



# National Weather Service

## Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



January 2006

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons		Estimated Damage		Character of Storm
					Killed	Injured	Property	Crops	

### TEXAS, South Panhandle

TXZ021>044

**Parmer - Castro - Swisher - Briscoe - Hall - Childress - Bailey - Lamb - Hale - Floyd - Motley - Cottle - Cochran - Hockley - Lubbock - Crosby - Dickens - King - Yoakum - Terry - Lynn - Garza - Kent - Stonewall**

01	0000CST				0	0	0	0	Drought
31	2359CST								

Drought conditions intensified over the South Plains of west Texas and the extreme southern Texas Panhandle during the month of January. An abnormally long dry period commenced over the region in late October 2005. This followed widespread copious rains that set local climate records during the winter of 2004 and 2005. The onset of exceptionally dry conditions was accompanied by unseasonably warm temperatures. The average temperature during January at Lubbock was 47.3 degrees, 9.2 degrees warmer than the thirty year average (1971 to 2000) January temperature of 38.1 degrees. The warmth accounted for a combined six daily record high temperatures at Childress and Lubbock. With the last measurable rainfall at Lubbock International Airport occurring on October 27, 2005, the thirty-one dry days of January contributed to what would become a record setting stretch of consecutive days without measurable precipitation for the city.

The U.S. Drought Monitor officially indicated D2 (severe) drought conditions over an expanding area that encompassed the extreme southeastern Texas Panhandle and the northeastern portions of the South Plains by January 24th. The intense short-term drought conditions that persisted over the area since late autumn resulted in the curing of abundant rangeland vegetation that grew following the previous year's record rains. With extremely dry fuel moisture levels, record warm temperatures, and persistently breezy southwest to westerly winds that advected very dry low level air (observed dewpoints as low as -20 degrees F) into the area, the threat for wildfires was very high over all of west Texas

Most crops across the region had been harvested by the time the drought commenced, and the dry weather actually helped farmers extract cotton from the fields during the late fall. The drought, however, is expected to have long-term adverse effects as fields are prepared and planting begins during the upcoming growing season. Thus agricultural losses resulting from the drought will likely be realized at future dates according to local extension agents.

TXZ021>024-026-028>036-039-041

**Parmer - Castro - Swisher - Briscoe - Childress - Lamb - Hale - Floyd - Motley - Cottle - Cochran - Hockley - Lubbock - Crosby - Yoakum - Lynn**

01	1040CST				0	1	35K	0	High Wind (MG58)
	1540CST								



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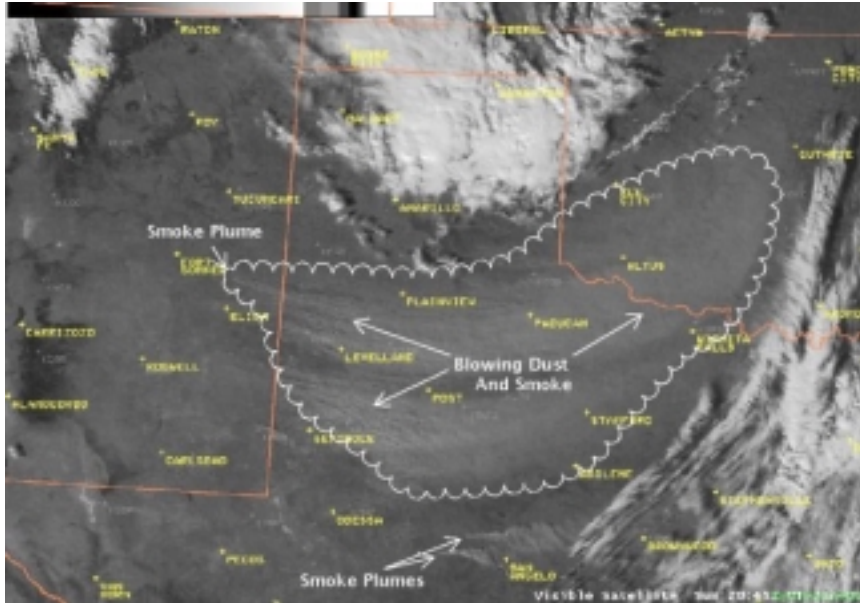
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### TEXAS, South Panhandle



*Visible satellite imagery at 14:45 CST showing widespread blowing dust over the South Plains. Smoke plumes from numerous ongoing wildfires are embedded within the dust. Imagery - NWS Lubbock, Texas.*

High winds affected much of the South Plains of west Texas on New Year's Day. The Texas Tech West Texas Mesonet recorded numerous severe wind gusts up to 67 MPH. The strong westerly winds caused blowing dust and resulted in dangerous driving conditions for holiday travelers. A tractor-trailer was blown over on Interstate 27 five miles south of Hale Center (Hale County). The driver sustained minor injuries. A summary of recorded severe gusts in order of magnitude follows:

