

around the metro

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Minnesota was warm once again in 2006. But it was a dry heat. Preliminary figures show it was the warmest year statewide since 1895. Starting with the warmest January since 1846 and ending with the warmest December since 1959, the year was the third-warmest on record in the Twin Cities. It joined 2005, 2001, 1999 and 1998 on the Top 10 list in the metro. And 2006 also was Rochester's second-warmest ever.

That much was part of an obvious trend. The real news for 2006 was drought across much of the state, starting in mid-May and persisting in the northeast. Some areas of northern Minnesota endured a growing season with the least rainfall on record. Rivers and lakes remain at very low levels; Lake Superior is near its lowest early-winter level since 1926.

Sugar-beet farmers had a record crop; the statewide corn and soybean crops were the second-best ever. Even wild rice harvesters were counting their blessings. But University of Minnesota Extension Service climatologist and meteorologist Mark Seeley said the conditions are similar to those in 1987, when farmers enjoyed good crops in the early stages of a drought that intensified through 1988. The year was also marked by spring floods, a pair of killer tornadoes, forest fires and, at the end of the year, lack of snow and dangerously thin ice.

But it wasn't all mayhem. The warm, dry weather made it easy to enjoy the outdoors in spring, summer and fall, with reliable sunshine and less need to mow the lawn. Residents used less heating energy than normal (though more cooling energy). The Twin Cities' growing season was three weeks longer than normal. The number of tornadoes reported was slightly below average. And mosquitoes seemed to take the summer off.

January
A gray, soupy month — warmest in the Twin Cities' modern record dating to 1891. The temperature never dipped below zero in the Twin Cities and only once in Duluth.

February
Two Harbors recorded 36 inches of snow, a monthly record.

March
The Twin Cities had their snowiest March ever (20.4 inches); 100 Metro Transit buses were stuck in a storm March 12-13, and 19 inches fell at Hastings.

April
Lake ice-out on northern lakes ran seven to 14 days ahead of average. The Red River approached historic highs at Fargo, Breckenridge and Grand Forks. New flood-control devices kept it in check, but smaller communities and farms were overrun.

May
St. Cloud hit 90, 98 and 92 over Memorial Day weekend.

2006 THE YEAR IN WEATHER



Star Tribune file photos

March: The metro area had its snowiest March ever, with 20.4 inches.



July: With temperatures topping 100, Ashanti Johnson, 6, left, and Loverree Jones, 13, took refuge in a cool wading pool at Longfellow Park in Minneapolis.

