Des Moines ASOS Relocated

Brooke Hagenhoff, Meteorologist

After roughly two years of planning, the Des Moines Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) was moved during the week of September 12. The ASOS is located at the Des Moines airport and provides frequent, automated weather observations. ASOS sites also serve as the “official” climate measurement sites, so when we break a temperature or precipitation record it is based off of the measurements taken at that location. For example, if the record high temperature for a day is 98° in Des Moines, to break the record the Des Moines ASOS must reach 99° or higher. A thermometer anywhere else will not qualify.

The site was moved due to upcoming construction at the airport that would have impacted the accuracy of the instruments. The ASOS was moved approximately a quarter mile from the previous location in an area of similar landscape which should prevent any influence on the accuracy of the future climate record.

A move like this is rare and requires a lot of planning and expertise. Our office electronics technicians did an incredible job, along with the help of another technician that traveled from the NWS Topeka office to assist our team. We also thank the on site observers that took manual observations for three days while the site was down.
With Fall in full swing, the season of harvesting and other fall activities is upon us. The changing weather will come with days of low humidity values paired with dry and windy conditions, increasing the threat of fires and spread rate. In these situations, especially when a Fire Weather Watch or Red Flag Warning is in effect, it is better to postpone harvesting or having campfires or burn piles until conditions improve. Criteria for a Fire Weather Watch or Red Flag Warning includes sustained winds at or above 25 mph, minimum relative humidity values at or less than 25 percent, and dry fuels (grasses and crops). Burn bans currently in effect in Iowa can be found at Iowa Burn Bans. In any case, practicing safe burns and harvesting is always recommended to reduce the risk of fire starts and spreads, and here are a few tips:

**General Tips:**
- Always closely monitor a campfire/burn pile, keeping it a manageable size and free of surrounding objects/debris to avoid spread.
- Completely extinguish campfires/burn piles after all the material is burned to ash.
- Keep the area around a grill clear and never leave unattended.
- Properly extinguish and dispose of cigarettes and cigar butts.

**Farming Machine Care Tips:**
- Inspect and clean any surfaces that radiate heat such as exhaust pipes, as well as the engine and surrounding areas.
- Check and clean or replace air filters to keep machinery running more efficiently and prevent overheating.
- Keep oil and coolant levels from getting low.
- Remove any plants that may be caught on the machine, especially on moving parts and the engine area.
- Repair any leaking parts as soon as they are found such as hoses, metal lines and fittings.
- Let the machine cool for at least 15 minutes after use before refueling to reduce chances of ignition or evaporation of fuel if accidentally spilled.
On the Cover:
Des Moines technicians (left and center) and Topeka technician (right) in front of the completed ASOS relocation.

Welcome Joe Price, Electronics Technician

In mid September, NWS Des Moines welcomed our new Electronics Technician, Joe Price, we are thrilled to have him as a part of our team! Joe says:

“I am an Iowa native, and have lived in the Ames area for the last 15 years. A majority of my education is in electronics. I have had many travel opportunities over the years and enjoy seeing the many different regions of the world and our country. I met my wife while living in Georgia and returned to the Midwest to raise a family.

We spend a majority of our free time outdoors involved in quite a few local activities. We participate in coordinating sporting events and other community recreations, of those I enjoy the most is coaching sports. The National Weather Service is a great organization and I look forward to being involved in something so important.”

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