

Dec. 4-5, 2002 Winter Storm

The first major winter storm of the season blanketed the region with heavy snow and ice on December 4. An ice storm occurred over southwest Kentucky, especially in the Tennessee border region from Murray to Fulton. Thousands of people lost power due to falling trees and power lines, some for up to three days.

Further north, heavy snow was the main problem. The band of heaviest snow was over the hilly terrain of southeast Missouri, especially northwest of a line from Poplar Bluff to Cape Girardeau, where 5 to 9 inches of snow fell. Several inches of snow fell over most of southern Illinois and northwest Kentucky. Only 1 to 3 inches of snow fell along and north of Interstate 64 in southern Illinois and southwest Indiana.

Numerous vehicle accidents and school closings were reported. A couple of fatal vehicle wrecks occurred in western Kentucky. Schools were closed for up to three days. Our region was only a small part of the country affected by this storm.

...SNOWFALL AND ICE REPORTS FROM ACROSS THE REGION...

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS HAVE BEEN OBTAINED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN PADUCAH SINCE NOON. THE REPORTS ARE FROM COUNTY OFFICIALS...STORM SPOTTERS AND THE MEDIA.

MOST OF THE SNOW FELL BETWEEN 2 AM AND NOON. MIXING WITH SLEET AND FREEZING RAIN SINCE THEN RESULTED IN LITTLE ADDITIONAL ACCUMULATION IN MOST AREAS.

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI...

COUNTY	CITY	SNOW DEPTH	WEATHER AT 3 PM
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BUTLER	POPLAR BLUFF	4-6	FREEZING DRIZZLE
CARTER	VAN BUREN	3-4	FREEZING DRIZZLE
RIPLEY	DONIPHAN	3-4	FREEZING DRIZZLE
WAYNE	PIEDMONT	9	
BOLLINGER	MARBLE HILL	8	PATCHY FREEZING RAIN
CAPE GIR.	JACKSON	2.5	FREEZING DRIZZLE
CAPE GIR.	CAPE GIR.	4-5	
PERRY	PERRYVILLE	5	FREEZING DRIZZLE
SCOTT	COUNTY WIDE	3-6	SLEET/FRZG DRIZZLE
STODDARD	BLOOMFIELD	4-5	
NEW MADRID	NEW MADRID	UP TO 1/2 INCH OF ICE	
MISSISSIPPI	EAST PRAIRIE	2	

WESTERN KENTUCKY...

COUNTY	CITY	SNOW DEPTH IN INCHES	
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MCCRACKEN	PADUCAH	4	FREEZING DRIZZLE
UNION	STURGIS	4-5	SLEET/SNOW/ICE
UNION	MORGANFIELD	3-4	
TODD	ELKTON	3-4	SNOW AND 1/4 INCH OF ICE
LIVINGSTON	SMITHLAND	4	FREEZING RAIN
MARSHALL	NORTHERN AREAS	3	SNOW AND 1/3 INCH OF ICE

GRAVES	MAYFIELD	1/2 INCH ICE
CRITTENDEN	MARION	4
HENDERSON	HENDERSON	2
DAVISS	OWENSBORO	2-3
CALDWELL	PRINCETON	4 SNOW AND 1/4 INCH OF ICE
HOPKINS	MADISONVILLE	4
CHRISTIAN	2N HOPKINSVILLE	4
MUHLENBERG	SOUTHERN AREAS	4 LIGHT RAIN
CALLOWAY	MURRAY	UP TO 1/2 INCH ICE

SOUTHWEST INDIANA...

COUNTY	CITY	SNOW DEPTH IN INCHES
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VANDERBURGH	EVANSVILLE	2-3
GIBSON	PRINCETON	1-1.5
WARRICK	COUNTY WIDE	3
POSEY	MT VERNON	2
SPENCER	GRANDVIEW	2

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS...

COUNTY	CITY	SNOW DEPTH IN INCHES
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UNION	COUNTYWIDE	2 TO 4
WILLIAMSON	9S MARION	4
GALLATIN	COUNTY WIDE	2-3
HARDIN	COUNTY WIDE	4-5
JOHNSON	VIENNA	4.5
SALINE	HARRISBURG	4
WAYNE	FAIRFIELD	2
JACKSON	SIU CARBONDALE	3
FRANKLIN	WEST FRANKFORT	4

SEE THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PADUCAH WEB SITE FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THIS DANGEROUS WINTER STORM:

WWW.CRH.NOAA.GOV/PAH

WINTER STORM LEAVES LONG TRACK OF SNOW, ICE ACROSS THE U.S.

