

...SOUTH FLORIDA 2006 WEATHER REVIEW...
...DECEMBER ENDS YEAR ON A WARM NOTE...

THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2006 WAS THE SECOND WARMEST DECEMBER ON RECORD AT MIAMI, FORT LAUDERDALE AND WEST PALM BEACH, AND THE THIRD WARMEST IN NAPLES. A PERSISTENT UPPER LEVEL HIGH PRESSURE AREA OVER AND EAST OF SOUTH FLORIDA LIMITED THE NUMBER OF COLD FRONTS PASSING THROUGH THE AREA, CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNSEASONABLY WARM TEMPERATURE READINGS.

HERE IS A LISTING OF AVERAGE DECEMBER TEMPERATURES:

SITE	DECEMBER AVG TEMP	DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL
FT LAUDERDALE HLWD INTL	75.1	+5.7
MIAMI INTERNATIONAL	74.4	+4.5
MIAMI BEACH	74.2	+4.2
NAPLES REGIONAL	71.7	+5.4
PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL	73.1	+4.8
PERRINE 4W	71.8	+4.5

DECEMBER WAS ALSO A VERY WET MONTH IN A FEW LOCATIONS, PRIMARILY IN PALM BEACH COUNTY WHERE RECORD RAINS FELL ON DECEMBER 14TH. PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PICKED UP A WHOPPING 8.22 INCHES OF RAIN ON THAT DAY, AND OTHER LOCATIONS IN PALM BEACH COUNTY RECEIVED IN EXCESS OF FIVE INCHES. THE AVERAGE MONTHLY DECEMBER RAINFALL IN WEST PALM BEACH IS 3.14 INCHES. THE MONTHLY TOTAL FOR PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL WAS 11.06 INCHES, WHICH WAS ONLY .63 INCHES BELOW THE ALL-TIME RECORD WET DECEMBER SET BACK IN 1994.

THE WARM AND SOMEWHAT WET DECEMBER WRAPPED UP WHAT WAS A RELATIVELY UNEVENTFUL WEATHER YEAR IN SOUTH FLORIDA. HERE ARE SOME OF THE MOST NOTABLE WEATHER EVENTS OF THE PAST YEAR:

TROPICAL STORM ERNESTO - AUGUST 29-30:

THE HURRICANE SEASON OF 2006 WAS MUCH QUIETER THAN THE PREVIOUS TWO YEARS, PRODUCED ONLY ONE TROPICAL SYSTEM WHICH AFFECTED SOUTH FLORIDA...TROPICAL STORM ERNESTO ON AUGUST 29TH AND 30TH. MAXIMUM WINDS WITH THE STORM WERE 45 MPH, ALTHOUGH THESE SUSTAINED WINDS WERE NOT FELT OVER THE SOUTH FLORIDA MAINLAND. THE HIGHEST SUSTAINED WINDS RECORDED WITH ERNESTO WERE 40 MPH AT LAKE WORTH PIER. FOWEY ROCKS LIGHT SOUTH OF KEY BISCAIYNE DID RECORD SUSTAINED WINDS OF 50 MPH AT AN ELEVATION OF OVER 100 FEET. HIGHEST WIND GUSTS WITH ERNESTO WERE MOSTLY IN THE 35 TO 50 MPH RANGE AREA-WIDE. AS A RESULT OF THESE RELATIVELY LIGHT WINDS, LITTLE IN THE WAY OF DAMAGE WAS OBSERVED. HEAVY RAINS FROM ERNESTO DID AFFECT WESTERN PORTIONS OF SOUTH FLORIDA, WITH AREAS MOST AFFECTED BEING THE INTERIOR SECTIONS OF COLLIER COUNTY AS WELL AS HENDRY AND GLADES COUNTIES. RAINFALL AMOUNTS IN THESE AREAS RANGED FROM 5 TO 8 INCHES, WITH A MAXIMUM OF 8.72 AT SOUTH GOLDEN GATE ESTATES IN INTERIOR COLLIER COUNTY. THESE RAINS CAUSED EXTENSIVE FLOODING IN GOLDEN GATE AND IMMOKALEE. IN ADDITION, FISHEATING CREEK AT PALMDALE IN GLADES COUNTY ROSE ABOVE ITS BANKS AND FORCED THE EVACUATION OF SEVERAL HOMES.