- 2 NE Friona (Parmer).....67MPH
- 7 E Silverton (Briscoe).....67MPH
- 3 N Hart (Castro).....67MPH
- 2 NE Dimmitt (Castro).....67MPH
- 2 NE Tulia (Swisher).....65MPH
- 2 S Muleshoe(Bailey).....65MPH
- Lubbock Int. Airport (Lubbock).....64MPH
- 6 S Anton (Hockley).....64MPH
- 1 NE Amherst (Lamb).....64MPH
- 4 S Levelland (Hockley).....64MPH
- 6 S Olton (Lamb).....62MPH
- 2 NE Floydada (Floyd).....62MPH
- 7 W Denver City (Yoakum).....62MPH
- Reese Center (Lubbock).....61MPH
- 1 S Plainview (Hale).....61MPH
- 3 NE Tahoka (Lynn).....61MPH
- 10 SW Paducah (Cottle).....60MPH
- 3 N Roaring Springs (Motley).....60MPH
- 1 NE Morton (Cochran).....60MPH
- 3 W Lubbock (Lubbock).....60MPH
- Childress (Childress).....59MPH
- 5 NE Abernathy (Hale).....59MPH
- 6 SW Wolforth (Hockley).....59MPH
- 8 SW Sundown (Yoakum).....58MPH
- 6 NW White River Lake (Crosby).....58MPH



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### TEXAS, South Panhandle

TXZ023-034>035-039	Swisher - Hockley - Lubbock - Yoakum	01	1055CST 1630CST		0	3	325K	0	Wildfire
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*The above photograph shows a wildfire that burned out of control near a rural residence just north of Lubbock on New Year's Day. The fire destroyed horse stables and injured a fire fighter. Photo courtesy - Jason McLaughlin.*

A wildfire near the rural community of Claytonville (Swisher County) destroyed two homes. No injuries were reported

A second wildfire ignited near the intersection of Regis and Interstate 27, one mile southwest of Lubbock International Airport. The fire destroyed horse stables, and one fire fighter was hospitalized for smoke inhalation related injuries

Another large wildfire near Levelland burned two mobile homes and injured fire fighters. Two firemen were hospitalized due to minor burn injuries and smoke inhalation.

A wildfire that initiated near Tatum, New Mexico, burned several thousand acres of rangeland and threatened structures as it spread across the Texas/New Mexico state-line into Yoakum County near Bronco. The fire was contained before doing significant damage in Yoakum County, but one rural residence was evacuated.

January 1 Wind and Wildfire Event Summary - A potent upper level trough affected much of the Southern Plains on New Year's Day. The trough resulted in widespread high winds over the region, where intense short-term drought conditions existed. The wind combined with the exceptionally dry conditions to result in a historic outbreak of wildfires over eastern New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma.

High and frequently severe winds began to blow over the west Texas South Plains by late morning. These winds persisted through the mid afternoon hours, and resulted in widespread blowing dust and one injury. At least a dozen wind-driven wildfires were sparked over the South Plains. Four of the wildfires were significant, and resulted in the loss of property and three injuries. The winds and fires on the 1st combined to result in four injuries and estimated property losses that exceeded \$350,000.



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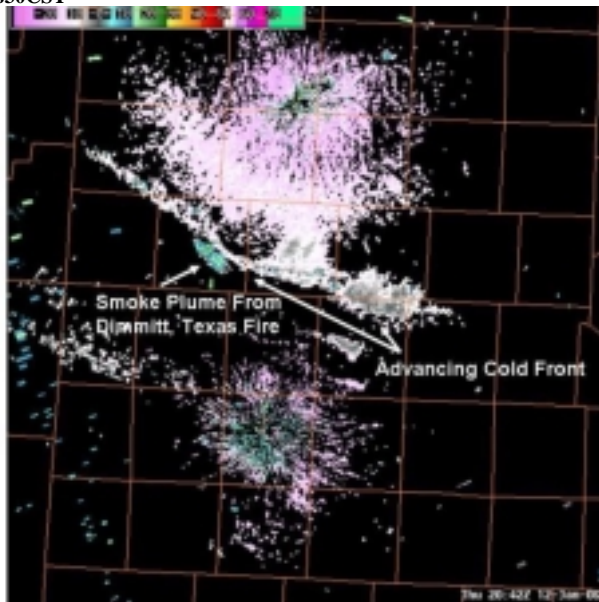
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### TEXAS, South Panhandle

TXZ022-031

Castro - Motley

12	1430CST 1630CST				0	0	200K	0	Wildfire
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*KLBB WSR-88D reflectivity imagery showing the smoke plume associated with the Dimmitt, Texas, wildfire and the advancing frontal boundary that shifted the fire's propagation. Imagery - NWS Lubbock, Texas.*

A large wildfire ignited near U.S. Highway 385 just north of Dimmitt on the afternoon of the 12th. A frontal passage caused a westerly to northerly wind shift that rapidly changed the fire's direction of growth and spread. The fire destroyed three abandoned structures on the northwest side of the city. Resources from surrounding counties as well as the Texas Forest Service were utilized to battle the blaze. Two forest service air tankers provided airdrops and managed to contain the fire before it spread into the city. This undoubtedly averted extensive damage to homes and businesses.

A second large wildfire was reported to be burning out of control just west of Matador around 15:00 CST on the 12th. This fire destroyed at least one structure. No injuries were reported.

A series of at least six wildfires charred portions of the extreme southern Texas Panhandle and the South Plains of west Texas on the 12th. Strong westerly winds and extremely low relative humidity values combined with parched fuels and the ongoing short-term drought to result in a very high fire danger. In addition, an advancing cold front interacted with several of the fires, changing the direction of fire propagation and spread. Two wildfires became significant and destroyed property, including one fire that threatened the city of Dimmitt (Castro County). Total losses were estimated at \$200,000.