



OKLAHOMA CLIMATOLOGICAL SURVEY

NEWS RELEASE

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Oklahoma Dodges a Bullet

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NORMAN – As parts of northern Oklahoma are still digging out from more than a foot of snow, it seems hard to believe that we dodged a bullet. As winter storms go, this one wasn't so bad. Even though roads were closed from snowdrifts blown by winds in excess of 30 miles per hour and days later there are still enough patches of ice to cause traffic problems, the lasting effects of the storm are small compared to some of those in our recent past.

Just a few years back, a pair of winter storms devastated parts of eastern (December 2000) and western (January 2002) Oklahoma (see the OCS Event Summaries, http://climate.ocs.ou.edu/event_summary.html). The January 2002 event crippled the rural electric cooperatives. The coops had to put up power lines and poles that would have stretched from here to New York City. Fortunately, much of the ice from this weekend's storm came in the form of sleet, which does not cling to power lines as efficiently as freezing rain.

Snow totals were indeed impressive. The 10.4 inches recorded in Tulsa already puts them ahead of their annual average of 9.1 inches. Nowata, Pawnee and Foraker reported 12 inches and Bartlesville led the reporting stations in Oklahoma with 15 inches (see attached image). Additional snowfall information is on the climate pages of the National Weather Service Forecast Offices in Tulsa (<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tsa/>) and Norman (<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/>).

One other thing from this event for which many Oklahomans are grateful – parts of eastern Oklahoma received more than three inches of precipitation (see attached image; note: precipitation totals in northern Oklahoma will increase this week as snow melts slowly into the Mesonet's rain gauges). While it may not have come in the form that most farmers and ranchers wanted, it is sure to help alleviate some of the long-term drought conditions.

Attachments:

Map – Snowfall totals, courtesy of the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Tulsa
Map – Oklahoma Mesonet precipitation reports