



Photo credits: Jeff Wheeler (2,4) and Renee Jones Schneider (5), Star Tribune; Steve Kohls (1), Brainerd Daily Dispatch; Bob King (3), Duluth News-Tribune

1. Feb. 29 Plowing Leap Day snow along County Road 19 in Crow Wing County. **2. March 14** Unseasonably warm spring beckoned people outside on a perfect spring afternoon. With piles of snow still melting in the parking lot nearby, two men searched for coins near Lake Calhoun with a metal detector. **3. June 20** A car fell into a huge sinkhole in Duluth after a deluge of up to 9 inches of rain caused extensive damage across the region. **4. July 2** Beachgoers cooled off at Lake Nokomis in Minneapolis. Temperatures hit 99 degrees. That was followed by 101 on July 4 and 102 on July 6.

5. Dec. 9 Enjoying a walk along the Mississippi in the Dec. 9 snowy weather, which guaranteed a white Christmas for the Twin Cities.

THE YEAR IN weather '12

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By BILL McAULIFFE
mcaul@startribune.com

JANUARY

January saw nine daily highs of 40 degrees or better in the Twin Cities. The John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon along the North Shore was canceled for lack of snow. The Twin Cities didn't drop below zero until Jan. 18, tying the record for the latest first subzero temp in winter, and the first of only three for the season. Just 4.6 inches of snow fell in the metro.

FEBRUARY

Cars and trucks were banned from Hennepin County lakes on Feb. 9. A Leap Day snow/ice/rainstorm brought 2.23 inches of rain to Faribault on Feb. 29, a statewide Leap Day record. Up North, double-digit snow depths, including 12.3 inches at Hinckley, also set Leap Day records and made February the first month with above-normal precipitation since July 2011.

MARCH

A weeks-long heat wave left Minnesotans giddy. From March 10-20, seven state record highs were broken. The Twin Cities hit 80 on March 17, the earliest date ever, during a stretch with eight consecutive daily record highs for dew point. (There were 12 for the year.) The Twin Cities also had nine record-warm nights and the mean temperature March 10-24 was 27 degrees above normal. Minnesota lakes started losing ice March 11, many on their earliest dates ever. A tornado near Elysian March 19 was the second-earliest in state records.

APRIL

Luvverne hit 90 April 1, the earliest 90 on the books in the state. Southern Minnesota was nipped by frost April 10-12. A record 1.19 inches of rain fell in the Twin Cities on April 15 and a foot or more of snow Up North eased drought conditions.

MAY

Southern Minnesota saw daily record rainfalls May 1-6, including a May 6 state record 3.62 inches at Pipestone. The southwestern and central parts of the state absorbed 8 inches or more May 4-6. Drought over! The first week of the month brought 4.23 inches of rain to the Twin Cities — more than a normal month's worth. The Twin Cities received 9.34 inches, making May the second-wettest on record. New Ulm led the state with 12.39. The rain helped farmers avoid the brunt of the next drought, in late summer.

JUNE

Homes were flooded and roads closed around Cannon Falls after 8.83 inches of rain fell June 14, a Minnesota record for any June day. That was overshadowed a week later by epic rains in the Duluth area, ranging from 7 to 10 inches. Raging creeks and rivers tore up highways, parks and trails, knocking hundreds of people out of their homes from Aitkin to Two Harbors.

JULY

The 4th brought a record high (101) and a record warm low (81) to the Twin Cities, along with a dew point of 77, the highest of the year. July 6 was the year's hottest day (102), and made 2012 the first year with more than one 100-degree day since 1988 (which had four). Some southern Minnesota lake temperatures exceeded 90 degrees at mid-month. Duluth's average July temperature tied the warmest ever; the

2012 A WEATHER STORY

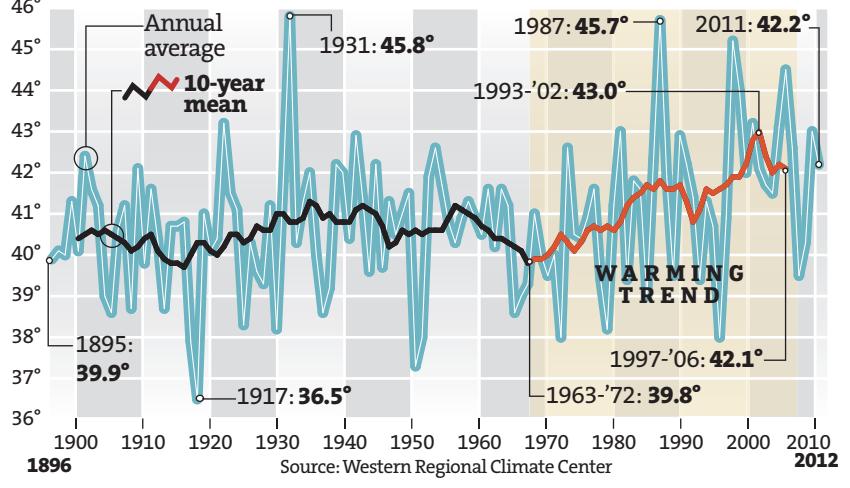
In 2012, the weather was like a verse from "Oh, Susannah": It rained all May, June and July; the weather, it was dry. After an unforeseen mild winter, followed by a March that brought warmth of historic intensity and duration, drought intensified, but many farmers harvested record crops. Despite a warm summer, few damaging tornadoes appeared. October wildfires were doused by a record early snowfall. And meteorological winter brought a sun so hot we froze to death (and snow).

