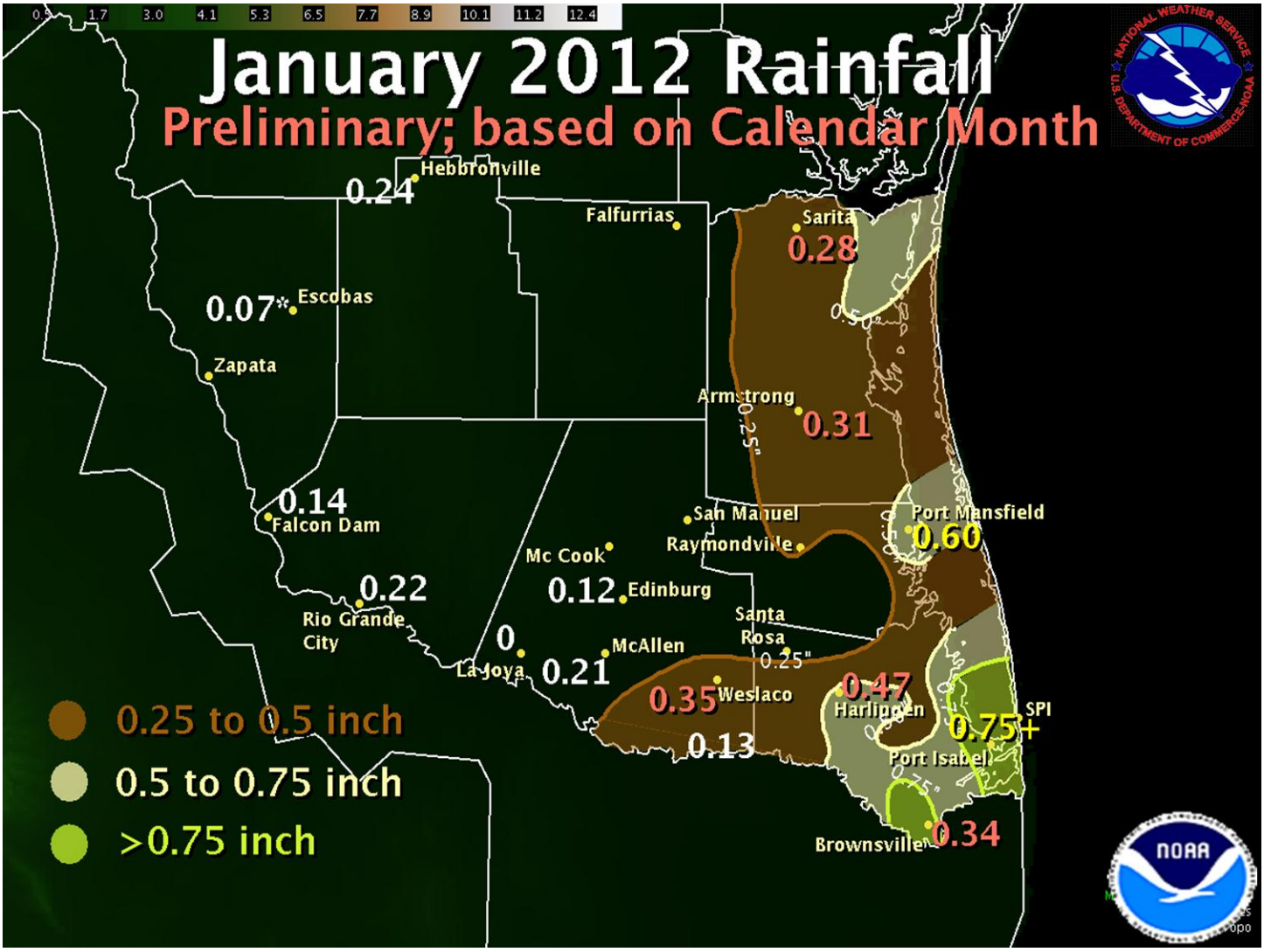


January 2012

In Like a Lamb, Out Like a Lamb

Warm and Humid…but Little Rain Falls in January 2012

Overview

After the brakes were applied to the warm to hot, rain free weather in December, 2011, the new year brought a return of spring-like weather, with long stretches of unseasonable warm and humid conditions broken briefly by weather typically expected in January. The month began on a wintry track, Valley-style; after a warm and sticky New Year's Eve, a decent cold front brought chilly temperatures and a minor freeze to parts of the region on the 3rd. Alas, the chill would disappear under daytime temperatures back into the 80s for the 7th through the 9th. Another front on the 9th would usher in the final period of seasonably cool weather, culminating with chilly daytime temperatures and wildfire growth potential on gusty northwest to north winds and low humidity. Thereafter, a flat high pressure ridge well above the earth's surface combined with lower surface pressures in the lee of the Sierra Madre to bring persistent south to southeast winds – the "Valley Wind Machine" – along with early April-like daytime temperatures in the lower to middle 80s with balmy nights in the 60s to lower 70s. A front pushed drier, but still mild, air across the Valley late on the 25th, and temperatures settled back to the 70s on most days and 50s to around 60 on most nights to close the month.

The unusually warm and humid period between the 20th and 25th gave the Valley most of the daily continental U.S. high temperatures, and ensured that most locations would finish in the top twenty all time, dating back more than 100 years in some cases. Though January 2012 was warm, it was well below the all-time records set in 1950 (see table below).

