

BALMY

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On Aug. 9 the thermometer at the airport recorded the astounding figure of 108 degrees. That broke, by 2 degrees, the record for the hottest temperature ever at the airport, a mark which had defied every previous heatwave since Aug. 4, 1961.

But that newly minted record lasted about as long as the solidity of a chocolate would have on the airport runway tarmac on those torrid days.

On Aug. 10 the temperature crested at 109, meaning the previous day, having vanquished a record that persisted for 57 years, itself could manage to hold on for only a day.

The current record had better staying power, to be sure, as it remains at the top of the list. But whether it can retain its title for more than a half a century might be unlikely, based on a recent report about how climate change has affected Oregon, and how it might affect the state in the future.

The fourth Oregon Climate Assessment Report, which aggregates a series of peer-reviewed scientific studies from the past two years, projects, among other things, that Oregon's average temperature could rise by 4 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100.

Such a warming trend would pose a host of potential problems for the state, the authors concluded, prominent among them more severe and longer wildfire seasons, shrinking snowpacks and the resulting loss of water for farms and ranches, and rising sea levels.

"Simply put, the state's biggest fire years occur when summers are unusually warm and dry," said Philip Mote, an Oregon State University professor and former director of Oregon Climate Change Research Institute and a co-author of the report. "Since warm and dry summers are occurring more frequently, we can expect the fire danger to increase as well. At the same time, our hydrology is changing — starting with shrinking snowpack, which in many basins poses a dual threat of increasing flood risk in the winter and resulting in lower soil moisture and stream flows in the summer."

The authors note that the possible effects of a warming climate aren't exclusively negative.

They also project that the growing season could extend as much as two additional months in the Willamette Valley, and including Eastern Oregon.

Some of the potential ramifications could have mixed effects.

For instance, the climate report projects "extreme precipitation events" — much heavier than normal rainfall — will increase by about 20 percent in Eastern Oregon. That could help offset the reduction in winter snowpack, but it also could contribute to

Baker City's 10 Warmest* Years

- 2018 — 48.0°
- 1992 — 47.7°
- 1973 — 47.7°
- 1998 — 47.6°
- 1981 — 47.6°
- 1986 — 47.5°
- 1958 — 47.3°
- 1967 — 47.2°
- 2015 — 47.1°
- 1997 — 47.0°

* average yearly temperature is compiled from the average daily high and low temperatures at the Baker City Airport. The overall average for the airport from 1944 through 2018 is 45.5°

Baker City's 10 Coldest* Years

- 1955 — 42.0°
- 1985 — 42.8°
- 1948 — 42.9°
- 2008 — 43.1°
- 1989 — 43.3°
- 1993 — 43.5°
- 1957 — 43.6°
- 1984 — 43.7°
- 1952 — 43.7°
- 2013 — 43.9°

* average yearly temperature is compiled from the average daily high and low temperatures at the Baker City Airport. The overall average for the airport from 1944 through 2018 is 45.5°

"Since warm and dry summers are occurring more frequently, we can expect fire danger to increase as well."

— Phillip Mote, professor, College of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences, Oregon State University

landslides.

In one sense Baker City lags behind Oregon as a whole in terms of record temperatures.

The warmest year statewide was 2015, when the average temperature, based on records from about 40 sites, was 50.4 degrees, breaking the previous record of 49.9 degrees set in 1934.

In Baker City 2015 ranks as the ninth-warmest year, with an average high of 47.1 degrees.

As for long-term temperature trends, the first 25 years of record-keeping at the Baker City Airport were cooler than the following two quarter-centuries.

The average temperature for the first 25-year period (1944-68) was 44.93 degrees.

The middle period — 1969-93 — was the warmest of the trio, with an average temperature of 45.80.

The past 25 years, 1994-2018, was slightly cooler — by a little more than one-tenth of a degree — with an average temperature of 45.64 degrees.

Of the 10 warmest years at the airport, two happened during the first quarter-century of record-keeping at the airport — 1958, which ranks eighth, and 1967, the ninth-warmest.

The eight other years in the top 10 are equally divided between the most recent 25-year period (starting in 1994) and the middle quarter-century. By contrast, the 10 coldest years are more heavily weighted to the first two 25-year periods, with four of the 10 years in each period.

Just two of the 10 coldest years have happened in the previous quarter-century

Comparing the 25-year periods

Daily temperature records have been taken at the Baker City Airport since 1944 — a span of 75 years that makes it possible to divide the span into three 25-year periods.

1944-1968

- Average temperature: 44.93°
- Years with avg. temperature above 46.5°: 5
- Years with avg. temperature below 44°: 7
- Years in top 10 warmest: 2
- Years in top 10 coldest: 4

1969-1993

- Average temperature: 45.80°
- Years with avg. temperature above 46.5°: 9
- Years with avg. temperature below 44°: 4
- Years in top 10 warmest: 4
- Years in top 10 coldest: 4

1994-2018

- Average temperature: 45.64°
- Years with avg. temperature above 46.5°: 7
- Years with avg. temperature below 44°: 4
- Years in top 10 warmest: 4
- Years in top 10 coldest: 2

— 2008, which is the fourth-coldest, and 2013, which is the 10th-coldest.

