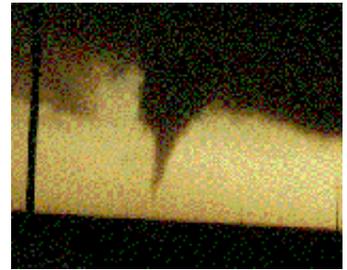




The West Texas

TWISTER



SPRING 2000 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE FORECAST OFFICE LUBBOCK TEXAS

La Nina Forecast

For the second winter in row, La Nina affected our weather. La Nina, which is associated with cooler-than-average water temperatures in the Pacific near the equator, usually leads to warm and dry conditions during the winter in the southwest U.S. Since November, much of west Texas has experienced warm dry weather.

The extended outlook from the National Weather Service is for La Nina to gradually weaken. However, the long range forecast predicts more warm and dry conditions through April.

Preparing for Severe Weather Season 2000



Mature Cumulonimbus NSSL Photo Collection, NOAA Photo Library

Severe Weather Awareness Week in Texas

Governor George Bush has proclaimed March 5-11 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in Texas. In an official memorandum, he reminded Texans of the terrible devastation and loss of life in the tornadoes that struck Oklahoma last May. Governor Bush emphasized that no part of Texas is immune to severe weather. He urged local government officials to work with schools, libraries, the media, and civic groups to help prepare Texans for the upcoming severe weather season.

Severe Weather Awareness Week is a great time to review your severe weather safety plans. Everyone should know where to go and what to do when severe weather strikes.

What's In This Edition...

Tornado Statistics by County

30th Anniv. of 1970 Lubbock Tornado

The Drought Worsens

Spotter Training Schedule 2000

La Nina Forecast

Severe Weather Day at Reese



2000 Spotter Training Schedule

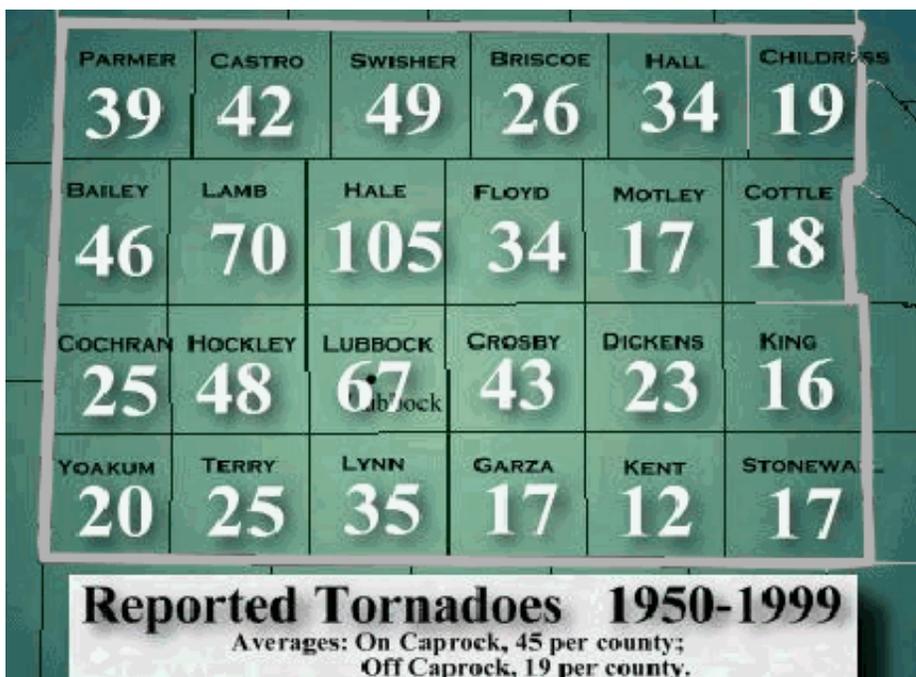
(as of 2/15/00)

