



The West Texas

Twister



SUMMER 2004

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE FORECAST OFFICE

LUBBOCK TEXAS



Lubbock Forecast Office Welcomes Justin Weaver as new Meteorologist-in-Charge

Justin Weaver has been appointed as the new Meteorologist-in-Charge (MIC) of the Lubbock Weather Forecast Office (WFO) of the National Weather Service. Justin replaced Larry Vannozi, who accepted a promotion as MIC of WFO Nashville, TN earlier this year. Justin's NWS career began in the Lubbock Office in 1990 as a Meteorologist Intern. Three years later he was appointed as the office's Service Hydrologist and eventually a Lead Forecaster in 1995. In 1998, Justin moved his family back to Michigan, where both he and his wife grew up. They were quickly drawn back to West Texas in 2001 as Justin returned to WFO Lubbock as the office's first Information Technology Officer.

Justin received a bachelor's degree in Meteorology from Central Michigan University in 1988 and earned a master's degree in Atmospheric Science from Texas Tech University in 1992. He and his wife, Jennifer, have two girls, ages nine and six, and a three-year-old son.

What's In This Edition...

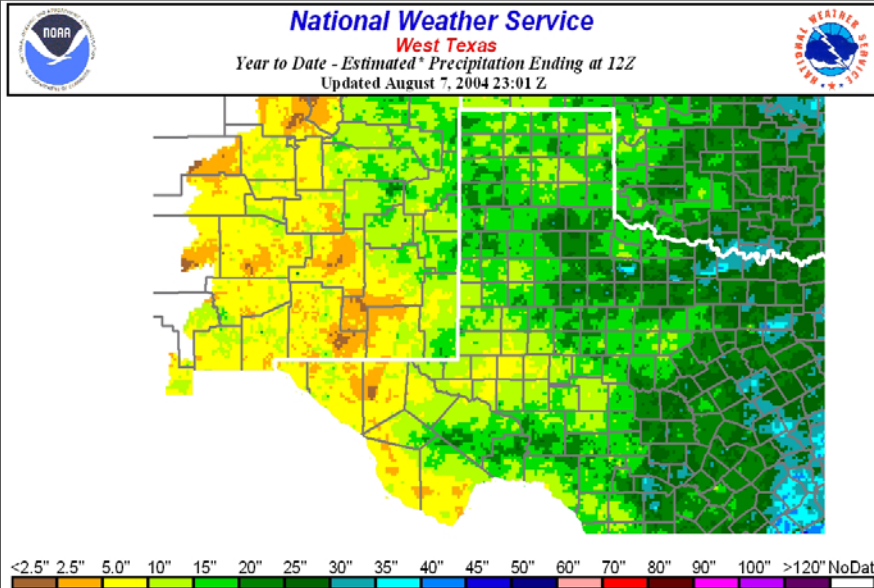
Heavy Rainfall near Jayton

New MIC at the Lubbock office

Summerfield and Plainview NOAA Weather Radio stations

2004 turning out to be very wet!

2004...The Rain keeps coming!



2004 has been a very wet year for most of the region. The picture above shows the radar estimated precipitation since January 1st. Some locations have already surpassed the normal annual rainfall. A few Texas Tech mesonet sites have recorded over 25 inches of rainfall, including the mesonet sites near Spur and Jayton, and nearly 30 inches has fallen east of Silverton!



2004 Total	STATION
20.06	<u>Abernathy 5NE</u>
23.37	<u>Amherst 1NE</u>
16.12	<u>Anton 6S</u>
11A	<u>Aspermont 3NE</u>
16.41	<u>Brownfield 2S</u>
13.81	<u>Clarendon 2W</u>
15.84	<u>Dimmitt 2NE</u>
16.39	<u>Floydada 2NE</u>
17.76	<u>Fluvanna 3W</u>
16.51	<u>Friona 2NE</u>
19.81	<u>Gail 2SE</u>
18.06	<u>Graham 5SW (MACY)</u>
21.05	<u>Guthrie 10W (PITC)</u>
15.97	<u>Hart 3H</u>
25.51	<u>Jayton 1S</u>
13.58	<u>Lamesa 2SE</u>
20.77	<u>Levelland 4S</u>
15.00	<u>Lubbock 3W</u>
15.33	<u>Memphis 1NE</u>
13.40	<u>Morton 1NE</u>
17.53	<u>Muleshoe 2S</u>
16.95	<u>O'Donnell 1H</u>
16.03	<u>Olton 6S</u>
19.09	<u>Paducah 10SW</u>
14.36	<u>Pampa 2E</u>
10.65	<u>Plains 3H</u>
16.03	<u>Plainview 1S</u>
20.86	<u>Post 1S</u>
17.27	<u>Ralls 1SE</u>
13.80	<u>Reese Center</u>
24.57	<u>Roaring Springs 3H</u>
14.27	<u>Seagraves 1SW</u>
13.23	<u>Seminole 2H</u>
29.05	<u>Silverton 7E</u>
16.84	<u>Slaton 2NE</u>
22.27	<u>Snyder 3E</u>
25.71	<u>Spur 1W</u>
15.29	<u>Sundown 8SW (MALL)</u>
21.87	<u>Tahoka 3NE</u>
19.51	<u>Tulia 2NE</u>
21.54	<u>White River Lake 6NW</u>

Cumulative Rainfall for 2004, through August 6

South Plains Area Rainfall - July 25-29, 2004

For most of the South Plains, Rolling Plains, and extreme Southern Panhandle, rainfall was plentiful during the last week of July 2004. Although a few locations remained dry including the Southeast Panhandle and spotty parts around the Southwest Panhandle and Northwest South Plains, other areas were not only wet, but were literally washing away.