Measureable rain was limited to a scarce few days; upper level disturbances tracking across west Texas and northern Mexico on the 5th and 30th dropped locally one quarter inch or more of rainfall along and near the Cameron and Willacy County coast.

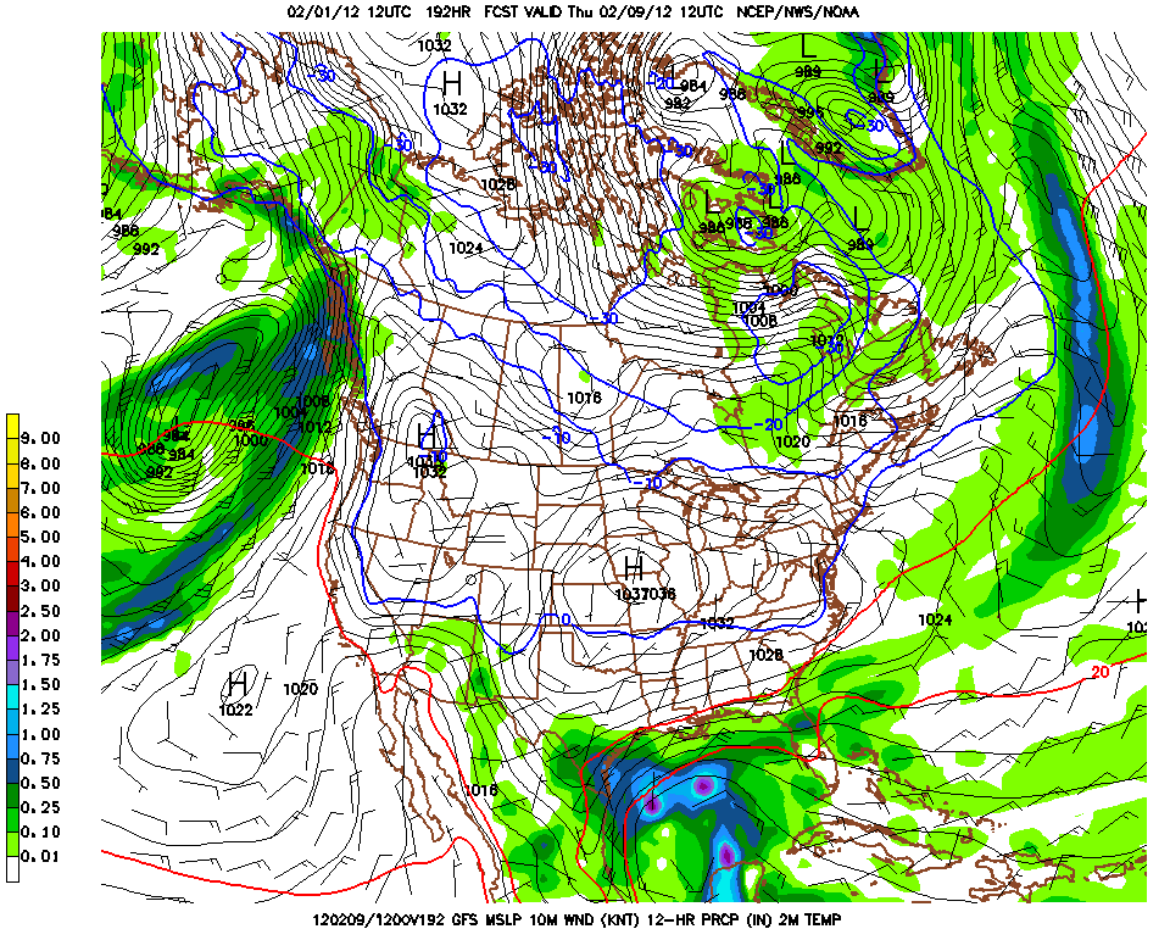
Table of average temperatures (maximum+minimum/2), January, 2012.

Station	2011 Average	Rank	All-Time Record	Year
Port Mansfield (since 1959)	64.7	2	64.8	2000
McAllen/Miller (since 1961)	65.76	4	66.5	1998
McAllen/Cooperative (since 1942)	65.3	5	70.6	1950
Falcon Dam (since 1963)	61.9	6	65.6	1998
Brownsville (since 1878)	66.39	9	68.7	1950
Harlingen/Cooperative (since 1911)	65.4	12	69.2	1950
La Joya/Mission (since 1911)	64.0	14	69.2	1950
Rio Grande City (since 1897)*	61.8	17	69.7	1950
Raymondville (since 1913)	63.6	18	68.5	1952
Falfurrias (since 1908)	60.1	28	69.2	1950
Port Isabel/Cooperative (since 1929)	62.5	29	68.7	1950

**Site missing more than 20% of data, or 29 years, from record.*

What's Next?

February picked up where January left off; warm, humid, with little rainfall. As of this writing, a pattern shift may be underway into mid February, which would return raw temperatures, brisk north to northeast winds, and occasional rain or drizzle. How much rain? Keep it tuned to our home page for updates.



Global Forecast System Model deterministic forecast of surface pressure, wind (black barbs), and precipitation (shaded areas) for February 9th at 6 AM, from February 1st model forecast issued at 6 AM. Such precipitation amounts (one half to one inch) on a single day would go a long way to pushing February rainfall toward the monthly average, which is around 1.5 inches across the Rio Grande Valley.