

Messages of the Day **December 2011**

Friday, December 2, 2011

Sleet . . . "That other frozen stuff"!

A Colorado observer asks "What is sleet and how do I measure it when it makes it's rare appearance in my state?"

Here's our answer: Sleet is precipitation that leaves the cloud as rain, but on its way down freezes into little balls of ice before reaching the ground. Sleet is measured and reported in the same manner as snow. You melt the contents of your gauge to get the water content, and you measure the accumulation of sleet on the ground or on your snow board, and report that as "New Snow" and as "Total Depth". Please note "sleet" in your comments so we know that it fell at your location.

Friday, December 9, 2011

The "Five For CoCoRaHS" Year-End Fundraiser continues through January 10, 2012

It's day four of our annual year-end fundraiser and we thank you for your support! If you have yet to make a donation please consider giving \$5.00 to support this campaign.

For more information on the fundraiser and to access the donation portal click here: ["INFO/DONATE"](#)

Measuring Snow and Ice. . . a Refresher

December is a good time of year to take a few minutes to go over how to measure snow and ice. These elements become so much a part of many of our daily lives as we approach the winter solstice.

For a comprehensive read on the subject click here: ["Measuring Snow and Ice"](#)

You will also notice that this is taken from the most recent "Catch" e-mail message from our director Nolan Doesken. For a full list of past "Catches" on a variety of topics click here: ["The Catch"](#)

Thanks again for taking measurements in wintry weather!

Monday, December 12, 2011

The "Five For CoCoRaHS" Year-End Fundraiser continues through January 10, 2012

To those who have given to our annual year-end fundraiser, we thank you for your support! If you have yet to make a donation please consider giving \$5.00.

For more information and to access the donation portal click here: ["Info/Donate"](#)

◆Goal: \$38,000 ◆Donations to date: \$12,141 ◆Days left in campaign: 30

Windchill . . . "Baby it's cold outside!"

When the wind blows it often feels much colder than what the thermometer says. One way to quantify what you are experiencing is known as the "wind chill factor". The AMS Glossary of Meteorology defines it as: "a means of quantifying the threat of rapid cooling during breezy or windy conditions that may result in hypothermia in cold conditions."

In 2001 the National Weather Service revised the "windchill index" that many of us are familiar with. To find out more about windchill visit: ["The Windchill Page"](#).

And one last thing . . . don't forget to wear a hat!

Friday, December 16, 2011

The "Five For CoCoRaHS" Year-End Fundraiser continues through January 10, 2012

To those who have already given, we thank you for your support! If you have yet to make a donation please consider donating \$5.00. *A volunteer recently wrote us to suggest that folks donate the amount of rainfall they've had in 2011 . . . now there's a creative idea!*

For more information and to access the donation portal click here: ["Info/Donate"](#)

◆Goal: \$38,000 ◆Donations to date: \$14,982 ◆Days left in campaign: 26

CoCoRaHS for Schools!

The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network is announcing "CoCoRaHS for Schools"! See our new page and animation by clicking here: [Schools](#).

What could be more perfect than CoCoRaHS as a classroom project? Students get to participate in a real scientific program where the data are used by real scientists; Students practice basic observation skills using a real scientific instrument; And, CoCoRaHS gets more data, which in turn helps the scientists! It takes just a few minutes a day and participating can meet several state and national standards for education.

So, please enjoy and share this with a teacher you know! If you have questions, please contact: education@cocorahs.org

Monday, December 19, 2011

To those who have already given, we thank you for your support! If you have yet to make a donation please consider donating \$5.00.

For more information and to access the donation portal click here: ["Info/Donate"](#)

◆Goal: \$38,000 ◆Donations to date: \$16,281 ◆Days left in campaign: 22

Blizzard

As you read this message, several parts of the country are experiencing blizzard conditions.

Here's the definition straight out of the American Meteorological Society's Glossary of Meteorology:

*"**Blizzard** -- A severe weather condition characterized by high winds and reduced visibilites due to falling or blowing snow. The U. S. National Weather Service specifies a wind of 30 knots (35 miles per hour) or greater, sufficient snow in the air to reduce visibility to less than 400m (0.25 miles). Earlier definitions also included a condition of low temperatures, on the oder of -7 degrees C (20F) or lower, or -12C (10F) or lower (severe blizzard). The name originated in the United States but it is also used in other countries. In the Antarctic the name is given to violent autumnal winds off the ice cap. In southeast France, the cold north wind with snow is termed blizzard. Similar storms in Russian Asia are the 'buran' and 'purga'. In popular usage in the United States and in England, the term is often used for an heavy snowstorm accompanied by strong winds."*

Coming straight from the NWS web site they define **Blizzard** as: "A blizzard means that the following conditions are expected to prevail for a period of 3 hours or longer:

- Sustained wind or frequent gusts to 35 miles an hour or greater; and
- Considerable falling and/or blowing snow (i.e., reducing visibility frequently to less than ¼ mile)."

