

STORM DATA AND UNUSUAL WEATHER PHENOMENA

MARCH 1976

PLACE	DATE	TIME - LOCAL STANDARD	LENGTH OF PATH (MILES)	WIDTH OF PATH (YARDS)	NO. OF PERSONS		ESTIMATED DAMAGE		CHARACTER OF STORM
					KILLED	INJURED	PROPERTY	CROPS	
WASHINGTON Yakima, Grant, Benton, Franklin, Adams, Lincoln, Spokane, and Walla Walla Counties including the Columbia Basin	21	Afternoon and Evening			3	12	6	7	Wind and Dust Storm
	A vigorous Pacific storm with winds of 25 to 35 mph swept across the Columbia Basin during the afternoon and evening. Wind gusts as high as 65 mph were measured at Hanford during the early afternoon, and Yakima reported gusts to 59 mph. These winds picked up dust over a wide area and several highways were closed by the Department of Highways as visibilities were reduced to near zero. A triple fatality occurred on highway number 220 during the dust storm, and one hundred car accidents were reported in the lower Yakima Valley. Snowplows were used to remove sand from parts of highway number 240 near Pasco. A new home, valued at \$50,000 was severely damaged in Kennewick. A tugboat and barge was damaged on the Columbia River near Finley. A roof of an eight car garage at Meadow Spring Townhouse was blown off. A mobile home was overturned in Kennewick. Four trees were blown onto a mobile home five miles north of Spokane. A light aircraft at Mead was torn from its mooring and had extensive damage. Power lines and poles were broken in many areas in the Columbia Basin, as well as many farms. Substantial damage was reported at newly planted sugar beets in the Burek area in Walla Walla County.								
Seattle; King and Kitsap Counties	21	Morning					4		Wind
	Strong southerly winds hit Seattle and Puget Sound area. A large sign fell on two parked cars in Seattle causing \$3500 damage. Two large ships dragged anchor in Elliott Bay. Several power lines were downed in Kitsap, and some in King County.								
WEST VIRGINIA	NO STORM DATA REPORT RECEIVED FOR THIS STATE								
WISCONSIN Southeast and east portion of state	162				0	?	6		Ice Storm
	Freezing rain, sleet, and thunderstorms developed over portions of southeast and east Wisconsin early on March 1 and continued through most of the day on March 2. Rainfall amounts ranged from approximately 0.4 inch to 1.23 inches reported at Milwaukee Mitchell Field. Much of this rainfall froze on exposed objects. Up to 15,000 customers were without electrical power due to the ice storm. Hardest hit areas were in Washington, Fond du Lac, Sheboygan and Ozaukee counties. West Bend and it's surrounding areas and areas north and northeast, including Eden and Ashford were hard hit by the storm. The main damage in these areas were caused by power lines snapped as tree branches collapsed under the weight of the ice. 20 percent of West Bend was without power during the peak of the storm. Power was interrupted due to downed power lines as far west as Madison where only small outages occurred. In Milwaukee, only spotty power problems prevailed as much of the precipitation fell as rain.								
State Wide	465				1	?	8	0	Winter Storm, Ice Storm, Heavy Snow and Flooding
	A major winter storm, highlighted by a devastating ice storm, moved across Wisconsin on March 4, 1976, causing a variety of adverse weather statewide. A severe ice storm plagued most of southern and portions of eastern Wisconsin while heavy snow and sleet pelted central regions and blizzard conditions hit the northeast. Heavy thunderstorms and some flooding occurred over extreme southeast Wisconsin. The Governor of Wisconsin declared the ice storm as one of the worst natural disasters to hit Wisconsin in history. Some of the areas previously hard hit by freezing rain on March 1 & 2 were dealt a second blow by the severe ice storm of March 4. The ice storm caused very heavy damage which included hundreds of completely snapped utility poles, thousands of downed power and telephone lines and many trees totally destroyed by massive ice accumulations. Narrow swaths of extremely heavy destructive icing conditions occurred across many of the southern counties as scattered thunderstorms produced excessive freezing rain accumulations. Some ice accumulations ranged up to a phenomenal five inches in diameter on wires and limbs of trees. By late Thursday night and early Friday morning on March 5, the already critical ice storm situation was complicated by strong winds, gusting to above 50 mph, that developed across most of southern Wisconsin early Friday morning. Milwaukee's Mitchell Field clocked wind gusts to 59 mph by 6:30 a.m. on March 5. Up to 400,000 residences were directly affected by the ice storm and up to 100,000 people were without power during the height of the storm. Some residents in hard hit counties had power completely off for nearly a week while outlying regions were without power for over 10 days. According to Sheriff Departments, Local Emergency Government Units, state surveys, and newspaper clippings, damage estimates from the ice storm were more than 50.4 million dollars. This figure includes: 17.2 million in agricultural losses, 13.7 million in private utility damage, 8.4 million in damage to local government property and related expenses, and 10.9 million in private losses.								
WISCONSIN (continued)									