WEATHER-RELATED DEATHS:

A TOTAL OF 7 PEOPLE DIED AS A RESULT OF WEATHER-RELATED HAZARDS IN 2006. RIP CURRENTS ONCE AGAIN TOPPED THE LIST, CLAIMING FIVE LIVES, ALL IN BROWARD COUNTY BEACHES INCLUDING ONE ON THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR. THREE OF THE 5 DEATHS OCCURRED IN THE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 6-8. THE OTHER TWO DEATHS WERE FROM LIGHTNING STRIKES, WHICH INJURED AN ADDITIONAL 7 PEOPLE. LIGHTNING ALSO CAUSED APPROXIMATELY 1 MILLION DOLLARS IN DAMAGE, PRIMARILY FROM A LIGHTNING STRIKE THAT CAUSED A FIRE TO A RESTORED WORLD WAR TWO BARRACKS ON THE FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IN BOCA RATON ON MAY 16.

SEVERE WEATHER:

SOUTH FLORIDA SAW RELATIVELY FEW SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS IN COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS YEARS. FOUR TORNADOES WERE OBSERVED ACROSS SOUTH FLORIDA, AND ALL BUT ONE OF THESE WERE VERY WEAK AND CAUSED NO DAMAGE. AN F0 TORNADO STRUCK THE CORAL SPRINGS AND POMPANO BEACH AREA ON THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 23RD, CAUSING MINOR DAMAGE. TWO OF THE TORNADOES WERE WEAK WATERSPOUTS THAT MOVED BRIEFLY ONSHORE AT DEERFIELD BEACH AND GOLDEN BEACH. A TOTAL OF 27 WATERSPOUTS WERE NOTED OVER THE COASTAL WATERS. OTHER SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS CONTAINING AT LEAST 58 MPH WINDS AND/OR HAIL OF THREE-QUARTERS OF AN INCH OR GREATER WERE OBSERVED ON 50 OCCASIONS...CAUSING 100 THOUSAND DOLLARS IN DAMAGE.

THE MOST ACTIVE SEVERE WEATHER DAY IN SOUTH FLORIDA WAS ON MAY 15TH, WHEN A TOTAL OF 21 REPORTS OF LARGE HAIL AND/OR STRONG WINDS WERE RECEIVED. GOLF BALL SIZE HAIL WAS OBSERVED IN DORAL AND HIALEAH, AND A STRONG DOWNBURST ESTIMATED AT 70-80 MPH CAUSED SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO A HANGAR AT OPA-LOCKA AIRPORT.

FLOODING:

SIGNIFICANT FLOODING FROM VERY HEAVY RAINS OCCURRED OVER PORTIONS OF COLLIER...HENDRY AND GLADES COUNTIES DURING AND AFTER TROPICAL STORM ERNESTO IN LATE AUGUST, IN PALM BEACH COUNTY ON DECEMBER 14, AND IN THE DORAL AND HIALEAH AREA ON MAY 15. IN ADDITION TO THESE EVENTS, LOCALLY HEAVY RAINS CAUSED ROOFS TO COLLAPSE IN SEVERAL APARTMENT BUILDINGS ACROSS SOUTH FLORIDA, LIKELY THE RESULT OF UNREPAIRED DAMAGE FROM HURRICANE WILMA OF OCTOBER 2005.

TEMPERATURES:

THE VERY WARM DECEMBER HELPED TO PUSH THE AVERAGE YEARLY TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR MAIN SOUTH FLORIDA OBSERVING SITES (MIAMI, FORT LAUDERDALE, WEST PALM BEACH AND NAPLES) TO 76.2 DEGREES. THIS IS ALMOST A DEGREE (0.8) ABOVE NORMAL. THE COOLEST MONTH WAS FEBRUARY (65.6 DEGREES) AND THE WARMEST MONTH WAS AUGUST (83.7 DEGREES).

