The first blizzard of 1997 hit east-central North Dakota on the morning of the 4th. The blizzard was preceded by freezing rain that lasted most of the day before switching over to snow. The snow became so heavy that the highway department pulled the plows off of the roads the evening of the 4th and all day on the 5th. It was during the evening of the 4th that the northwest winds began to blow. Winds of 25 to 35 mph were common. Some of the higher snow amounts include 14 inches of snow at Ellendale (Dickey Co) and Linton (Emmons Co), 11 inches at Hague (Emmons Co) and 18 inches of snow at Oakes (Dickey Co). The roof collapsed at the Lull plant in Oakes from the weight of the snow. Although the snow was not as heavy in the western part of North Dakota, the freezing rain made travel very hazardous. A Greyhound bus slid into the ditch on I-94 near New Salem. This would turn out to be the first of 4 major snow events that would hit western and central North Dakota during January. Injuries and dollar damage amounts estimated.

The economic impact these 4 blizzards had on North Dakota were staggering. On the agricultural side alone, it is estimated that over 6 million was lost for buildings and machinery, 4.7 million in livestock deaths, 21.7 million for extra feed consumption, and $50,000 worth of dumped milk when transporters couldn't get to the farms. In addition, its estimated that $600,000 was spent by the Game and Fish Dept. to help farmers battle the deer that was eating their hay reserves. Also, its estimated tha the National Guard spent $800,000 in January to help with snow removal. Many communities spent up to 10 times their snow removal budget just in January alone, with the state itself spending an estimated additional $125,000 in salaries and operating expenses. Damage totals are still coming in as of this writing. The January of 1997 will be long remembered in the minds of many North Dakotans.
declared the state a disaster area. This was followed on the 12th with President Clinton approving the 1st ever request to declare a major statewide disaster. The national guard was called in to help with snow removal as many communities had already spent their snow removal money before this storm. Injuries and dollar damage amounts estimated. M66PH, M41OU

The 3rd blizzard to hit North Dakota in less than 3 weeks affected mainly the east-central and eastern part of the state. Again, like the previous blizzard, the winds was the major weather factor. Wind gusts at times were over 50 mph. This created widespread blowing and drifting snow. All major roads in the area were closed again for the 3rd time this year. In Logan Co. the machine shed that is used by the Logan Co. Historical Society to store antiques was damaged by the roof falling in. With the severity of the blowing and drifting snow, roads that were just opened from the last storm were once again blown shut. This lead to the death of a 71 yr. old Fredonia(Logan Co.) man. He suffered a heart attack at his farm, and was able to call 911 for help. However, the ambulance couldn't get to him because of the blocked roads. A 57 yr old man from Napoleon(Logan Co.) also suffered a heart attack on his farm and passed away before assistance could get to him. Injuries and dollar damage amounts estimated. M71PH, M57PH

The last in a string of 4 blizzards to hit North Dakota struck in the morning of the 22nd. Snow amounts with this storm ranged from 2-4 inches, but northwest winds gusted to near 45 mph. Again, east-central and eastern North Dakota were hardest hit. I-29 in North Dakota and I-94 from Bismarck to Fargo were closed again. Injuries and damage amounts estimated.