

January Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Overall, the temperatures and precipitation for January were about average. However, this simply represented the middle ground between the extremes, as two significant intrusions of arctic air were balanced by several, sunny mild days. As is usual in our region, a January thaw took place, most pronounced during the middle of the month.

January started out with a highly variable pattern that signified what we would get for the rest of the month. The first week of the month saw visits from both cold and warm air masses. A little snowfall started off New Year's Day, with about a half inch falling in the morning and again in the evening. Temperatures were about normal for the day, with highs just reaching the freezing mark.

Mild air moved in over the next two days as high pressure moved in from the west. Temperatures peaked in the low 50s on the afternoon of the 3rd, almost 20 degrees warmer than normal. Of course, this was ahead of some cold air, as the high pressure moved off to the east and the cold front rushed in behind.

The high for the 4th was reached at midnight, as temperatures were in the upper 30s ahead of the cold front. Temperatures continued to fall through the morning and next afternoon, with single digits the best we could manage on the afternoon of the 4th. Snow also filled in nicely behind the cold front, with 3 to 6 inches accumulating. Cold air continued to be reinforced across the region, and we were below zero by that evening and well below zero on the morning of the 5th. Temperatures were not able to warm much that afternoon, only reaching the single digits for highs. A few snow showers developed at times as well, adding another light dusting to the wintry landscape.

Cold air was firmly entrenched during the first full week of January. Temperatures were below zero on the morning of the 6th, as clear skies, cold air, and a fresh snow cover all conspired to allow for efficient radiation cooling. Seasonal temperatures returned for most of the rest of the week as high pressure moved in. This led to mainly sunny skies, with high clouds at times.

High temperatures were in the 30s and 40s from the 7th through the 10th before stronger westerly winds kicked in. These gusty winds off the mountains allowed temperatures to warm to above normal levels to end the weekend. High temperatures reached the low 50s on the 11th, and the dry, warm winds helped to efficiently melt much of the lingering snow pack. Clear skies each night did allow overnight low temperatures to fall to normal and below normal levels, with single digits and low teens common.

The week of the 13th was generally dry and sunny week with one quick exception. Monday the 13th was a "normal" day, with highs reaching the low 40s and plenty of sunshine. However, a quick-moving shot of cold air and upslope conditions moved in just before sunrise the next morning. This brought a quick shot of snow and cold, accumulating around a half inch of snow. Temperatures only reached the upper 20s that afternoon. But as quickly as this shot of cold air moved in, mild and dry conditions returned.

The remainder of the week was mainly sunny and dry, with highs rising to above normal levels, reaching the upper 40s and low 50s the rest of the week and into the weekend. Sunday the 19th was the warmest day of the week, reaching the mid-50s about 10 to 15 degrees warmer than normal.

An active weather pattern again returned during the week of the 20th as the strong ridge of high pressure that has been dominating the West Coast most of the fall and winter moved toward Colorado. As the ridge moved closer to the state, temperatures soared to well above normal levels. This occurred on the 21st, 24th, and 25th. However, when the ridge shifted back to the west just enough to allow the cold air streaming through the Midwest to sneak into the Front Range, temperatures quickly plummeted and light snow accumulated. This was the case on the 22nd and 23rd and again on the 27th and 28th.

We continued to be on the western edge of this battle line between cold and warm air mass through the remain-

der of the month, with temperatures quickly warming on the 29th, only to cool down again later on the 30th and into the 31st.

A look ahead

February is often a dry and cold month for the region as we move toward the snowy and unsettled conditions of March and April. Precipitation averages less than an inch, with average high temperatures in the 30s. It can get very cold in February with arctic air making strong pushes into the region, but days begin to get a little longer, which leads to some nice, sunny days.