If a contest was being held for the most rain, Jayton would definitely be the winner with over 10 inches, most of it falling Wednesday morning the 28th of July between 5:00 AM and 9:00 AM. Jayton was just part of a band of extremely heavy rain that stretched from Tahoka and O'Donnell eastward through the Brazos River Valley across locations like Post, Lake Alan Henry, White River Lake, Jayton, Aspermont, and Guthrie.



Runoff pouring out of a field near Jayton, Wednesday the 28th of July around noon.

Flood waters flowing down the Salt Fork of the Brazos River east of Jayton and north of Aspermont on Wednesday, July 28th.



Summerfield and Plainview Weather Radio Stations are on the Air!

NOAA Weather Radio (NWR), the “Voice of the National Weather Service”, began broadcasting from its newest sites near Summerfield and Plainview, Texas early this year. Summerfield NWR station WNG-657 broadcasts on a frequency of 162.500 Mhz directly from the NWS Office in Lubbock and reaches a large portion of Deaf Smith, Parmer, and Castro Counties, as well as portions of Randall, Oldham, Swisher, Bailey, Lamb, and Curry Counties. Plainview NWR station WNG-561 broadcasts on a frequency of 162.450 Mhz and reaches a large portion of Hale and Swisher counties, as well as parts of Castro, Lamb, Briscoe, and Floyd counties. Residents now have an extra resource that can be used to receive critical advance warning information 24 hours a day. In recent years, the sound of the NWR voice has changed. Automation, which allows us to speed critical weather information from advanced workstations directly to the growing number of transmitters, makes use of computer-synthesized voices.

This new technology eliminates many of the delays inherent in the older systems and allows simultaneous broadcasts on multiple transmitters when necessary. It also makes better use of other new technologies, such as Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME), which allows listeners to program specially equipped NWR models to receive warning alarms for specific counties, and the Emergency Alert System (EAS), which brings critical warnings to commercial broadcasters faster than ever before.

Weather Radios come in many sizes, with a variety of functions and costs. Some receivers can automatically sound an alarm and turn themselves on if a severe weather warning is broadcast. Some are SAME-equipped. Most receivers are either battery-operated portables or AC-powered desktop models with battery backup. Some scanners, HAM radios, CB radios, short wave receivers and AM/FM radios are also capable of receiving NWR transmissions. Weather radios can be purchased at most electronics stores.

Severe weather remains a threat off and on throughout the summer and into the fall on the Texas South Plains. Now would be a perfect time to purchase a NWR to help ensure that you can receive critical warning information .



Castro County EMC Randy Griffitt (center) and former WFO Lubbock MIC Larry Vannozzi (right) discuss the NWS's newest NWR station at a news conference.



NOAA Weather Radio

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!

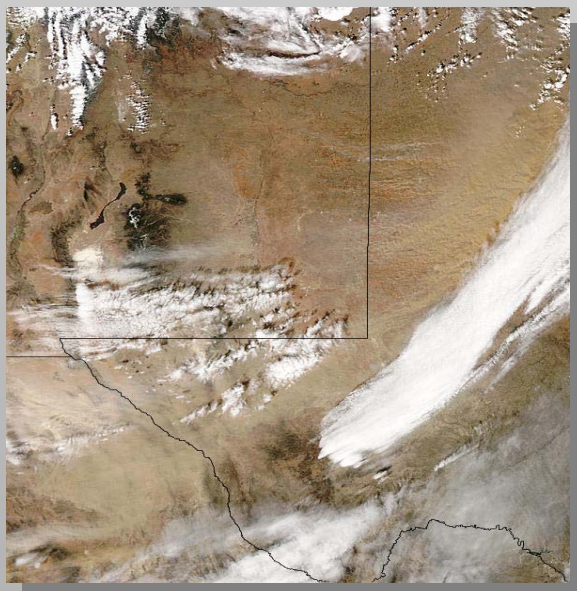
Dust Storm Pile-ups Avoidable

Towering pillars of dust, lifted by winds gusting up to 63 mph, choked the Texas South Plains on February 19, 2004. The thick, reddish-brown clouds, billowing off area fields, dropped visibilities to a few feet at times, and contributed to three multiple vehicle pile-ups. The worst involved more than two dozen vehicles near Southland, 20 miles southeast of Lubbock, claiming the lives of a New Mexico truck-driving couple.