Graphics by raymond.grumney@startribune.com

A 45-YEAR WARMING TREND

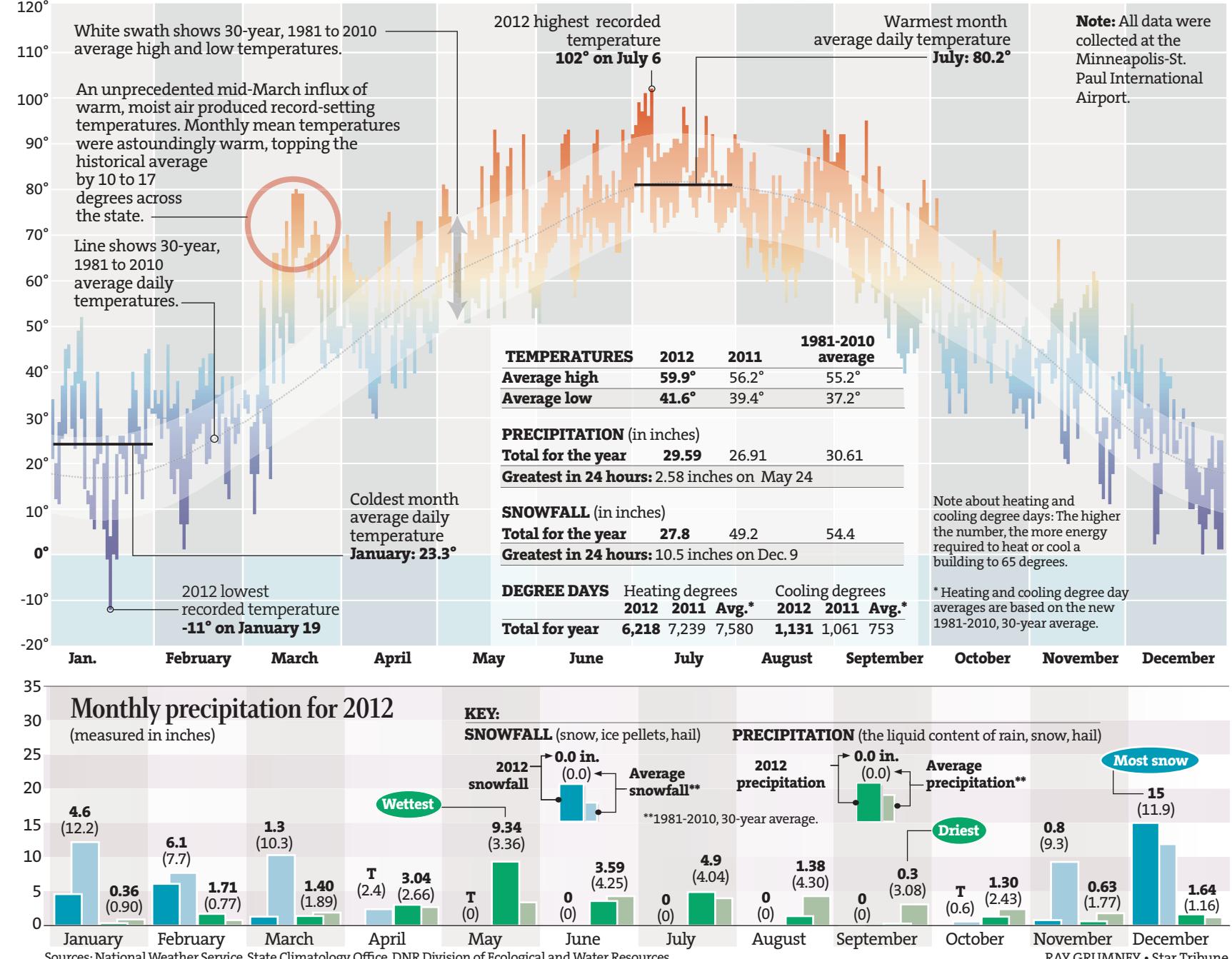
Minnesota's 10-year average temperatures have warmed steadily since the mid-1960s, and have run higher for most of the last 20 years than over the preceding nine decades. The statewide figure for 2012 is not yet available, but is expected to be one of the warmest on record.