January 2014 Weather Statistics

Average High	39.5° (-0.9°)
100-year return frequency value max	48.4° min 30.8°
Average Low	9.7° (-2.8°)
100-year return frequency value max	26.6° min 6.6°
Highest Temperature	55° on the 19th, 21st
Lowest Temperature	-12° on the 6th, 28th
Monthly Precipitation	0.66" (-0.0" 0% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	1.56" min 0.01"
Monthly Snowfall	16.1" (3.9", 25% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	33.5" (-20.9", 39% below normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	14.0" (+2.25", 17% above normal)
	(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
Heating Degree Days	1240 (+45)
Cooling Degree Days	0

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Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters to the editor are on page 27.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community should not be interpreted as the view of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

Dreaming of Palmer Lake

You folks have one of the absolute best little towns on the planet!

Having travelled the world many a time, I have seen quite a few places in my life, but when I dream of where I'd like to settle down and stay—it's always Palmer Lake, Colorado.

You see folks, I've had the pleasure to have met so many nice people in your town, eat there, stay there—and I just have to think that although many of you know it's a great place, many of you also don't fully appreciate it for what it is.

Do you have "issues" or problems there? Well of course you do! But it's OK because of the people who live there, call it home and work and strive to fix problems as they come up and realize that no matter what, Palmer

Lake is a wonderful place to live.

I don't know if life will bring me back there or not to fully realize my dreams, but I'm sure hoping so. Enjoy and appreciate your town—I know I do!

Dean Hutson
Grandview, Mo.

Voters didn't think through marijuana issue

Thanks from families to the majority of Colorado citizens voting to make marijuana legal. Thanks for letting our children know that it's OK to get high and making it easier to introduce our children to drug use. Thanks for helping parents in that they no longer need to be concerned about teaching their children against drug use, but only about responsible drug use. Thanks for not giving any thought to the difficulty you have added to parents struggling with their pre-teens and teens using alcohol or drugs. Thanks for making Colorado a less family-friendly state. Thanks for helping to take away the drive and initiative for self-improvement by providing an escape from reality. Thanks for addicting our local and state governments to the tax revenue from marijuana sales.

All will have to pay for your selfish feel-good attitude and dumb logic in not thinking this all the way through when you voted. I only hope that all our local governments in El Paso County have the foresight and guts to say no to marijuana sales.

Richard Muegge
Pleasant View

D-38 School Board wins sign it before you read it award

It was revealed at this month's School Board meeting that the promised money saving D-38 Certificates of Participation (COP) redemption cannot occur in 2014 as "always intended" without using Legal Defeasance. Defeasance definition says "this usually requires a team of attorneys, banking experts, and financial professionals." Read that as more wasted refinance costs, legal fees, and broken financial contracts risking deteriorating district credit ratings.

After two years of D-38 financial manager status meetings on COP redemption status, citizen warnings,

and the board refusing to respond to questions or concerns, these consequences seemed surprising to our leadership. Review the D-38 video tape of January's board meeting and over and over you hear our board members distancing themselves as "not financial experts." Hello! Our community and teachers placed faith in you to do just that, provide financial oversight, or at least pay attention to your fiduciary responsibilities to provide improvements in our kids' D-38 educational environment.

Gordon Reichal

Effective teaching in District 38

I would like to congratulate the teachers and administrators of District 38 for their talent, skills, and dedication as the district implements the Teacher Effectiveness Act, better known as Senate Bill 191 (SB 191).

The Teacher Effectiveness Act was passed by the Colorado Legislature in 2010 and the implementation is managed by the Colorado Department of Education. This act has many components that are designed to improve instruction for our students. It provides a rubric of five core teaching standards that focuses on student learning as a result of teachers teaching. Teachers are challenged to equip students with the ability to not just learn skills or a set of facts, but to evaluate information and apply it in a world of ever-growing complexity and information availability. However, this comprehensive rubric is just half of a teacher's evaluation.

By law, the other 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation is based on student growth data. This data comes from individual students, schools, and the district as a whole. Teachers of subjects not tested by the state, such as art, music, and physical education, have been working together to create their own assessments.

As with any new system, the new teacher evaluation system presents challenges. Maintaining focus on students and teachers has been a hallmark of D-38 education. So, as we face increasing state mandates we continue to work on making all of the changes relevant; pursuing an excellent education.

Bob Foster

Director of Personnel and Student Services
Lewis-Palmer School District 38

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