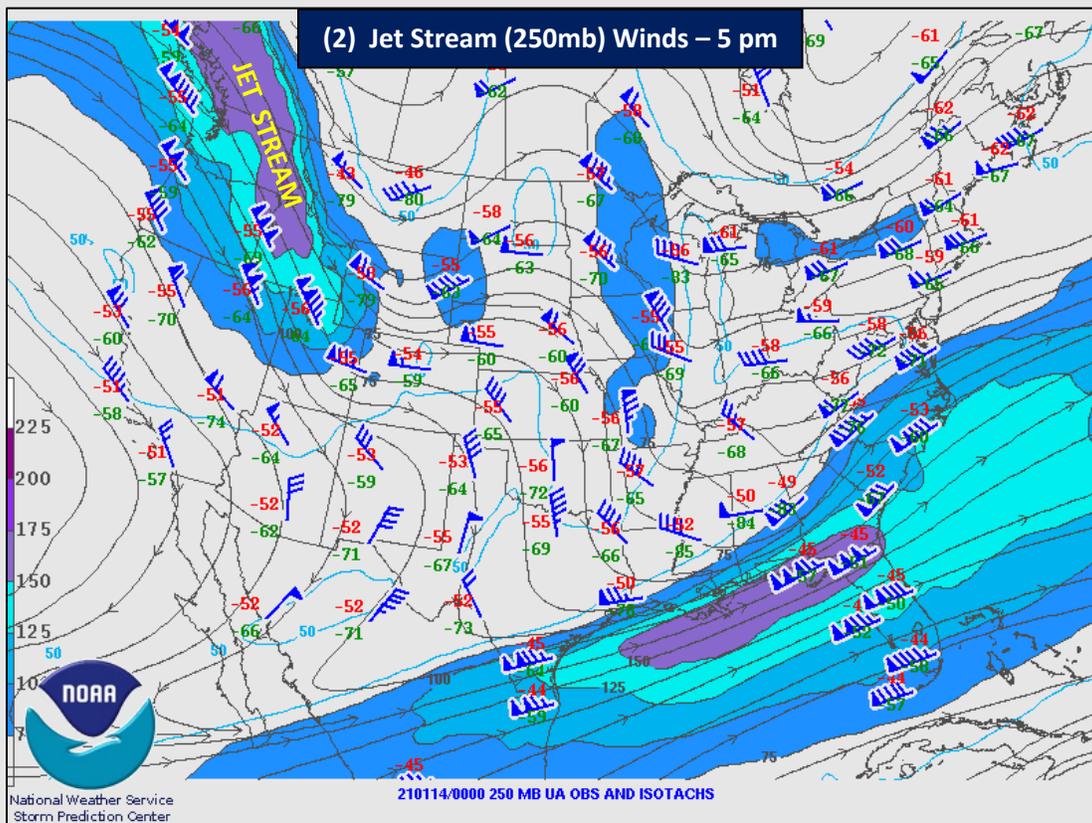
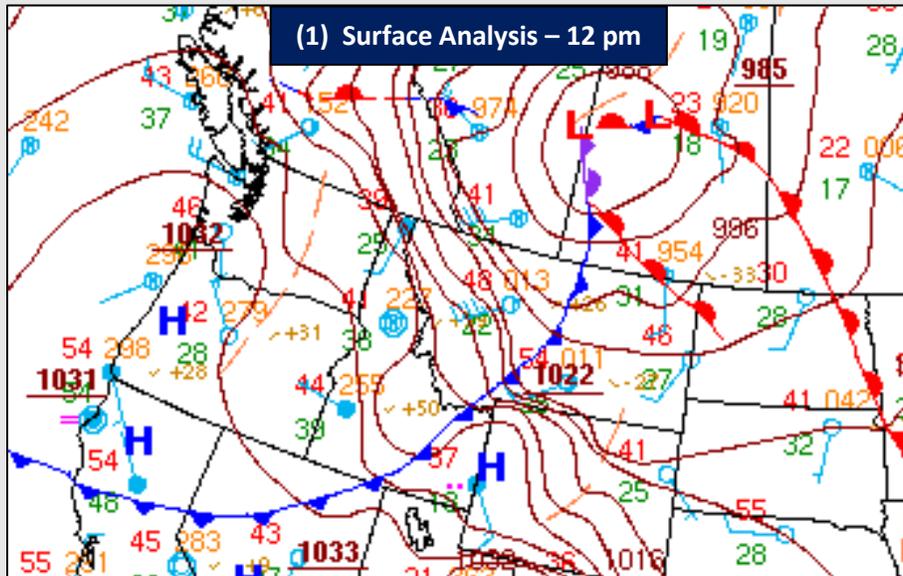
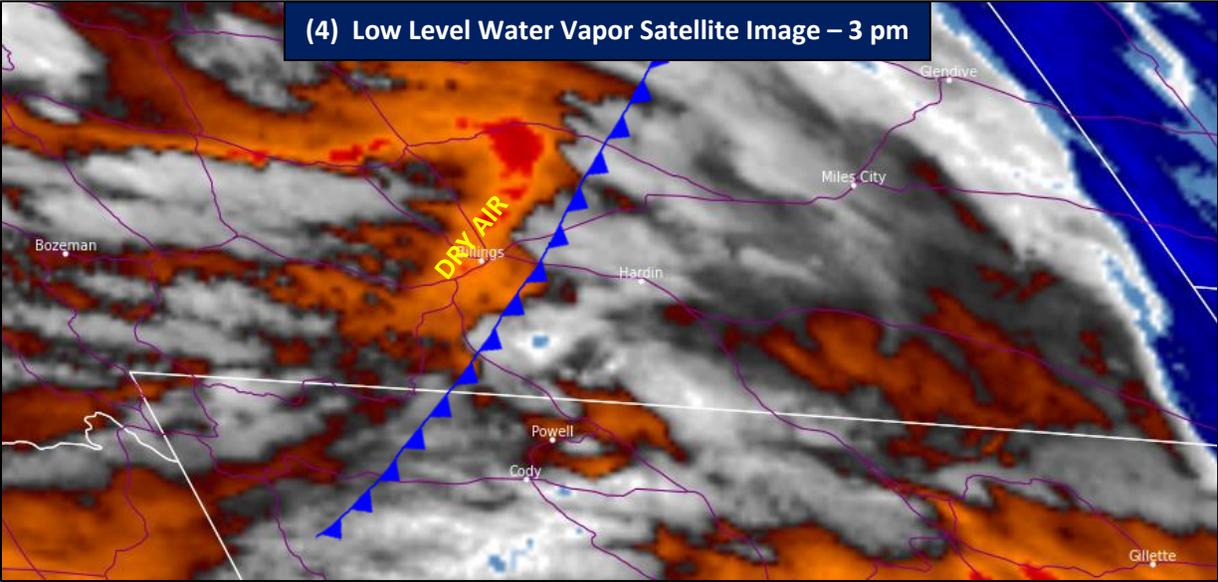
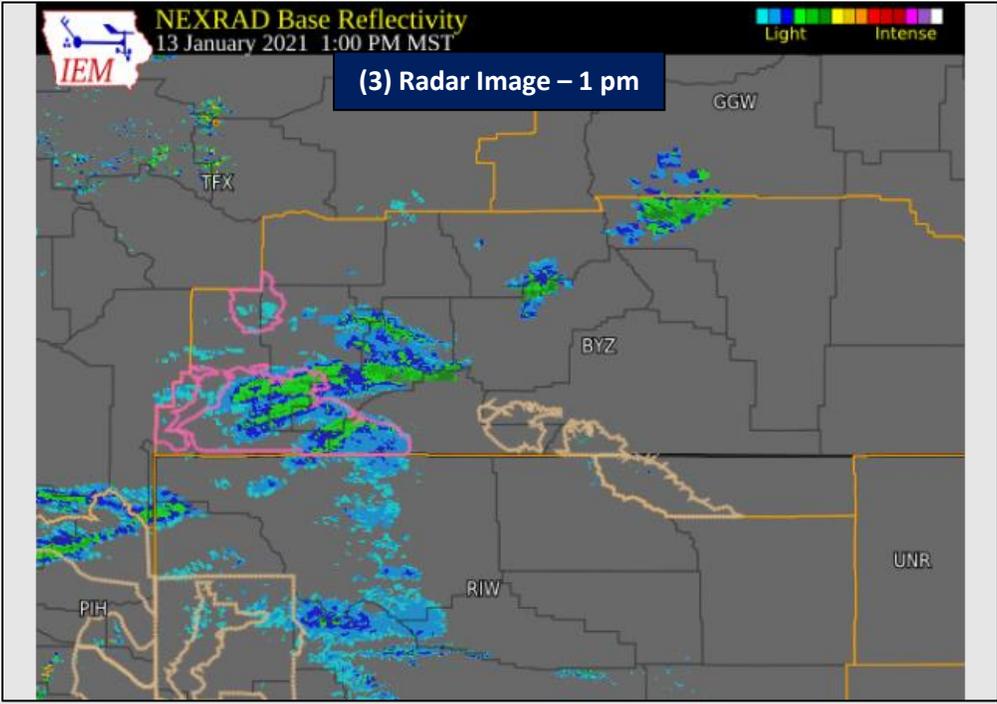
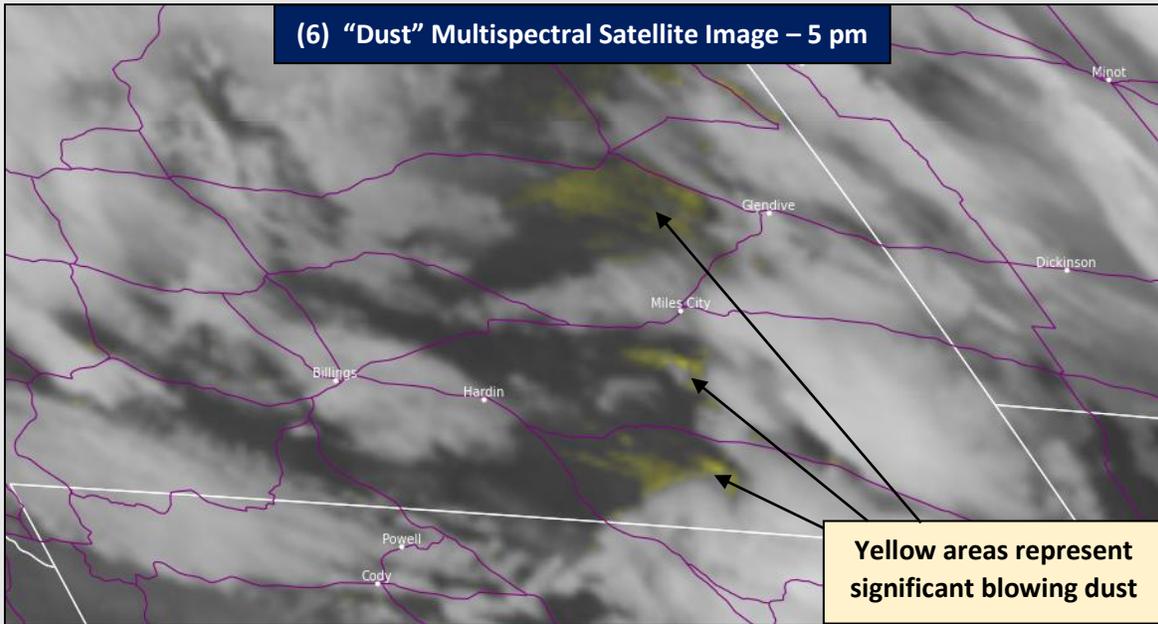


METEOROLOGY & SATELLITE IMAGERY: Strong winds began along the western foothills (not an unusual occurrence) in the pre-frontal hours Tuesday night. The arrival of a Pacific cold front (Figure 1) during the day on Wednesday the 13th was followed by a period of subsidence (descending air) and very strong winds across the lower elevations. Aloft, a strong northwesterly oriented jet stream (Figure 2) was driving through the northern Rockies, and strong winds existed at mountain top level. The cold front also produced light shower activity (Figure 3) which enhanced the gustiness of the surface winds. The combination of all of these ingredients resulted in the strong winds.

In addition to the wind, intense drying occurred in the wake of the front (Figure 4) and resulted in the development and rapid spread of a few grass fires. A 3 pm satellite image (Figure 5) shows the hot spot associated with the North Delphia Fire just east of Roundup. Blowing dust was also widespread, and could be seen on satellite imagery (Figure 6) in eastern Montana in the late afternoon.







WIND RECORDS: The peak wind gusts at Billings (69 mph) and Miles City (75 mph) were each records for January. Sheridan (67 mph) reported its 4th highest January gust. The following day (January 14th) Miles City reported a peak gust of 66 mph, which ranks 2nd for January. Peak winds at these locations are measured at the local airports.

PHOTOS: Here is a sampling of the numerous photos we received. Thanks to everyone for sharing