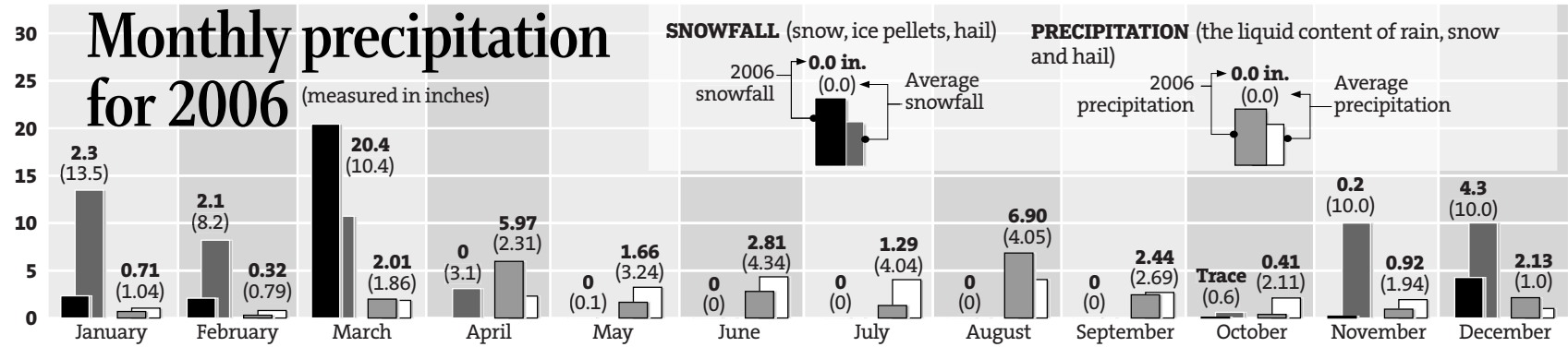
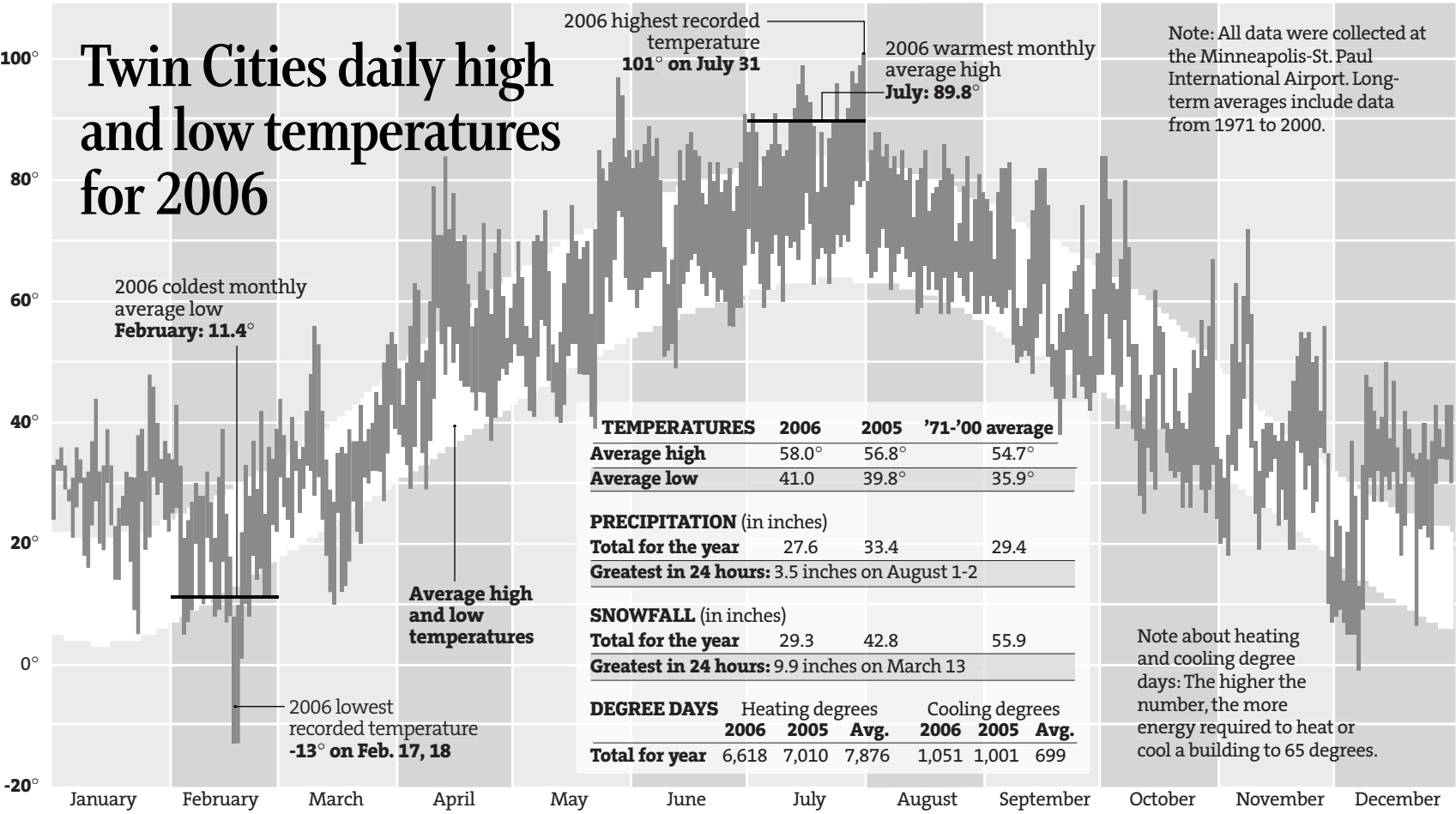


