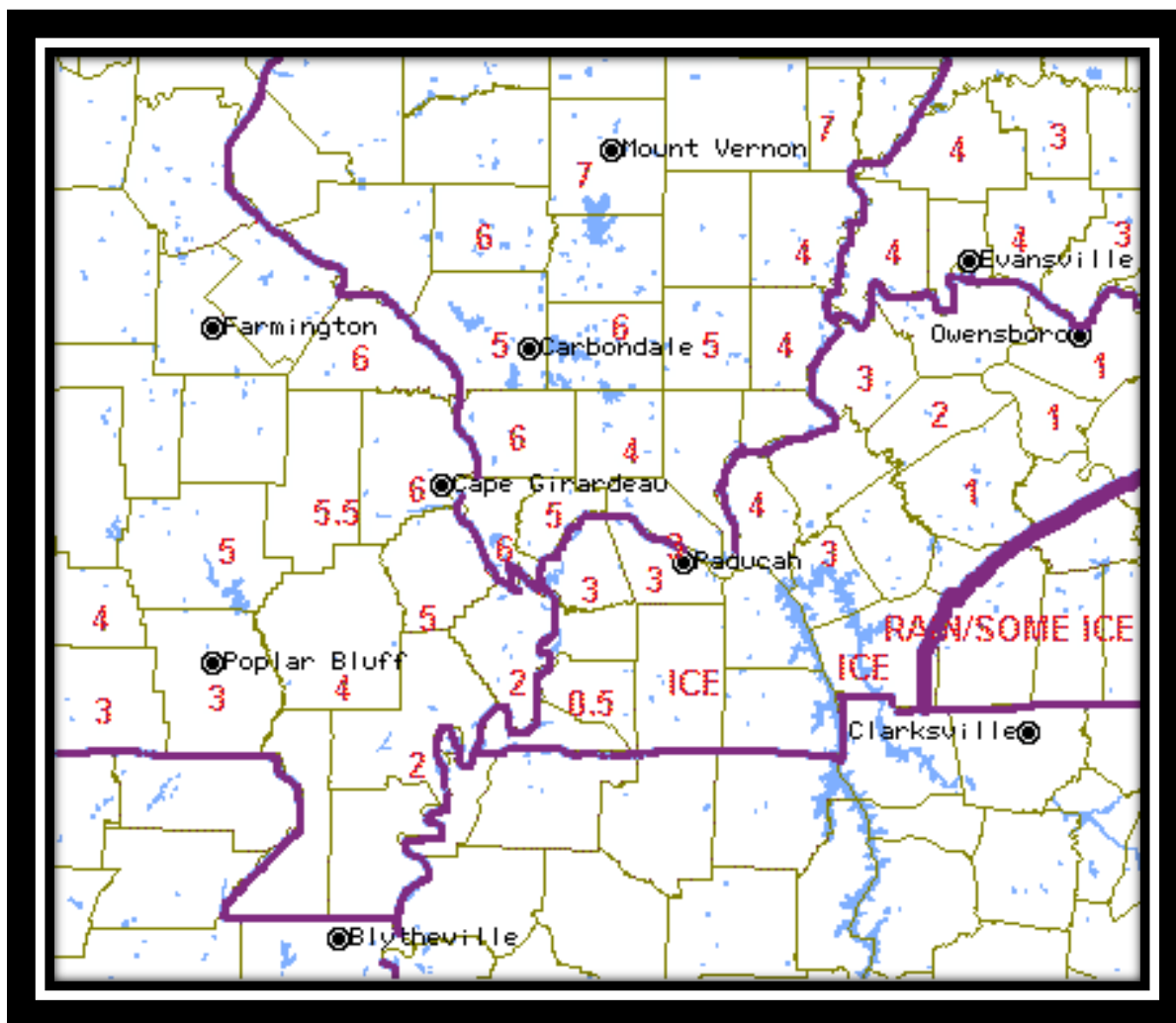


WINTER STORM SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 13, 2000

On December 11, a strong cold front swept across the central U.S., bringing arctic air southward across much of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. Bitterly cold wind chills from 10 to 20 below were experienced as far south as western Kentucky and southeast Missouri. This arctic air set the stage for the winter storm that would follow on December 13. A Winter Storm Watch was issued very early on the morning of December 12, and then upgraded to a Winter Storm Warning for most areas later on the 12th. By the early morning hours of the 13th, all areas were under a Winter Storm Warning.

