



# The West Texas

# TWISTER



Winter 2002

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE FORECAST OFFICE LUBBOCK TEXAS

## Winter Weather Outlook

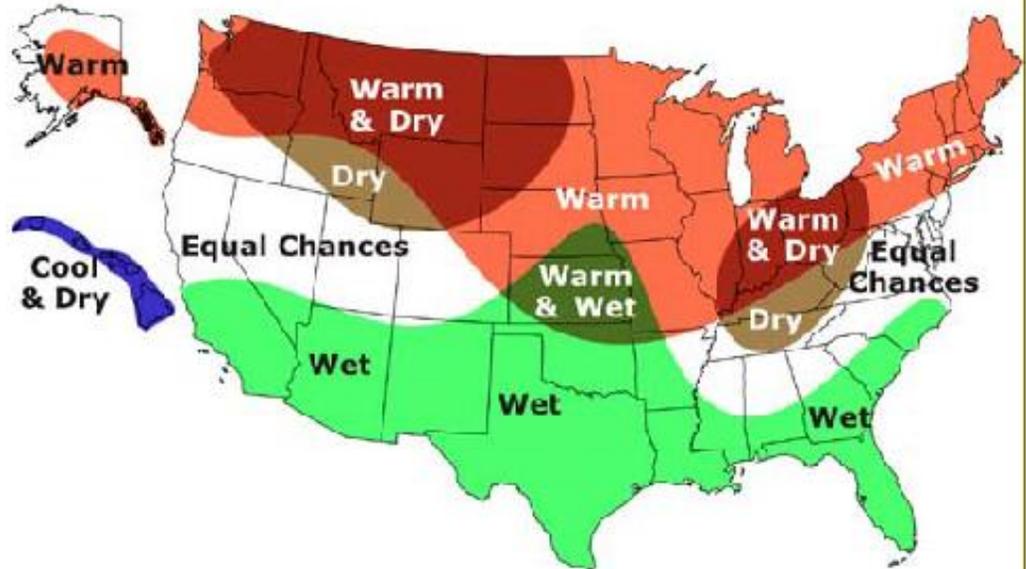
### El Nino Returns!

### What's In This Edition...

- ◆ Winter Weather Awareness Day
- ◆ Co-operative Program News
- ◆ Winter Weather Product Suite
- ◆ StormReady
- ◆ SKYWARN Recognition Day
- ◆ ...and more



## Winter Outlook December 2002 - February 2003



Sea surface temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific continue slightly above normal and should remain so through the upcoming winter. This condition is what defines the so-called "El Nino". This most recent El Nino developed this past summer and although not as strong as the previous El Nino that occurred, we still expect it to influence the weather pattern across the world.

Typically, El Nino conditions have resulted in about 80 percent above average precipitation in the South Plains area from late fall through winter (November through March). Average temperatures during that same period are slightly below average. El Nino winters have also featured some of the snowiest winters in the area. There have been six winters since 1950 in which Lubbock has received more than 20 inches of snow and four of those winters were dominated by El Nino conditions. Lubbock's greatest snowstorm and its snowiest season on record occurred during the winter of 1982-1983, which was the strongest El Nino recorded to date.

The current long-term forecast for the South Plains area for this winter reflects these expectations: higher probability for wetter than normal conditions (some of which will likely be snow and ice) and little foreseeable trend in temperatures. We'll let you know how these expectations turn out in our next edition in late February!



Ninety percent of all presidentially declared disasters are weather related. Many laws and regulations help local emergency managers deal with hazardous chemical spills, search and rescue operations, and medical crises but there are few guidelines that deal with hazardous weather operations. Recognizing this need, the National Weather Service has partnered with the Emergency Management Community to develop guidelines to help cities, counties, and towns implement procedures to reduce the impact of weather-related disasters.

StormReady guidelines are based on the applying community's population so small towns have the same opportunity for recognition as large cities. StormReady communities have multiple ways to receive severe weather warnings and alert the public to the threat, they have established a 24-hour warning point and EOC from which emergency response efforts can be coordinated, they promote the importance of public

readiness through education and training, and have a plan that is utilized during disasters. Because of their hard work to prepare for disasters such as tornadoes and floods, StormReady communities are also better prepared to handle **all** disasters, both natural and manmade.