12-month state-wide average and 10-year mean temperatures for Minnesota

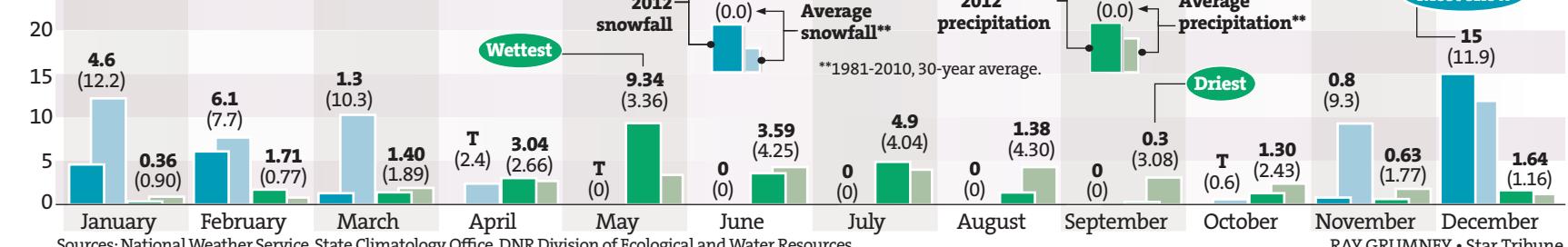


Source: Western Regional Climate Center

Twin Cities daily high and low temperatures for 2012



Monthly precipitation for 2012 (measured in inches)



Twin Cities' was second-warmest, but the dew point average was slightly below the 110-year average. Cities from International Falls to Spring Grove received daily record rains near mid-month; Twin Cities rainfall was slightly above normal.

AUGUST

The shorter days broke the heat. Still, August ended the warmest meteorological summer on record for Duluth and third-warmest for the Twin Cities. The month also was dry, with only one-third of the normal rainfall from Duluth to southern Minnesota.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 11 hit 95 in the Twin Cities, the latest high of 95 or above since 1939. It also was the 31st day of 90 or higher in the Twin Cities, making the most such days in a season since 1988 (which had 44). Days later, cities across the Iron Range dropped to 28 degrees; Warroad fell to 19 degrees on Sept. 18. Drought intensified; the Twin Cities had its second-driest September on record.

TWIN CITIES MONTHLY DATA FOR 2012

	Avg. high temp.	Avg. low temp.	Avg. temp.	Diff. from normal	Precip. (inches)	Diff. from normal	Snow* (inches)	Diff. from normal
Jan.	30.8	15.8	23.3	7.7	0.36	-0.54	4.6	-7.6
Feb.	34.8	20.6	27.7	6.8	1.71	0.94	6.1	-1.6
Mar.	57.5	39.1	48.3	15.5	1.40	-0.49	1.3	-9
April	59.6	40.5	50	2.5	3.04	0.38	T	T
May	73.5	53.8	63.7	4.5	9.34	5.98	T	T
June	82.3	62.3	72.3	3.5	0	-0.66	0	0
July	89.9	70.4	80.2	6.4	4.90	0.86	0	0
Aug.	82.1	61.8	72.0	0.8	1.38	-2.92	0	0
Sept.	76.7	51.6	63.9	1.9	0.30	-2.78	0	0
Oct.	56.4	38.6	47.5	-1.4	1.30	-1.13	T	-0.6
Nov.	45.6	28.6	37.1	3.4	0.63	-1.14	0.8	-8.5
Dec.	30.6	16.2	23.4	3.7	1.64	0.48	15	3.1
2012	59.9	41.6	50.8	4.6	29.59	-1.02	27.8	-26.6

*Snow, ice pellets or hail; T=trace amount

OCTOBER

Drought-enhanced wildfires broke out across northwestern Minnesota, peaking Oct. 2 when 11 homes near Karlstad were destroyed. Fires were smothered by wet snow two days later. Badger, near Roseau, received 14 inches, an early-season record. Up to 2 inches of rain fell across the north metro and northern Minnesota on

tornadoes, the second-latest tornado occurrence on record in Minnesota. About 32 hours later, a dusting of snow across the metro turned a morning rush hour into a mosh-up. It was the quickest switch ever from tornadoes to snow, climatologists noted. Rochester hit a record 70 on Nov. 21, and Thanksgiving Day saw a record 60 in the Twin Cities, followed by snow and low of 24 that evening. Parts of the Arrowhead received 6 inches or more.

DECEMBER

After a 55-degree high Dec. 3 in the Twin Cities, winter made a triumphant return, dumping more than a foot of snow across much of Minnesota Dec. 9-10, the most in two years. Sacred Heart in southwestern Minnesota and Lake Elmo in the metro hit 17 inches. In the Twin Cities the snow included more than a normal December's worth of precipitation; as the year ended, precipitation was only about a drop short of normal.

Bill McAuliffe • 612-673-7646

Oct. 23, and over southeast Minnesota Oct. 24-25. October's average Twin Cities temperature, 1.4 degrees below normal, ended a 16-month string of above-normal temps.

NOVEMBER

A record high of 69 (along with a record high dew point of 56) in the Twin Cities Nov. 10 led to four small