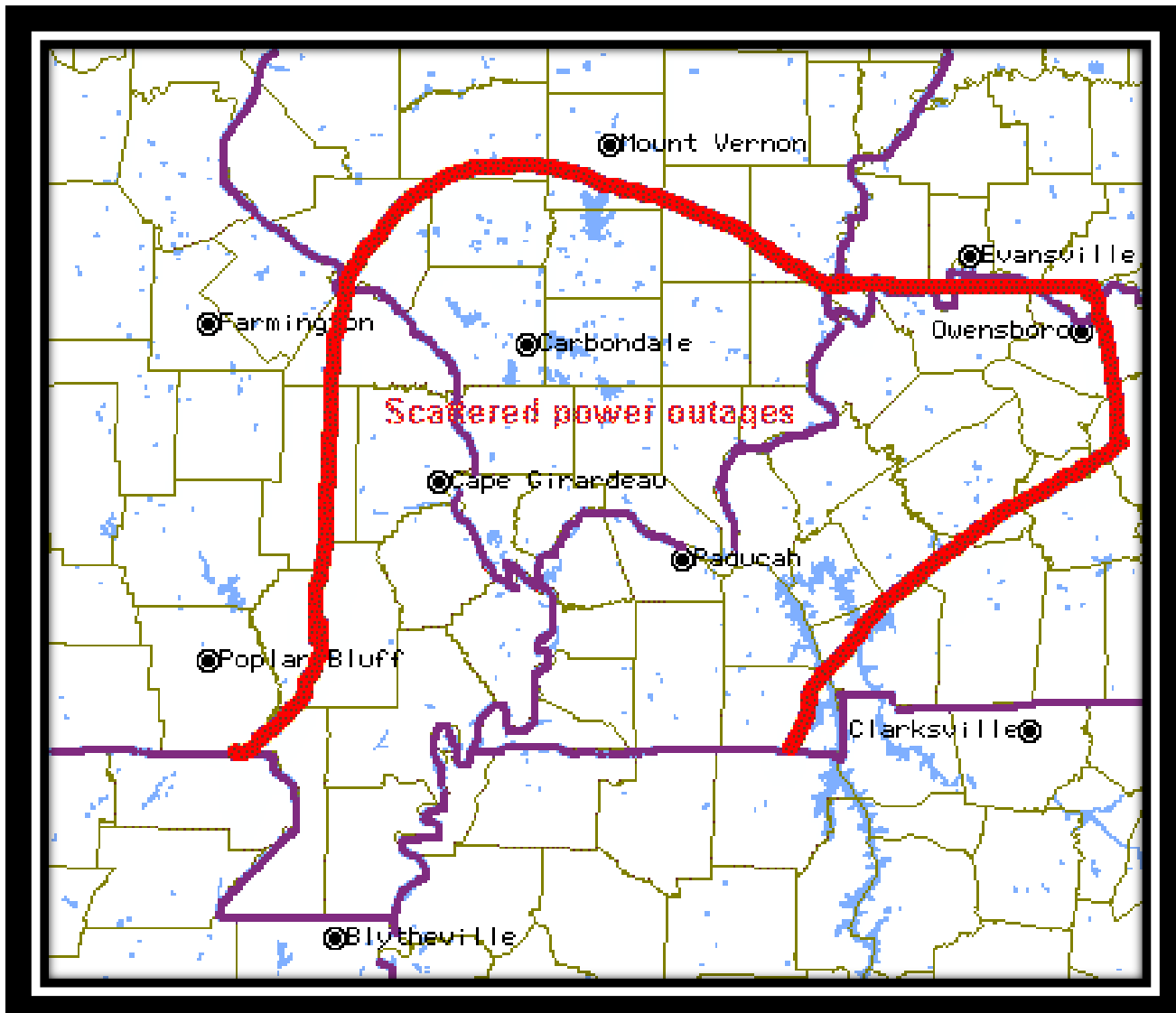
A strong upper level disturbance moved east from the southern Rockies on December 12, crossing the southern Plains early on the 13th. As a result, a strong south wind flow developed just above ground level. Within the lowest 1000 feet of the atmosphere, the wind flow remained easterly, keeping the cold arctic air in place right near the surface. A large amount of snow, sleet, and freezing rain fell in most areas. The liquid equivalent, or the amount measured after it was all melted, was around 1 inch over southwest Indiana, southern Illinois, and southeast Missouri. Over western Kentucky, 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch was the norm. The precipitation began as snow before sunrise on Dec. 13. See the snowfall map below for snowfall totals.



The snow changed to sleet and freezing rain from southeast to northwest during the morning, but not before 6 to 7 inches of snow blanketed the ground from Cape Girardeau and Carbondale northeast to Mount Carmel, IL, along the Wabash River. A prolonged period of freezing rain then caused significant icing during the afternoon. The exception was east of the Lakes region, where temperatures rose slightly above freezing for a few hours. The photos below were taken outside the Paducah National Weather Service office on the morning after the storm.



Scores of accidents occurred, but very few, if any, were serious. Most schools were closed on December 13 and 14. The weight of the ice on trees and power lines caused a considerable number of power outages. Most of the outages were small, and power was restored to almost everyone during the night of the 13th. The map below shows those areas where power outages were reported.



The final two photos are from Poplar Bluff, Missouri, where 4 inches of snow fell before the change to freezing rain.



After the recent mild winters of the late 90's, this winter has begun on a relatively cold and stormy note.