The National Weather Service issues blizzard warnings and is a great place to go for up the to minute forecasts for your local area.

Here is a sample of a blizzard warning that was issued for southeastern Colorado:

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PUEBLO CO

320 PM MST MON DEC 19 2011

EASTERN LAS ANIMAS COUNTY-WESTERN KIOWA COUNTY- EASTERN KIOWA COUNTY-
LAS ANIMAS VICINITY/BENT COUNTY- LAMAR VICINITY/PROWERS COUNTY-SPRINGFIELD
VICINITY/BACA COUNTY- INCLUDING...BRANSON...KIM...EADS...SHERIDAN LAKE...LAS
ANIMAS... LAMAR...SPRINGFIELD...WALSH

320 PM MST MON DEC 19 2011 ...BLIZZARD WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 9 AM MST
TUESDAY...

A BLIZZARD WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 9 AM MST TUESDAY.

* LOCATION...KIOWA COUNTY...EASTERN LAS ANIMAS COUNTY...BENT
COUNTY...PROWERS COUNTY AND BACA COUNTY.

* CAUSE AND TIMING...A POWERFUL WINTER STORM WILL MOVE FROM EAST CENTRAL
INTO THE OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE BY TUESDAY MORNING.

* SNOW ACCUMULATION... FOR KIOWA COUNTY...6 TO 10 INCHES WITH LOCALLY HIGHER
AMOUNTS POSSIBLE. ELSEWHERE...10 TO 20 INCHES WITH LOCALLY HIGHER AMOUNTS
POSSIBLE.

* WIND...NORTH WINDS 15 TO 30 MPH WITH GUSTS TO AROUND 50 MPH.

* IMPACT...TRAVEL MAY BECOME HAZARDOUS IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE AT TIMES DUE TO A
COMBINATION OF HEAVY SNOW...BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW...WHITEOUT
CONDITIONS AND ICY...SNOW COVERED ROADS. DRIFTING SNOW COULD LEAD TO ROAD
CLOSURES AT TIMES. PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS... LIFE THREATENING
WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE EXPECTED. SUSTAINED WIND SPEEDS OR FREQUENT
GUSTS OVER 35 MPH AND VISIBILITY REDUCED TO BELOW 1/4 MILE BY FALLING AND
BLOWING SNOW ARE EXPECTED. AVOID TRAVELING IN THE WARNING AREA. IF YOU ARE
PLANNING TO TRAVEL IN THE WARNING AREA DURING THE TIME OF THE WARNING...
LISTEN TO THE LATEST WEATHER FORECAST AND CONSIDER TRAVELING AT ANOTHER
TIME OR BY ANOTHER ROUTE. IF YOU MUST TRAVEL IN THE WARNING AREA DURING
THE TIME OF THE WARNING...TAKE ALONG A WINTER SURVIVAL KIT. IF YOU BECOME
STRANDED IN A RURAL AREA...STAY WITH YOUR VEHICLE UNTIL HELP ARRIVES. IN
SIMILAR CONDITIONS DURING PAST BLIZZARDS...PEOPLE HAVE DIED OF EXPOSURE
WHILE TRYING TO WALK TO SHELTER. TO KEEP WARM IN YOUR VEHICLE...RUN YOUR
ENGINE 10 MINUTES EACH HOUR...AND MAKE SURE THE EXHAUST PIPE IS CLEAR OF
SNOW TO AVOID CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING.

So if a blizzard is forecast for your area, please be careful and think it through before venturing out. Staying
put is usually the best policy.

Tuesday, December 20 2011

To those who have already given, we thank you for your support! If you have yet to make a donation please
consider donating \$5.00.

For more information and to access the donation portal click here: ["Info/Donate"](#)

☐Goal: \$38,000 ☐Donations to date: \$17,896 ☐Days left in campaign: 21

"Sunrise, sunset . . . Swiftly flow the days"

"Sunrise, sunset . . . swiftly flow the days" so goes the song from the musical "Fiddler on the Roof". This is the time of year that many of us are keenly aware of sunrise and sunset as for many of us one comes way too late, and the other comes way too early. This week we reach the shortest day of the year (winter solstice on December 21st) and as we move into January many of us will be getting another two minutes of daylight each day (more in the higher latitudes).

If you're interested in sunrise/sunset times, and how they change for anywhere in the country, you may wish to pay a visit to the U.S. Naval Observatory website: ["Naval Observatory"](#)

They also specialize in such obscure, but critically important information such as twilight -- the amount of light visible before sunrise and after sunset.

For those of you who miss those long sunny evenings, just remember that Daylight Savings Time, observed in many states, is not that far away on March 11th in 2012.