Including Lubbock, there are currently just 18 communities that have been certified as StormReady in the state of Texas. Texas towns routinely have to deal with natural disasters and thus many communities in the state likely already have most of the requirements for StormReady certification in place. We'd like to see more communities in the South Plains area recognized for their hard work! If you're interested in learning more about (or applying for) the StormReady program, please contact Ed Calianese at 806-745-3916 x223.

## Get Your National Weather Service Forecasts Using These Resources

- Telephone - 806-745-4260
- NOAA Weather Radio - 162.40 MHz
- Web Site - [www.srh.noaa.gov/lub](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lub)

### Road Conditions

- **Texas DOT** - Phone - 1 800 452-9292  
Website - <http://www.dot.state.tx.us/hcr/main.htm>
- **New Mexico DOT** - Phone - 1 800 432-4269  
Website - <http://www.nmshtd.state.nm.us/>
- **Colorado DOT** - Phone - 1 303 639-1111  
Website - [www.cotrip.org/](http://www.cotrip.org/)

## Winter Weather Awareness Day November 21<sup>st</sup>

The Texas Division of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service have joined together to declare Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup> as Winter Weather Awareness Day (WWAD) in Texas. The purpose of WWAD is to focus public attention across the state on winter weather, so that they will begin to take steps now to prepare for the upcoming winter season. Even though it's a southern state, western Texas is known for its sharp outbreaks of cold during the winter months, which can be mixed with periods of snow and ice. Preparations for the dangers and hazards that winter storms can bring to West Texas should be made before we get into the heart of the season. Our office will issue several public information statements during the day addressing winter storms and the suggested preparations to be taken before the event.



### SKYWARN Scheduling

Even though winter is just underway, we will begin making arrangements for the upcoming spring severe thunderstorm season very soon. Since we intend to begin our SKYWARN training presentations in early February this year, we will begin scheduling the meetings for the upcoming season this December. The spotter training schedule will be posted and updated on our webpage. Since we emphasize different aspects of severe thunderstorm processes as they relate to spotting each season, we urge our spotters to attend training meetings at least once every other year if possible.



### Winter Fact

Lowest temperature recorded in Lubbock:  
- 17 degrees on February 8, 1933



## SKYWARN Recognition Day - December 7<sup>th</sup>

The National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League developed SKYWARN Recognition Day in 1999. It celebrates the contributions that volunteer SKYWARN radio operators make to the National Weather Service's severe weather program. During the day, SKYWARN spotters visit NWS offices and amateur radio spotters contact other radio operators across the world. The NWS Lubbock Office will be celebrating this event along with many other NWS offices across the country. Please watch our website for the details regarding an open house and the bands/frequencies that we'll be operating during the event.



## Coop - News by Johnny S. Wallace, DAPM

There have been no changes to our observers over the past few months. However we do have a new Meteorological Intern in the Public Service Unit at the WFO Lubbock, Mr. Jason Runyen. Some of you may have already spoken to Jason over the past few months. He is learning the Coop duties and some of our observers will meet him as we venture out into the field over the next few weeks. This year we have been honored to present Individual Length of Service Awards to our Coop Observers at Pep, Flomot 4NE, South Camp, and an Institutional Length of Service Award to Radio Station KKYN in Plainview. Over the next few weeks *more* LOS Awards will be presented at Morton and Matador.

Since our last newsletter we have had several rainfall events that have raised most stations back to near normal precipitation for the year. The reporting being done by our Coop-observers continues to be very timely and helpful to all of our users as well as the forecasters. This data, collected in a timely fashion, is an invaluable help to all of us. It gives us an idea of which areas to watch for flash flooding and other flood events that may occur in our warning area. There is a new web-based program being developed in the Central Region of the National Weather Service that will allow Coop Observers from throughout the country to enter their daily reports via an on-line computer instead of calling in the data to PC-ROSA. If any of you out there might be interested in reporting this new way, please let me know with a phone call or email and I will set you up to report via your PC when the program becomes available.

As our world becomes more and more automated it becomes more and more important to us that we get your monthly forms by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the next month. The processes take place so much more quickly these days than before, if we don't have your forms it is impossible to quality control the data so we can post it for use on our web page.

All of our COOP Observers continue to do an outstanding job, and all of us at the Weather Forecast Office in Lubbock thank you for your continuing efforts. And please have a safe and happy holiday season.