August: Tonja Baker stood by the remnants of her house after tornadoes left a wide swath of destruction in Nicollet and Le Sueur counties.

TWIN CITIES MONTHLY DATA FOR 2006

	High temp.	Low temp.	Avg. temp.	Diff. from avg.	Precip. (inches)	Diff. from avg.	Snow* (inches)	Diff. from avg.
Jan.	48	5	28.6	15.5	0.71	-0.33	2.3	-11.2
Feb.	43	-13	20.0	-0.1	0.32	-0.47	2.1	-6.1
Mar.	56	10	33.6	1.5	2.01	0.15	20.4	10
April	84	29	53.5	7.0	5.97	3.66	0	-3.1
May	97	39	61.9	2.6	1.66	-1.58	0	-0.1
June	91	49	70.9	2.5	2.81	-1.53	0	0
July	101	59	79.6	6.5	1.29	-2.75	0	0
Aug.	88	58	72.1	1.5	6.90	2.85	0	0
Sept.	83	38	59.6	-1.4	2.44	-0.25	0	0
Oct.	84	24	45.9	-2.7	0.41	-1.70	trace	-0.6
Nov.	72	7	36.8	4.4	0.92	-1.02	0.2	-9.8
Dec.	50	-1	29.1	10.5	2.13	1.13	4.3	-5.7
2006			49.5	4.2	27.6	-1.84	29.3	-26.6

*Snow, ice pellets, hail



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

Note: All data were collected at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Long-term averages include data from 1971 to 2000.

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Staff researcher Linda Scheimann contributed to this report.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Where to find celebrations

All events are free and open to the public.

TODAY

New Salem Missionary Baptist Church, 2519 Lyndale Av. N., Mpls. Minnesota State Baptist Convention celebrates "Making the Dream a Reality" at 6 p.m.; with speaker Dr. Stephen John Thurston. Call 612-522-2951.

Congregational Church of Excelsior, 471 3rd St., Excelsior. Court of Appeals Chief Judge Edward Tousseint Jr. will speak at 10 a.m. service. 952-474-5919.

Oakland Church UMC, 4405 Oakland Av. S., Mpls. Free breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Adult forum follows. Worship service at 10:30 a.m. with storyteller Nothando Zulu. Call 612-823-4483.

Oakland Church UMC, 4405 Oakland Av. S., Mpls. Service featuring the Rev. Dennis Oglesby Jr. and Jubilations Gospel Ensemble, 5 p.m. Soup and sandwich supper follows. Free-will offering. 612-827-6159.

Grace United Methodist Church, 15309 Maple Island Rd., Burnsville. Potluck dinner 5:30 p.m., fair and live music. The 7 p.m. program will feature Minnesota's 2006 Teacher of the Year, Lee-Ann Stephens, youth and adult choirs. Call 952-435-5696.

MONDAY

Statewide celebration, Central High School, Lexington & Marshall Avenues, St. Paul. 9:30 a.m. rally followed by march to Gangelhoff Center at Concordia University. Rep. Keith Ellison will speak at 11 a.m. Education fair at 1 p.m. Call 651-642-0812.

Humphrey Forum, 301 19th Av. S., Mpls. "Making Freedom's Mark: The Voting Rights Act of 1965" exhibit, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. On display through March 15. www.hhh.umn.edu/humphrey-forum or call 612-626-0711.

