Star Tribune file photos

2009

WEATHER WRAP-UP

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Minnesota (and North Dakota) became the Nation's Sandbag Box in 2009.

Thousands of volunteers erected miles of dikes to help keep Fargo and Moorhead dry despite a record-high crest on the north-flowing Red River in late March.

As the year wore on, the urban heat island became the urban desert island. Drought locked in on the metro area through much of the spring and summer, while much of the rest of the state got plentiful rains. The late months of the year saw flip-flopping weather, coinciding neatly with the turn of each calendar page. Cool August was followed by warm and dry September, then by cold and gloomy October, then by the second-warmest November on record.

In many ways December is still with us: Rain that followed snow over the Christmas holidays froze across much of the state, creating an icy carpet for sliding into 2010.

JANUARY

Statewide it was the coldest January since 1994. Babbitt was the minimalist, with minus-48 on Jan. 14. The Twin Cities reached minus-22 on Jan. 16, during a stretch of 86 hours of zero or below, the longest in 12 years. In the Twin Cities the temperature remained below freezing all month until reaching 46 on Jan. 31.

FEBRUARY

Pipestone and Luverne recorded Minnesota's first 50-degree readings of the year Feb. 24. Two days later the Twin Cities saw its biggest snowstorm (6 inches) of the season. Near Alexandria, 11 inches fell.

MARCH

Spring runoff drove the Red River of the North to an all-time high of 40.8 feet on March 28 at Fargo-Moorhead. Only a massive weeklong dike-building effort prevented a major disaster. Fargo recorded the most snow and most precipitation for any March on record. Nearby, Campbell, Minn., was buried by 27 inches of snow March 30-April 1.

APRIL

Canby's high of 93 on April 24 was a state record for the date. The temperature dropped to 40 the next day.

MAY

International Falls finally ended its snow season May 16 with a record 128.1 inches. The Red River at Fargo fell below flood stage May 19 — the first time in 61 days, a record. That day was also the warmest day of the year in the Twin Cities, where the high was 97. The 4 p.m. temperatures that day ranged from 100 at Granite Falls to 34 at Grand Marais, believed to be a record spread across the state. The month was the Twin Cities' third-driest May on record, with only 0.53 inches of rain.

JUNE

The Twin Cities saw three straight days with highs under 60 June 6-8, the first time that had happened in June since 1951. Tornado season opened June 17, with a half-dozen twisters across the state, including an EF2 near Austin.

JULY

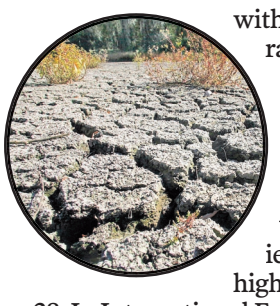
It was the state's third-coolest July on record. July 17 was the coolest ever in the Twin Cities, with a high of 65. Drought gripped the metro area, where the January-July period was the sixth-driest since 1871. A 14-year-old Stillwater girl was killed by lightning July 22.

AUGUST

The metro area's calm, cool and dry summer was interrupted Aug. 7-8 with nearly 3 inches of rain. Chaska's 6.2 inches Aug. 8 and 10.15 inches for the month were both records. A weak tornado tore up trees and damaged roofs in south Minneapolis and on the edge of downtown Aug. 19, the first touchdown in the city in 28 years.

SEPTEMBER

The drought didn't end after all. September wound up as the third-driest on record in the Twin Cities, with 0.46 inches of rain. Mankato received a mere 0.26, all of it on Sept. 25. Daily highs in the Twin Cities were 70 or higher until Sept. 28. In International Falls, September's average temperature (59.7) was higher than July's (58.8).



OCTOBER

After a bright, warm and dry September, October was the gloomiest since the solar radiation detector at the University of Minnesota was switched on in 1963, and the Twin Cities' fourth-coldest since 1891. The Twin Cities got 2.5 inches of snow on Oct. 12. Grand Meadow received an October state record 10.24 inches of precipitation, and Rochester got 7.9 inches of snow.

NOVEMBER

Someone changed the climatological channel again, as November was the second-warmest on record statewide. It was the fourth of the past six Novembers with only a half-inch or less of snow in the metro area.