	The severest icing conditions occurred along a band from Grant County in extreme southwest Wisconsin eastward into Washington and Ozaukee counties in southeastern Wisconsin. The following counties were especially hard hit and are highlighted: Washington County - Over 17.2 million dollars in damage. 1500 utility poles were completely snapped by massive ice buildups. In some cases, poles fell in two mile stretches. One steel high-tension power tower was bent down to the ground and the steel arms of many other towers were bent. Countless trees were snapped and completely destroyed. During the storm, a state of emergency was declared over the entire county. Most roads were completely blocked by fallen trees, poles and wires. Up to 95% of the county was without power at one time. Some of the hardest hit towns in the county were: West Bend, Slinger, Hartford, Kewaunee, Jackson, and Richfield. 200 National Guardsmen were called up to aid in the emergency for the county. Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Jefferson, Fond du Lac, and Waukesha counties in southeast Wisconsin were hard hit. Many utility poles were snapped to the ground, along with thousands of lines and trees damaged or destroyed. One high-tension tower collapsed under the weight of the ice. 85% of Sheboygan was without power. Oostburg and Plymouth had 70% of their power cut off by the storm. Saukville, Grafton's Belgium in Ozaukee County were hard hit. In Fond du Lac, Waupun, and St. Cloud, the storm was described as being one of the worst in history. Heavy damage occurred in Watertown, which is located in Jefferson County. A swath of very heavy icing damage occurred from Aztalan to Ixonia. Cambridge and Port Atkinson also saw severe icing as over two inches of freezing rain hit the county. In Waukesha County, a mile stretch of utility poles were down along Highway 83 near Mukwonago. Hartland was very hard hit. Pewaukee and Waukesha had many power lines and some trees down. Emergency food and shelter stations were set up throughout these counties in southeast Wisconsin. Dane, Columbia, Walworth, Rock, Green & Dodge Counties, located in southern Wisconsin, sustained a mighty blow by the storm. In Dane County, the heaviest damage occurred in the western sections. Mt. Horeb had heavy damage with many utility poles and trees destroyed. In Middleton, a state of emergency was declared. Stoughton had over \$650,000 in damages. The western sections of Madison seemed to be the hardest hit with \$400,000 in damages. One lineman died in Dane County when a transformer blew up near where he was working. In Dodge and northern Walworth Counties, towns hard hit included Elkhorn, Richmond and Whitewater. 90% of Columbia County was without power at one time. Between Caladonia and Columbus, power was out for many days. Portage was severely affected by the storm. Evansville, in Rock County, was especially hard hit. In Green County, extremely heavy damage occurred from Juda to Albany. 50% of the power was cut county wide. Half of the trees and power lines were damaged or brought down. In Monroe, a state of emergency was declared. In Grant, Crawford, LaFayette and Iowa Counties, the ice storm dealt a knockout punch. Up to 80% power outages occurred in these counties. National Guardsmen were called into the area. Two inches of ice covered most exposed surfaces. In Blanchardville, five miles of 69 kilovolt transmission lines were down. In Pennington, located in Grant County, five miles of utility poles were snapped like toothpicks by the heavy ice. In Highland in Iowa County, 200 poles snapped and entire towns were without power. In Crawford County, 50 utility poles in a row were flattened. Over extreme southeast Wisconsin, most of the precipitation fell as rain on March 4 sparing the major metropolitan areas of Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha of icing problems. However, heavy rain and thunderstorms occurred over the area and caused some flooding. Up to three inches of rain fell over the area and this rainfall was coupled with one to two inches of rainfall that occurred around March 1, resulting in flooding to creeks, rivers, and basements of homes. The Root River in Milwaukee and Racine Counties overflowed it's banks in many low-lying areas. In Kenosha County, the Des Plaines River reached flood stage and completely flooded some farm fields. Flooding of the Root River in Walworth County caused \$25,000 in damages. Some roads were cut off by high water over extreme southeast Wisconsin. The Oak Creek Sewer Treatment Plant was washed out by the flood storm drainage. 1 1/2 million dollars damage occurred to mechanical equipment in the plant. To the north from La Crosse to Green Bay line and northward, heavy snow fell. A mixture of snow, sleet, and freezing rain fell in central Wisconsin. Heaviest snowfall amounts were approximately 8 to 12 inches in extreme northeast Wisconsin. A 400 foot radio tower near Tomah in Monroe County collapsed as strong winds and accumulating ice and snow fell. The following counties were declared federal disaster areas due to severe icing and flooding: Calumet, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, LaFayette, Manitowish, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Richmond, Rock, Sauk, Sheboygan, Vernon, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha County.								
Northern third of state	12				0	?	?	0	Heavy snow
	Heavy snow developed over the northern third of Wisconsin early Friday March 12. By Friday afternoon many roads were closed as near blizzard conditions prevailed with considerable blowing and drifting of snow. Snowfall amounts were generally in the 6 to 12 inch range over extreme northern and northeast portions of the state with some locally heavier amounts of up to 15 inches reported.								