Although a number of tragic collisions in thick dust or fog have occurred from California to Texas in recent years, multi-vehicle collisions in low visibility are relatively unknown to the South Plains region. But they have not been unheard of. One collision in a dust storm near Pecos involved 14 vehicles in 2002. A fatal collision involving 17 vehicles between Clovis and Portales during dense fog in 2001 also caused a serious hazardous materials spill. These pileups typically occur because vehicles follow behind too closely and travel faster than those in front, resulting in a series of rear-end collisions. And they can be avoided by taking simple precautions.

If you choose to drive through fog or dust, watch for changing conditions. An approaching dark sky may indicate sudden loss of visibility - perhaps to just a few feet. Rural highways next to open fields are often subject to the worst conditions. Travel at a safely reduced speed, to allow time to respond to drastic visibility changes. It is suicidal to proceed into thick dust or fog at normal speeds.

If you can't safely continue, your worst action is to completely stop on the highway. With landmarks hidden, drivers often follow brake lights or taillights of vehicles *in front* of them. If that vehicle – *yours* – has stopped, your own lights could lead them to plow into you. Instead, pull safely far onto the shoulder, watching carefully for culverts and ditches. Then turn off your lights and lift your foot off the brake pedal. In most cases, safe travel can be resumed in minutes.



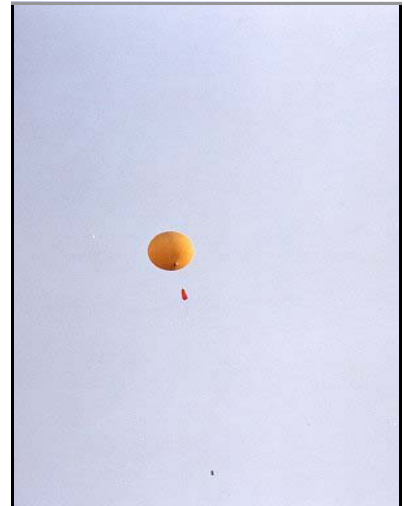
Dust plume as seen on visible satellite picture



Why do Forecasters Still Rely on Balloons?

Twice every day, from nearly 100 locations in the United States, the National Weather Service launches weather balloons, carrying instrument packages called radiosondes.

Radiosonde sensors measure upper-air conditions such as atmospheric pressure, temperature and humidity, wind speed and direction. The data is important for aviation safety, and meteorologists use radiosonde information to prepare weather forecasts.



South Plains Thunderstorms Presidential “Character Builders”

Did you know this? Air Force One, carrying President Clinton, was rocked by violent turbulence while flying near severe thunderstorms thirty-three thousand feet over Levelland, 30 miles west of Lubbock, on June 12, 1996.

The President was en route from Albuquerque to Charleston, S.C., on the modified 747-200, carrying about 70 others including crewmembers, Secret Service Agents and reporters. The stiff jolts tossed around everything not locked down – sending dinner soaring across the galley. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured. Investigators later concluded the plane was shaken by violent updrafts and downdrafts near severe thunderstorms that also forced evacuation of the Lubbock Air Traffic Control Tower. “I was holding on,” a smiling Clinton said after walking the aisles to check on everyone else. “It was certainly a character builder, wasn’t it?”



National Weather Service

Cooperative Observer Program

COOP – News

■ **Ben Franklin Award** (55 Years of Service)

The National Weather Service recently presented one of its most prestigious awards for outstanding service, the Benjamin Franklin Award, to Mr. Edward Brosch of Slaton who has collected rainfall data for over 55 years. Mr. Brosch began taking rainfall observations for the "Weather Bureau" in May 1949.

Why is it called the Ben Franklin award? *The Benjamin Franklin Award is given to cooperative observers after completing 55 years of service. In addition to showing us that thunderstorms have electricity in the legendary kite flying episode, Franklin was also the first person to track a storm moving up the east coast. As U.S. Postmaster, he instructed other postmasters along the eastern seaboard to record the weather and the compilation of these records showed the storm movement.*

■ **New Observers:**

Welcome and thanks to our newest cooperative observers added this spring and summer...including:

Plainview Water Production Plant –

Olton - Mr. Carl McClure

Muleshoe - Mr. Jack Rennels

Also, special thanks to the Plainview Daily Herald, especially Mr. Doug McDonough who recently started sending his data in daily over the Internet. Doug has been an outstanding weather observer at the Herald since April 1965. The Plainview Daily Herald began collecting and recording weather observations in September 1899.

■ Johnny Wallace, our Cooperative Program Manager - Johnny is now back at work full time continuing his recovery from cancer. Johnny spent over 2 months in the hospital over the winter and began a slow recovery this Spring. He would like to express special thanks to all of you for your thoughts and prayers.



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In This Issue...

Heavy Rainfall near Jayton, Dust Storm Pileups, New Weather Radio Stations and more...

Have You Looked at our website lately?

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Get Pinpoint and Graphical forecasts, climate information, and even latest rainfall estimates from the Lubbock radar. Check us out! — we're located on the web at:

www.srh.noaa.gov/lub