DECEMBER

Winter broke down the door Dec. 8-9 with a blizzard that dumped 16 inches around Winona. Then it trashed the rest of the place with heavy snow and rain over Christmas, which froze and left much of the state encased in ice and crust. Grand Forks got 25.1 inches of snow Dec. 23-26. Duluth recorded 24.5 inches Dec. 24-26. The Twin Cities got a Christmas Eve record, but only 5.2 inches.

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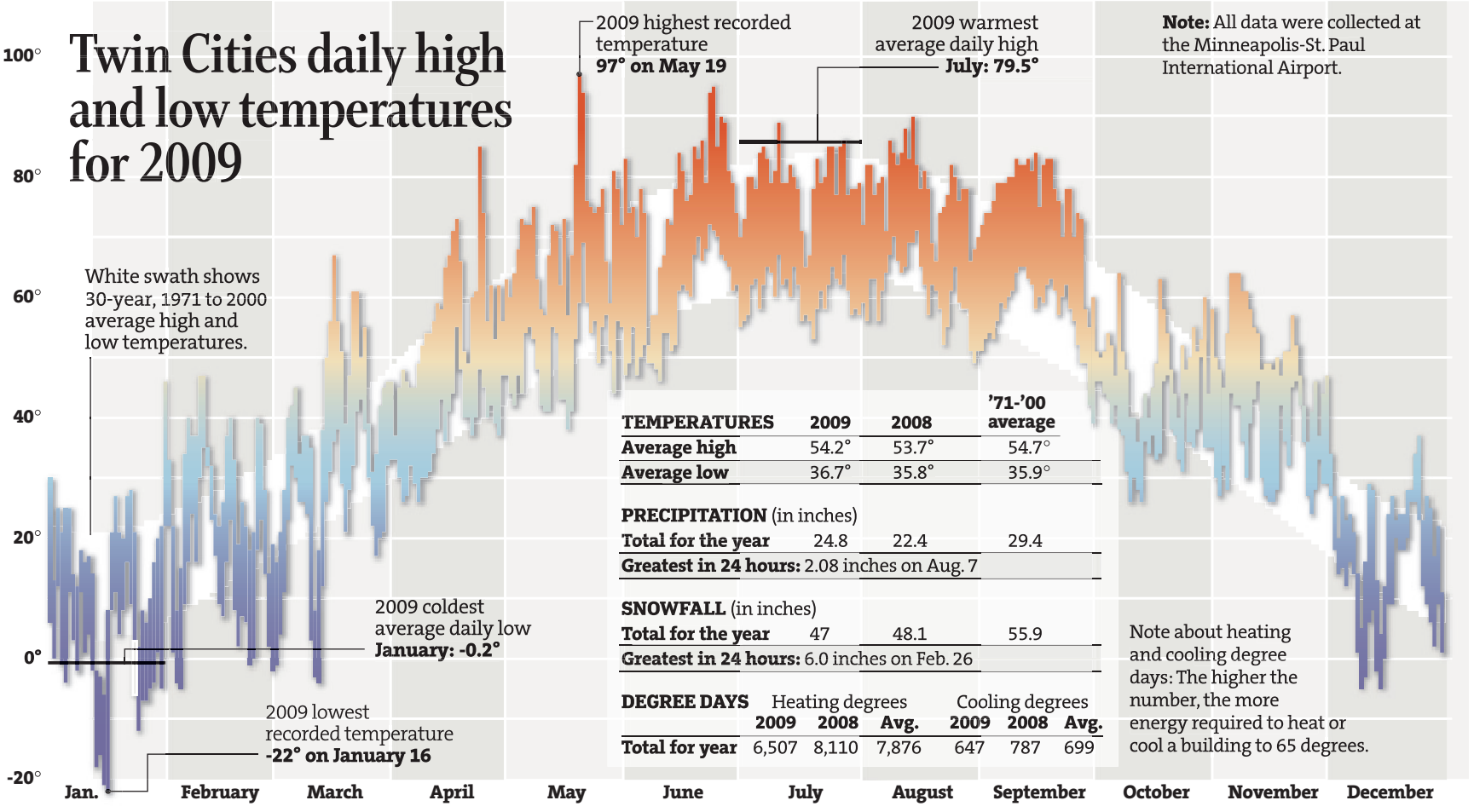
TWIN CITIES MONTHLY DATA FOR 2009