Although the airport has been the official site of Baker City's weather records since World War II, there were earlier recording stations, including one at KBKR Radio in Baker City, that date to 1894, Mote said.

The Office of the Washington State Climatologist has "spliced" the records from each of the sites, Mote said, to make it possible to look at temperature trends over more than a century, through 2017.

These data are available online at <http://www.climate.washington.edu/trends/>

Based on that database, the average temperature in Baker City has increased by 1.68 degrees, a rise that climatologists say is a "statistically significant" trend.

In general, the increase in average temperature was caused not as much because days are getting hotter but because nights aren't cooling as much.

The average daily low temperature in Baker City has risen by 2.39 degrees, which is also statistically significant.

The average daily high temperature, meanwhile, has risen by 1.04 degrees, which, according to the database, is not statistically significant.

OREGON BRIEFING

Dead wolf found near Mount Hood

PORTLAND (AP) — A wolf that might have been injured when it was captured and fitted with a radio collar was found near Mount Hood in northern Oregon, wildlife officials said.

The young male wolf found in November was one of only a few wolves that have taken up residence again near the volcanic mountain, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Monday.

A necropsy found the wolf was not poisoned or shot, said Elizabeth Materna, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist. The animal's cause of death was unknown, but it had an injury to its front paw that possibly occurred when it was captured, she said.

The federal agency oversees wolf management in most of western Oregon.

The first wolves were sighted in early 2018 in this area of the northern Cascades Mountains. Images from a trail camera near Mount Hood last summer showed the returning wolves had produced a litter of at least two. The wolf that recently died was not thought to be the breeding male, wildlife officials said.

Officials estimate that at least 124 wolves live in Oregon, mostly in the northeastern part of the state.

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife manages wolves in the eastern part of the state where the animals are listed as endangered. The state wildlife commission is set to vote on a management plan in March.

Environmental groups withdrew last month from negotiations on the plan, saying their proposals had not been fairly considered.

Blumenauer skips State of Union again

SALEM (AP) — Democratic Rep. Earl Blumenauer said he wouldn't attend President Donald Trump's State of the Union speech Tuesday.

In a statement Blumenauer, who represents Oregon's 3rd District, said he has skipped Trump's previous two State of the Union addresses as well.

Blumenauer said the president's recent behavior had resulted in "damage, division and confusion."

Intel will build factory in Hillsboro

PORTLAND (AP) — Intel has acknowledged it will soon start building a massive new semiconductor factory in Hillsboro.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports the company told about 50 residents living near its Ronler Acres campus that it will build a third phase of its massive DIX manufacturing complex, confirming a newspaper report last month.

Intel also said it plans a new technology building to support the factory with emergency generators, utilities and additional parking.

Intel was vague on details, including the project's exact size and timing. Hillsboro city officials say the chipmaker recently submitted construction permitting applications but the city has yet to fulfill public records requests for the documents.

The chipmaker says it plans to start work in Hillsboro sometime in 2019 but plans remain contingent on unspecified business and economic factors.

Storm drops flakes in San Francisco area, Las Vegas

By Gillian Flaccus
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Snow, ice and shivering cold blasted normally mild cities from Seattle to Las Vegas to San Francisco on Tuesday as the winter weather sweeping across the U.S. West shuttered schools, made travel treacherous and closed all roads in Yosemite National Park.

Winter storms have been hitting the West for several days and brought a surprise dusting to peaks overlooking San Francisco — the city's first notable snow in eight years. Yosemite's ski area closed, restaurants had shorter hours and shuttles were not running because of snow-covered roads.

"It's beautiful and we certainly need the snow, but we're asking people to stay indoors," park spokesman Scott Gediman said. "As the weather improves, we'll plow roads and assess the situation."

California is still recovering from a drought that led to tight water restrictions and contributed to severe wildfires.

Temperatures plunged into the teens in Seattle overnight, making roads slick, and schools throughout the area shut down for a second day. Unusual snow fell a day earlier, causing car crashes and canceling flights, and lower-than-normal temperatures were expected throughout the week.

Rare snow and cold

also walloped Portland. Residents awoke to unexpected overnight snowfall that closed schools and left some higher elevation roads slick for the morning commute.

Natalie Razez, 9, of Lake Oswego, Oregon, said when the snow flurries started Monday, her teacher shared some advice for ensuring a snow day Tuesday.

"Our teacher let us do a snow dance while it was snowing at school yesterday, and I flushed ice cubes down the toilet and I put spoons under my pillow," she said during a break from sledding and snowball fights.

In Nevada, the National Weather Service reported light snow in northwest Las Vegas. More than 3 feet of snow has fallen at the top of some Lake Tahoe ski resorts in the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 6 feet since storms began Saturday.

An 80-mile stretch of westbound Interstate 80 in the Sierra Nevada reopened to vehicles with chains or snow tires.

In Utah, a semi-trailer slid off an icy highway in a canyon and hit a deputy, sending him to the hospital with serious injuries and closing the road. The unnamed Rich County sheriff's deputy is expected to survive. He was hit outside his vehicle as he investigated a different semi-trailer that had lost control and rolled off the road.

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