## NWS Winter Weather Product Suite

Our office will likely issue a number of winter weather products this winter for the South Plains, extreme southern Texas Panhandle and the Low Rolling Plains. Here's a summary of the conditions that we expect when we issue each of these products:

**Winter Weather Outlook** - significant winter weather is possible in the 48 to 120 hour timeframe. The timing, precise track, and forecast intensity of the storm may be uncertain and thus specific details may still be undetermined.

**Winter Storm Watch** - significant and potentially dangerous winter weather is possible in the 12 to 36 hour timeframe. Heavy snow and/or heavy accumulations of ice and sleet are likely.

**Winter Storm Warning** - significant winter weather is expected within the next 24 hours. Four or more inches of snow and/or dangerous accumulations of freezing rain and sleet expected. Conditions could lead to injuries or loss of life. If only one element is expected then the warning may be issued as an event specific warning such as "Ice Storm Warning" or "Heavy Snow Warning".

**Blizzard Warning** - the combination of heavy snow and strong wind will result in blindingly low visibilities and dangerously low wind chills during the next 24 hours.

**Winter Weather Advisory** - a combination of snow amounts of 3 inches or less and light accumulations of ice or sleet will result in hazardous conditions in the next 24 hours.

**Snow Advisory** - snowfall amounts of 1 to 3 inches will occur in the next 24 hours.

**Wind Chill Advisory** - wind chill values colder than minus 15 degrees F are expected



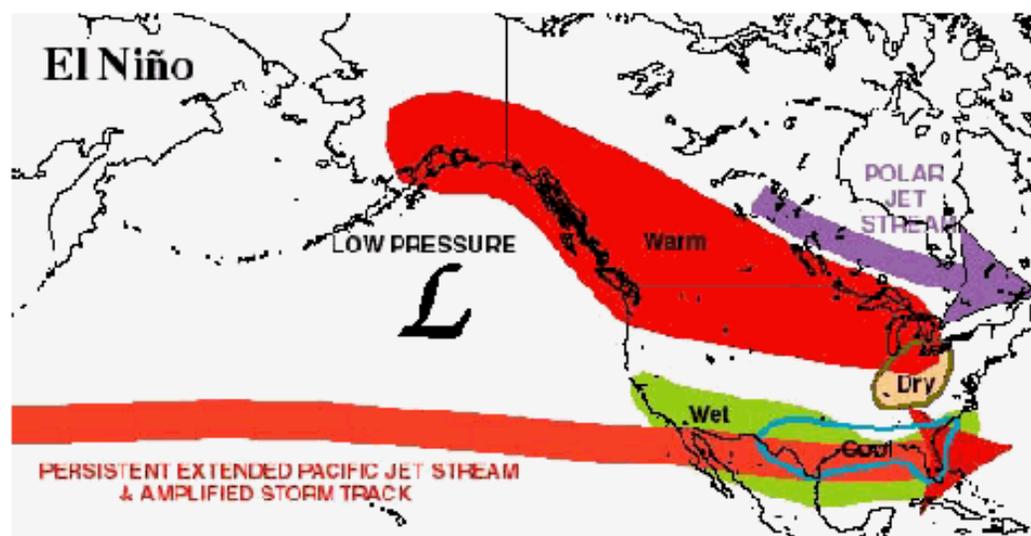
### Winter Facts for Lubbock

- **Heaviest seasonal snowfall:**  
41.2 inches in the winter of 1982 - 1983
- **Longest period at or below freezing:**  
207 hours December 17 - 26, 1983
- **Maximum snowfall in 24 hour period:**  
16.3 inches on January 20 - 21, 1983



### In This Issue...

Winter Weather Awareness Day, NWS Winter Weather Suite, StormReady, SKYWARN Recognition Day, Coop News, and more....



El Niño episodes feature two prominent changes in the atmospheric flow across the Eastern North Pacific and North America. The first is a much more zonally uniform flow than normal across the entire eastern North Pacific and North America. The second is a pronounced eastward extension and equatorward shift of the sub-tropical jet stream to the southwestern United States. Accompanying this flow pattern, low pressure systems tend to be more vigorous than normal over the eastern North Pacific and the southern tier of the United States, resulting in an abnormally stormy winter weather and an increase of precipitation across California and the southern tier of the United States. Also, there is an enhanced flow of marine air into most of North America, and a reduced northerly flow of cold air from Canada to the United States, resulting in a milder than normal winter across the northern tier of the United States.

National Weather Service

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