- Feb 17 Silverton 7pm City Hall
- Feb 28 Earth 730 pm Fire Dept.
- Mar 6 Post 7pm Fire Dept.
- Mar 7 Jayton 7pm Community Center
- Mar 9 Ransom Canyon 7pm Fire Dept.
- Mar 13 Panner Co. (Bovina) 7pm Bovina Fire Dept.
- Mar 13 Shallowater 7pm Fire Dept.
- Mar 20 Matador 7pm Fire Dept.
- Mar 21 Lynn Co. (New Home) 7pm New Home School (tentative)
- Mar 23 Plainview (tentative) 630 pm Fire Dept.
- Mar 27 Littlefield 7pm Fire Dept.
- Mar 28 Brownfield 7pm Fire Dept.
- Apr 10 Aspermont 7pm Fire Dept.
- Apr 17 Floydada 7pm Fire Dept.
- Apr 24 Memphis 730 pm Fire Dept.
- May 1 Morton 7pm Fire Dept.

Note: Approximately 10 additional classes will be scheduled. Check the "Skywarn" section of our web page (www.sch.noaa.gov/hub) for the latest schedule.



The potential killer in all thunderstorms is lightning. In fact, in the average year, 100 to 200 people die from the effect of a lightning strike. In many years this is more than either tornadoes or flash floods kill. Lightning is sometimes useful in storm spotting because it can illuminate funnels, tornadoes, or other cloud features at night.



NSSL Photo Collection, NOAA Photo Library

The graphic above shows the number of reported tornadoes for the Lubbock NWS CWA (County Warning Area), from 1950 through 1999. Notice that the numbers decrease significantly off the Caprock over the Low Rolling Plains. This is probably due in part to a very low population density over this area. Lamb and Hale Counties have the greatest frequency with 70 and 105 tornadoes respectively. Lubbock County is a close third, with 67 tornadoes or about 1.4 tornadoes per year.

NOAA Weather Radio



A new generation of NWR receiver allows you to pre-select the National Weather Service alerts you want to receive according to local geographic areas (counties or in some cases portions of counties). Look for NWR receivers with the **SAME feature (Specific Area Message Encoding)** which means the receiver is capable of turning itself on from a silent mode when the digital code is broadcast before the alarm tone is sounded for the geographic area you have pre-selected. If you are only interested in warnings for Lubbock county for example, you can program the receiver to activate for warnings and watches in that county only.

The Lubbock NWS Office operates one transmitter, which serves the central South Plains and broadcasts on a frequency of 162.400 MHz. The transmitter is located 7 miles north northeast of Lubbock International Airport.

Severe Weather Awareness Day at Reese Center

The National Weather Service (NWS) will join Texas Tech University as well as other groups in a day-long severe weather promotion at Reese Center on Saturday April 1. The event will feature displays from Tech's Wind Engineering Research Center (including their tornado cannon and mini-wind tunnel), the Storm Intercept Team, NWS, local TV stations, Department of Public Safety, the City of Lubbock's Emergency Management office, and American Red Cross. There will also be a kid's corner. Please come out to Reese Center between 10 am and 4 pm on April 1 to learn more about severe weather impact and safety.



SOUTH PLAINS AREA TIME SPECIFIC FORECAST

The NWS in Lubbock has begun issuing a detailed, county-by-county weather forecast for each of the 24 counties within our area of responsibility. It gives forecasts of sky cover, temperature, humidity, wind speed and wind direction EVERY 3 HOURS for up to 24 hours. This new "South Plains Area Time Specific Forecast" is issued at 9pm each day, then updated every three hours (ie, midnight, 3am, etc).

You can view this new forecast on our web page (www.srh.noaa.gov/lub) by clicking on your county on the map on the front page. If you would like more information about this new forecast product, contact Larry Vannozi at 806-745-3916, extension 223.

EXAMPLE

SOUTH PLAINS AREA TIME SPECIFIC FORECAST

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE LUBBOCK TX

1200 AM CST TUE FEB 15 2000

TXZ033>036-039>041-16000-

C OCHRAN-CROSBY-HO CKLEY-LUBBO CK-LYNN-TERRY-YOAKUM-

INCLUDING THE CITIES OF BROWNFIELD...CROSBYTON...LEVELLAND...