December 5, 2002 — A collision of warm, moist air flowing out of the Gulf of Mexico and a cold front moving south from Canada spread snow, ice, sleet and freezing rain in a band from southern Kansas and Oklahoma to the eastern seaboard from Tuesday night through Thursday, according to the NOAA National Weather Service.

Light to moderate snow fell from Virginia through Philadelphia, with the Baltimore-Washington D.C., area experiencing snowfalls of 4-6 inches. The highest storm total snowfall reported so far is 9.5 inches in Floyd County, Va., southwest of Roanoke.

Light snow began in New York City mid morning, and snowfall totals of 5 to 10 inches are forecast for the region Thursday. Airport delays of up to 2 to 6 hours have been reported in Philadelphia and New York areas.

The storm began Tuesday night in Oklahoma, southeast Kansas and southwest Missouri leaving anywhere from one to 10 inches of snow as the system moved to the east. Freezing rain and sleet combined with the snow in some areas, all of which resulted in hazardous driving conditions, downed power and telephone lines, and closed schools.

"This was one of those storms that reminds us how humble nature can make us feel," NOAA National Weather Service central region Director Dennis McCarthy said. "Our forecasters from Oklahoma to Washington, D.C., did a great job of working with media and emergency officials to let the public know what was coming and where and when it was going to hit. Still, despite all the preparations, normal social activity was brought to a standstill by the weather."

Snow began falling Tuesday night in southwest Missouri and southeast Kansas, leaving 2-4 inches over much of the area. A wintry mix left ice and snow in Oklahoma and northern Arkansas.

Heavy snow was falling by dawn Wednesday in Wichita, Kan., where 7 inches snarled traffic and closed schools. Snowfall hit St. Louis at 5 a.m. Wednesday, snarling morning rush hour traffic with 1-3 inches that slickened roads and caused numerous traffic accidents, while St. Louis' Lambert Field reported a record snowfall of 3.5 inches by 10 p.m. Wednesday, topping the record of 2 inches for Dec. 4 that had stood since 1910.

Moving east, the storm system dropped up to 5 inches of snow in southern Illinois and 3 inches in southern Indiana. Hardin County, Ill., reported 4-5 inches of snow and Vienna in Johnson County, Ill., reported 4.5 inches. Evansville, Ind., received about 3 inches of snow as did most of Warrick County, Ind.

Freezing drizzle and sleet falling on top of 1-5 inches of snow caused numerous problems in western Kentucky, where ice-laden tree branches downed power lines in some areas, leaving residents without electricity.

"This is one of the more intense winter storms we've had in the past couple of years," Paducah NWS forecaster Rick Shanklin said.

Toward the northern edge of the snow band, Louisville received about 2 inches of snow, which was still enough to cause school closings when officials determined roadways would not be safe.

The Appalachian region of eastern Kentucky received anywhere from just a dusting of snow to 4-5 inches, according to reports from the Jackson NWS office. Snowfall totaled 5 inches in Bell, Harland and Whitley counties; 4 inches in Jackson, Laurel, Lettcher, Rockcastle, Pulaski, McCreary and Wayne counties; 2 inches or less in Breathitt, Knott and Perry counties and a dusting in counties along the Tennessee state line.

Skies were mostly clear Thursday through the areas of Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky hit by the storm, but the snow and ice will be around for at least a few days, according to NOAA forecasters. High temperatures throughout the area are expected to reach only the upper 20s to low 30s Thursday and Friday.

Some parts of Tennessee received up to 6 inches of snow. Georgia escaped the worst of the storm except for some icy conditions along the Georgia/South Carolina line. With temperatures hovering just above freezing, the northern counties received up to 2 ½ inches of rainfall. Flights in and out of Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport were also delayed.

Ice accumulations of one half to three quarters of an inch were common across North Carolina and portions of northern/central South Carolina resulting in power outages across North Carolina and South Carolina. The Raleigh/Triangle area was hard hit with hundreds of thousands of reported power outages.

---From NOAA News.

Photo gallery of the December 4 storm...

Photo 1... Ice buildups on trees and power lines near Mayfield, KY



Photo 2... Heavy snow accumulation in Poplar Bluff, MO



Photo 3... Snow outside the Paducah, KY National Weather Service office



Photos 4 and 5... Snow-covered barge passing through the canal between Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley

