



### NWS Des Moines

Cover Photo: Iowa Department of Transportation camera on I-35 near Ankeny on October 19, 2020. A narrow, intense band of snow or "snow squall" resulted in rapid reductions in visibility and quick accumulations on roads. This band of snow was only about 10 to 15 miles wide but some areas saw accumulations over 7 inches.

## The Weather Whisper

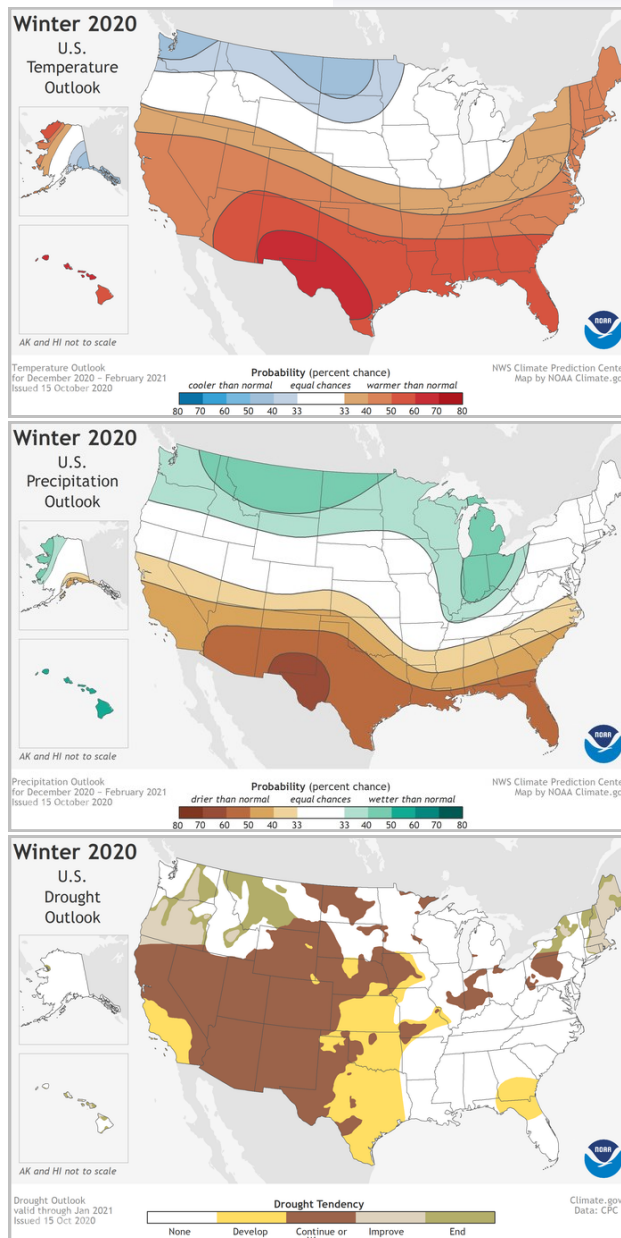
### November 2020

### Winter 2020-2021 Outlook

*Kristy Carter-Mauss, Pathways Intern*

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center released the [U.S. Winter Outlook](#) on October 15, 2020. The forecast calls for warmer and drier conditions for December 2020 through February 2021 across the southern U.S. and cooler and wetter conditions for the same three-month period for the northern U.S. Most of Iowa is in the neutral zone of both the temperature and precipitation outlooks meaning the state has equal chances at seeing above average or below average temperatures and precipitation this winter.

The first two figures on the right from the Climate Prediction Center show the areas forecasted to be warmer (red) and cooler (blue) and the areas forecasted to be drier (brown) and wetter (green), respectively. The third figure, also from the Climate Prediction Center, is the U.S. Drought Outlook valid through January 2021. With many areas of the western U.S., including much of western Iowa, already experiencing a drought, the forecast is concerning for many of these areas as it calls for drought conditions to continue or worsen (brown color). Additionally, areas of central Iowa, like much of the central U.S., could see drought conditions develop in areas that are not currently experiencing drought conditions (yellow color). The expanding drought conditions forecasted are largely due to a [La Nina](#) climate pattern that has been well established and is expected to continue through winter 2020-2021. La Nina conditions are characterized by below average sea-surface temperatures in the northern Pacific Ocean and affect temperature and precipitation patterns across the U.S., as seen in the 3-month temperature and precipitation outlooks described above and on the right. Less winter precipitation over much of the southern U.S. will allow for drought expansion and intensification going into Spring 2021. Please note, the outlooks discussed only show the likely averaged temperature and precipitation conditions, and how drought conditions are likely to change compared to present conditions, over the December 2020 through February 2021 time period. The outlooks do not indicate potential snowfall accumulations nor specific temperature forecasts.



Climate Prediction Center Winter Outlooks for Temperatures (top), Precipitation (middle), and Drought (bottom)

## Meteorologist Frank Boksa Retires after 33 Years of Service

After 33 years of service with the National Weather Service, Frank Boksa retired at the end of October. Of his NWS career, Frank says:

*"I started my career on June 8, 1987 at WSO Casper, Wyoming. I was hired along with 500 other meteorologists as part of the modernization of the National Weather Service. WSO Casper served much of the northern and eastern Wyoming. I did a lot of the spotter training and what was partner engagement for those days at the WSO. Moving from Chicago to Casper was an experience in and of itself for me and never seeing anyone outside a big city, I wanted to learn about the differences between big city and small town...and sometimes way small town. There was a town in Wyoming called Natrona, and they proudly displayed their population sign...which was 5. This started my interest in meeting with people, learning about the communities we forecast for and trying to provide for them what they needed.*

*With the hiring of 500 meteorologists, there were a lot of meteorologists ready to move into forecast slots after 3 years...more so than there were slots available. After growing quite comfortable in Wyoming, I didn't actively bid out for a while, but after being there for 5 years, I wanted to move on. I was hired as a forecaster in Des Moines in the spring of 1994 and have been here ever since. Getting married and having a family reduced my desire to move around and I was happy that I made Des Moines my home. While at Des Moines, I was given the opportunity to expand the agriculture*

*program, which included a daily input from Pioneer (now Corteva) and the state climatologist for our daily ag forecast. The ag program was eliminated as modernization went on, and, with the moving on of the WSEO (Weather Service Evaluations Officer), I was offered the opportunity to become the WSEO and direct my abilities to working with other federal agencies as well as other forecast offices. I took that position over and remained in that position until Flight Service Stations were merged into centers and the WSO was phased out. After that, I recognized a need for a formal fire weather program for the Des Moines forecast area as we had none in place. What started out as a program that made spot forecasts, now has a curing observer network, daily planning forecast issuances during the fire weather season, spot forecasts upon request, a formal warning system for dangerous fire threat days, GFDI maps of cropland and agriculture (credit Ray Wolf, SOO DVN for the development of the AgGFDI) and partner engagements including talks at district meetings and conferences. I remain the program leader for the fire weather program through my retirement and will truly miss this program and the connections I made with the fire weather community."*



Meteorologist-in-Charge Jeff Johnson (left) presents Meteorologist Frank Boksa (right) with his federal service plaque.

## NWS Des Moines wishes Frank all the best in retirement!



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