LUBBOCK...MORTON...PLAINS...TAHOKA

1200 AM CST TUE FEB 15 2000

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY

TIME SKY TEMP HUM WIND

3 AM FC M40S 65 W10

6 AM FC L40S 75 W10

9 AM FC U40S 60 W10

NOON FC U60S 30 NW10

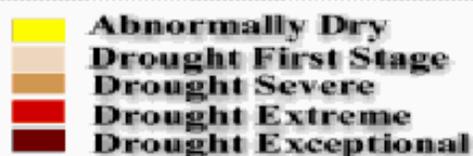
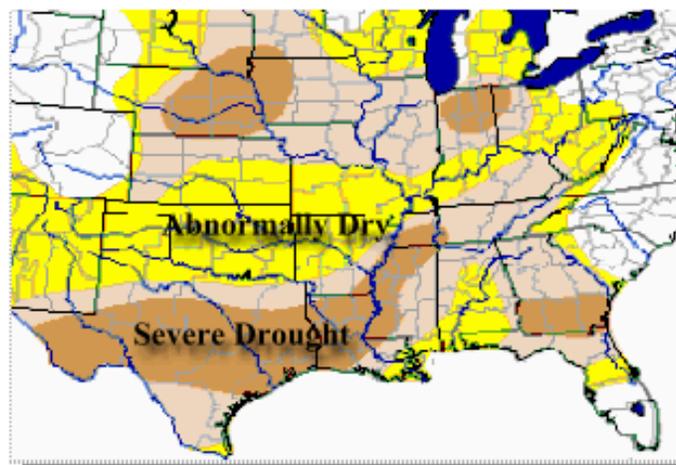
3 PM FC M70S 20 W15

6 PM FC U60S 30 SE10

9 PM FC U50S 40 E5

Did You Know??

- ◆ While the NWS uses many state-of-the-art technologies, meteorologists still depend heavily on some traditional sources for important weather data, including radiosondes carried by weather balloons and manual river observations.
- ◆ Early, accurate warnings don't mean anything if they aren't received by those in harms way. Be prepared and listen to NOAA Weather Radio. The newest models of NOAA Weather Radio receivers can sound an alert for the county in which you live, and give you a warning even if you are asleep!
- ◆ The National Weather Service relies on its partners in emergency management and the media to help get out severe warnings and keep communities safe.



Drought Conditions exist over the Southern South Plains, while abnormally dry conditions persist over the rest of the area in northwest Texas. Map showing conditions as of Feb 8 courtesy of U.S. Drought Monitor

Developing Drought on the South Plains

Precipitation during 1999 varied widely over our area with both record wet and dry months. For the year most areas received near or slightly above normal precipitation except for the extreme east and south portions where significantly less than normal precipitation fell. Another exception was the extreme northwest South Plains, which was wetter than average. The latest Palmer Drought Severity Index showed our eastern counties in a moderate drought with the rest of the area near normal.

Reservoir water supply levels improved during 1999 at White River Lake and Lake Alan Henry. Lake Meredith (near Amarillo) is the municipal water source for many South Plains communities along I-27, including Lubbock. The water level at Lake Meredith is currently near an all time high.

Most of our forecast area is classified as Moderate to High Fire Danger. The Moderate area extends from Lubbock and Hale counties westward, an area that received significant snow in December. In the southeast, King and Stonewall counties are designated Extreme Fire Danger. Kent and Stonewall counties have outdoor burning bans in effect. Without precipitation, much of the South Plains area will trend toward High to Extreme Fire danger by March.

Soil moisture is near normal to slightly above across the southern Panhandle. Farther south, soil moisture decreases with well below normal readings in the southern South Plains. Since farming there is mostly dry land (not irrigated), any continuing lack of soil moisture will greatly impact agriculture in that area.

The long range forecast calls for more unseasonably warm and dry weather for the period February through April. If that occurs, the drought situation and fire danger will become more serious.