Hoversten Chapel, Foss Center, 22nd and Riverside Av., Mpls. Augsburg College presents "Engaging Our Communities" with Mary Frances Berry, 1 p.m. Call 612-330-1114.

Calvary Baptist Church, 2608 Blaisdell Av. S., Mpls. Soul-food dinner at 5:30 p.m. Service of honor and challenge at 7 p.m. Call 612-872-7855.

Lyndale Farmstead Park, 3900 Bryant Av. S., Mpls., 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Celebration with speakers, arts and crafts, youth performances and food. www.minneapolisarks.org or call 612-370-4948.

Martin Luther King Park, 4055 Nicollet Av. S., Mpls. Musical and dramatic performances; speaker Alvin Brown Jr., publisher of Black Pages Monthly, 6 p.m. Call 612-370-4908.

Powderhorn Park Community Center, 3400 15th Av. S., Mpls. Celebration 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Artist Felix Hampton Brown will perform at 1:30 p.m. Call 612-722-4817.

Basilica of St. Mary, 16th St. & Hennepin Av. S., Mpls. "Celebrate the Dream" tribute with speaker Lou Gossett Jr., music by James Grear and Company and Nu Friends Community Choir. 7 p.m. Free parking in MCTC ramp, 15th & Hennepin Av. Go to www.minneapolisdu.edu or call 612-659-6747. Please bring a nonperishable food item.

Brookdale Library, 6125 Shingle Creek Pkwy., Brooklyn Center. "I Have a Dream" film at 11 a.m., noon, 1 and 3 p.m. Call 952-847-5600.

Edina Library, 5280 Grandview Square, Edina. Speaker Julie Landsman, co-editor of "White Teacher, Diverse Classrooms," 1:30-3 p.m. Call 952-847-5425.

Excelsior Library, 343 3rd St., Excelsior. Storyteller Nothando Zulu. 10:30 a.m. Call 952-847-5450.

Oxboro Library, 8801 Portland Av. S., Bloomington. Stories and music by T. Mychael Rambo and Thom West. 7 p.m. Call 952-847-5775.

Southdale Library, 7001 York Av. S., Edina. 10:30 a.m. Storyteller Danielle Daniel, music by Alphonse Bolden. Call 952-847-5900.

Northfield Middle School, 2200 Division St., Northfield. Carleton Drumming Ensemble, 6:30 p.m. Celebration at 7 p.m. with former Gov. Al Quie. Refreshments follow. Call 1-507-664-3504.

2007 March and Rally, 4th Street & Lake Avenue, Duluth. 10:30 a.m. gathering. March beginning 11 a.m. from Washington Center to DECC. Rally at 11:30 a.m. www.mlk-duluth.org.

TUESDAY

Sundin Music Hall, 1531 Hewitt Av., St. Paul. Hamline University program, "In Pursuit of the Beloved Community," 4 p.m. www.hamline.edu or call 651-523-2423.

WHAT'S OPEN, CLOSED

MONDAY

- **Post offices** will be closed, except for the 24-hour office at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Express Mail will be delivered in the metro area.
- **Most banks** will be open. TCF traditional and in-store branches will be open normal hours. Bremer traditional and in-store branches will be closed, U.S. Bank and Wells Fargo traditional branches will be closed and in-store branches will be open regular hours.
- Major **supermarkets** and **shopping malls** will be open.
- **Metro Transit** buses and light-rail trains will follow normal schedules. For route information, call 612-373-3333 or go to www.metrotransit.org. Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, Maple Grove Transit, Plymouth Metrolink and Southwest Metro Transit and Metro Mobility will have normal service.
- **Parking meters** won't be enforced in Minneapolis, St. Paul and at the University of Minnesota. Minneapolis parks will enforce meters unless noted on the meter.
- Most public **schools** and the University of Minnesota will be closed.
- Local, state and federal **government offices** will be closed.
- Most public **libraries** will be closed. Hennepin County libraries will be open.
- Most **recreation centers** will be open.