SOUTH FLORIDA TEMPERATURE EXTREMES RANGED FROM A LOW OF 28 DEGREES IN IMMOKALEE ON FEBRUARY 14 TO A HIGH OF 99 DEGREES IN WEST PALM BEACH ON AUGUST 13. THE NORTHERN INTERIOR PORTIONS OF SOUTH FLORIDA EXPERIENCED TWO FREEZES THIS PAST WINTER, ON JANUARY 8 AND FEBRUARY 14. THESE FREEZES COMBINED TO PRODUCE EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO THE BEAN AND CORN CROP IN WESTERN PALM BEACH, WITH LOSSES WELL INTO THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. UNOFFICIAL TEMPERATURE READINGS WERE AS LOW AS THE MID 20S NEAR BELLE GLADE ON THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 14. THE COLDEST DAY IN SOUTH FLORIDA WAS ON FEBRUARY 14, WITH READINGS AT THE MAIN OBSERVING SITES INCLUDED NAPLES AT 34 DEGREES, WEST PALM BEACH WITH 36, FORT LAUDERDALE WITH 41,

AND MIAMI WITH 44 DEGREES. THE WARMEST DAY WAS ON AUGUST 13 WITH WEST PALM BEACH RECORDING A RECORD-BREAKING 99 DEGREES, FORT LAUDERDALE WITH 95 AND MIAMI WITH 96. NAPLES RECORDED A YEARLY MAXIMUM OF 94 DEGREES ON FOUR OCCASIONS, MOST RECENTLY ON AUGUST 1.

PRECIPITATION:

PRECIPITATION AMOUNTS WERE GENERALLY BELOW NORMAL AREA-WIDE WITH A FEW NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS. MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WAS ONE OF THE LOCATIONS WITH ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL, WITH OVER FIVE (5.64) INCHES ABOVE THE YEARLY NORMAL, LARGELY DUE TO THREE SEPARATE DAYS IN WHICH LOCALLY TORRENTIAL DOWNPOURS DEPOSITED AROUND 4 INCHES OF RAIN AT THE AIRPORT. ON THE OTHER HAND, FORT LAUDERDALE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ONLY ABOUT 25 MILES AWAY, ENDED THE YEAR ALMOST 17 INCHES (16.69) BELOW NORMAL, AND WEST PALM BEACH WAS OVER 7 INCHES (7.23) BELOW NORMAL FOR THE YEAR. PORTIONS OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ENDED UP NEAR OR ABOVE NORMAL PRECIPITATION, WITH NAPLES AT JUST UNDER 2 INCHES (1.72) BELOW NORMAL FOR THE YEAR. GENERALLY SPEAKING, SOUTH FLORIDA EXPERIENCED A VERY DRY WINTER AND SPRING FOLLOWED BY A RATHER DRY SUMMER, THEN A DRY FALL WHICH LEAD TO THE THREAT OF WATER RESTRICTIONS BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

HERE ARE SOME TOTALS FROM AROUND THE AREA (IN INCHES):

SITE	2006 PRECIP	DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL
MIAMI INTERNATIONAL	64.17	+5.64
PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL	54.16	-7.23
MIAMI BEACH	54.00	+7.67
HOLLYWOOD	51.57	-9.16
NAPLES REGIONAL	50.18	-1.72
FORT LAUDERDALE INTL	47.50	-16.69

2007 OUTLOOK:

THE TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK FOR 2007 IN SOUTH FLORIDA...AS FORECAST BY THE CLIMATE PREDICTION CENTER...IS FOR NEAR NORMAL TEMPERATURES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR, FOLLOWED BY ABOVE NORMAL TEMPERATURES IN THE LATTER HALF. THE PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK CALLS FOR ABOVE NORMAL PRECIPITATION IN THE WINTER AND EARLY SPRING...FOLLOWED BY NEAR NORMAL PRECIPITATION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE MIAMI WEATHER FORECAST OFFICE WARNING COORDINATION METEOROLOGIST...ROBERT MOLLEDA...AT 305-229-4520...OR E-MAIL AT ROBERT.MOLLEDA@NOAA.GOV

\$\$

MOLLEDA/PFOST