	High temp.	Low temp.	Avg. temp.	Diff. from normal	Precip. (inches)	Diff. from normal	Snow* (inches)	Diff. from normal
Jan.	46	-22	8.3	-4.8	0.57	-0.47	8.4	-5.1
Feb.	47	-5	20.8	0.7	0.93	0.14	10.9	2.7
Mar.	67	-4	32.2	0.1	1.50	-0.36	1.5	-8.9
April	85	26	47.6	-1.0	1.57	-0.74	2.5	-0.6
May	97	38	60.8	1.5	0.53	-2.71	0	-0.1
June	95	46	67.7	-0.7	2.86	-1.48	0	0
July	89	53	70	-3.2	2.17	-1.87	0	0
Aug.	90	49	69.5	-1.2	6.43	2.38	0	0
Sept.	84	39	66.5	5.5	0.46	-2.23	0	0
Oct.	64	26	43.2	-5.5	5.57	3.46	2.8	2.2
Nov.	64	24	42.7	10.2	0.38	-1.56	T	-10
Dec.	47	-5	17.3	-1.4	1.83	0.83	20.9	10.9
2009	**97**	**-22**	**44.7**	**-0.6**	**24.80**	**-4.61**	**48.1**	**-8.9**

*Snow, ice pellets, hail

Twin Cities daily high and low temperatures for 2009



Note: All data were collected at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

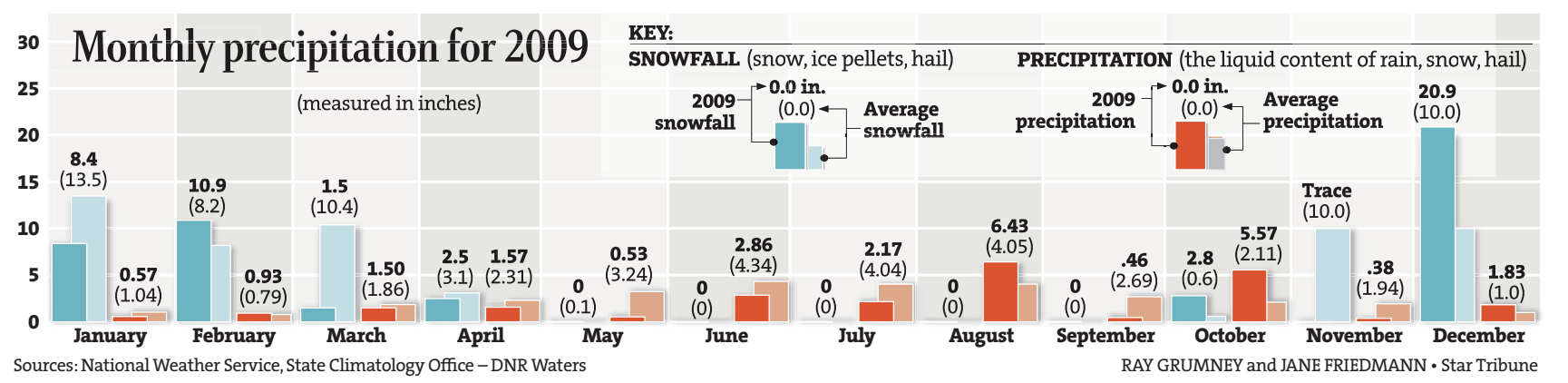
TEMPERATURES	2009	2008	'71-'00 average
Average high	54.2°	53.7°	54.7°
Average low	36.7°	35.8°	35.9°
PRECIPITATION (in inches)			
Total for the year	24.8	22.4	29.4
Greatest in 24 hours: 2.08 inches on Aug. 7			
SNOWFALL (in inches)			
Total for the year	47	48.1	55.9
Greatest in 24 hours: 6.0 inches on Feb. 26			

DEGREE DAYS	Heating degrees 2009	2008	Avg.	Cooling degrees 2009	2008	Avg.
Total for year	6,507	8,110	7,876	647	787	699

Note about heating and cooling degree days: The higher the number, the more energy required to heat or cool a building to 65 degrees.

Monthly precipitation for 2009

(measured in inches)



Sources: National Weather Service, State Climatology Office – DNR Waters

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