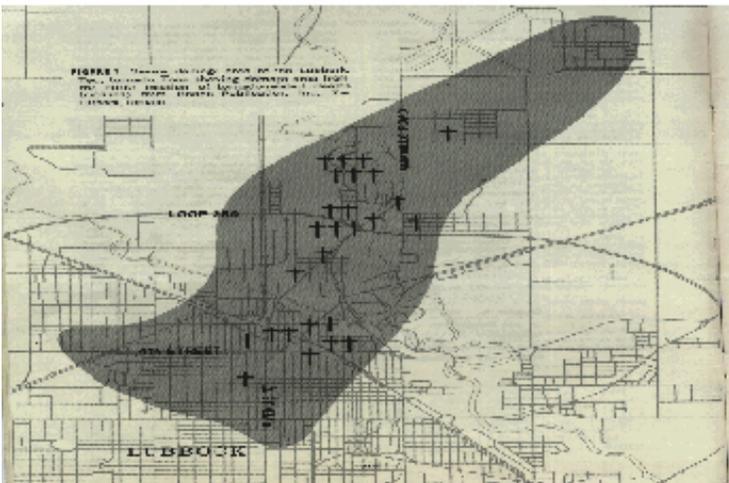
See graphic on next page for 90 Day Precipitation Forecast from the Climate Prediction Center.

The Lubbock, Texas Tornado

May 11, 1970



Photos were taken from Natural Disaster Survey 70-1, and are courtesy of the Lubbock Avalanche Journal.



Shaded area shows tornado path. Crosses represent fatalities.

BE PREPARED!!

This storm which was so destructive 30 years ago is a reminder of how vulnerable we are to deadly tornadoes on the High Plains, and how serious we should be about severe weather safety and preparedness. Please take time now, before severe weather season, to ensure that you and your family are ready.

30 years ago this Spring, on May 11, 1970, tragedy struck Lubbock, Texas as an F5 tornado ripped through downtown Lubbock. Twenty-six were killed and at least 1500 more were injured. The tornado had winds estimated in excess of 200 mph, and damaged or destroyed a large section of the city, mainly north and east of 19th Street and University Avenue.

In the few moments between 9:35 p.m. and the time the funnel lifted into the clouds, the tornado devastated the community along an 8 1/2 mile path. It wrought havoc along a track that was 1 1/2 miles wide in downtown Lubbock to one-fourth mile wide as it passed over the Weather Bureau Office located at the Lubbock Airport.

The twister was responsible for 125 million dollars in damage with an estimated 15 square miles of the city damaged or destroyed.





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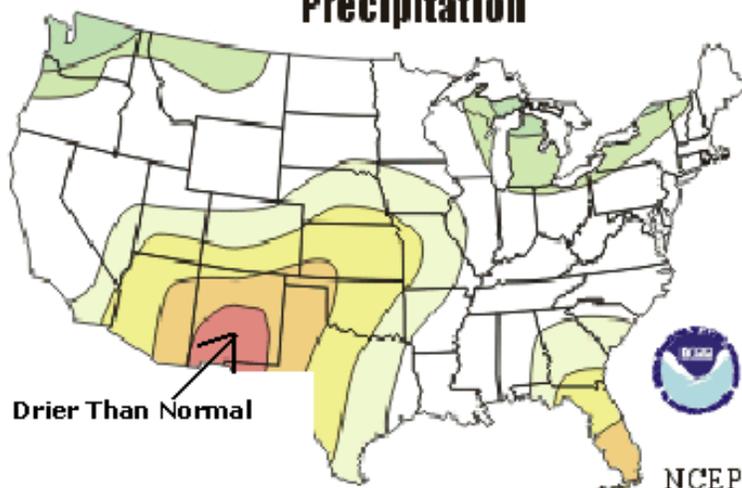


In This Issue...

Spotter Training, 1970 Lubbock Tornado, Drought Update, and more...

90 Day Outlook from NCEP's Climate Prediction Center

Climate Outlook February-April 2000 Precipitation



Drier Than Normal

NCEP
Climate Prediction Center

Release Date: January 13, 2000

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