

What a winter we've had in Sisters

By Ron Thorkildson
Correspondent

Extreme winter weather battered Central Oregon in December and January, while February brought a respite to its snow-weary and frost-bitten residents. Three-foot snow depths were common in and around the Sisters area during December and January, accompanied by bone-chilling temperatures that plunged below minus-20 degrees Fahrenheit early in January.

More moderate weather in February allowed folks to make some progress in clearing away the deep snow, though temperatures still averaged three degrees below normal — but without the bite of another arctic outbreak.

Sisters' data showed that precipitation was a third of an inch below normal, but information supplied by the National Weather Service office in Pendleton indicates February's precipitation levels were at least 150 percent above normal in Deschutes County.

Sisters picked up an additional seven inches of snow in



PHOTO BY RON THORKILDSON

The huge piles of snow that paralyzed traffic in town during December, January, and early February are finally melting away.

February. The maximum temperature for the month was 55 degrees and the minimum was 13 degrees. According to Marilyn Lohmann, hydrologist at the Pendleton office, the snow pack in the Central Oregon Cascades has a water equivalent 150 percent of normal as of March 9.

The early winter La Niña was weak and short-lived. Both the multivariate ENSO Index and the Oceanic Niño

Index show a return to El Niño-Southern Oscillation neutral conditions at this time.

As most of the piles of snow around town have finally disappeared, the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center foresees near normal temperatures and above normal precipitation levels for March. This forecast was issued on February 28.



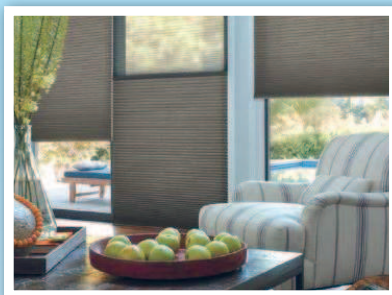
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