



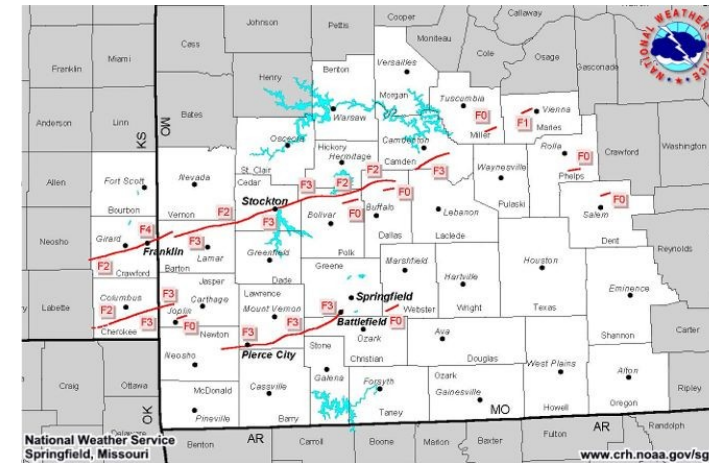
"To provide weather and flood warnings, public forecasts and advisories for all of the United States...and its territories...for the protection of life and property."

National Weather Service

5808 W Hwy EE
Springfield, Mo. 65802
Phone: 417-864-8535
Email: Steve.Runnels@noaa.gov
Gene.Hatch@noaa.gov

National Weather Service

Natural Hazard Risk Assessment Information For: **Lawrence County Missouri**



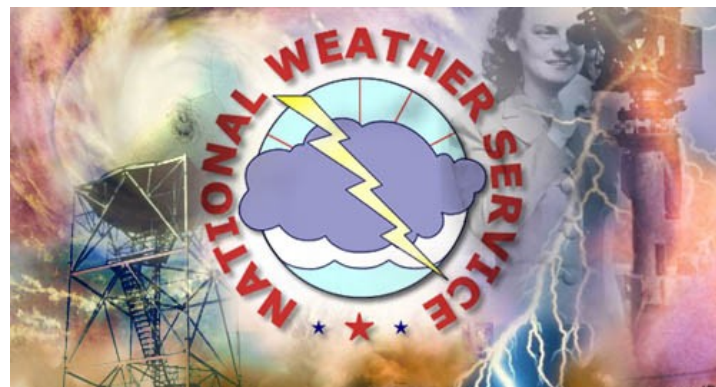
Information Provided By
WFO Springfield, Mo

2009 Update

Includes data and information
through December 2008

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This document is intended to provide general information on severe weather that has affected Lawrence County and the communities with in the county.

By Gene Hatch
 Meteorologist Intern WFO Springfield. Mo.

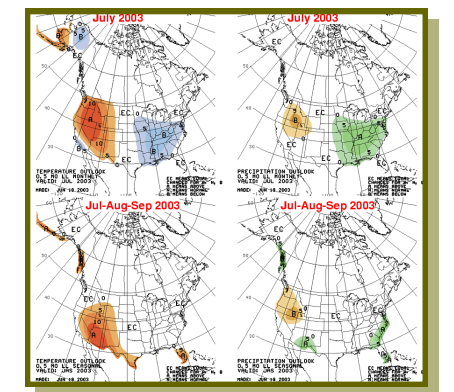
Local Climatology

Averages and records for Mount Vernon, Missouri in Lawrence County

38	19	3.8	74	-16	17.5
45	23	3.0	83	-18	15.0
55	32	2.3	85	-2	18.0
64	42	0	89	18	1.0
73	52	0	92	29	0
81	61	0	100	38	0
87	66	0	106	43	0
87	64	0	105	44	0
78	56	0	106	28	0
68	45	0	93	16	0
53	34	0.8	82	4	5.0
43	24	2.7	75	-17	16.0

Links for Climate information

- www.crh.noaa.gov/sgf/
- www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/
- www4.ncdc.noaa.gov
- web.missouri.edu/~moclimat/
- mrcc.sws.uiuc.edu/
- agebb.missouri.edu/weather/index.htm



Historic Weather in Southwest Missouri

Jan. 8th-1997...Six inches or more of snow fell over much southwest, south central and central Missouri from noon on the eighth to noon on the ninth. The heaviest snow fell in a band from Cassville to Springfield north to Hermitage where up to ten inches was recorded. Damage estimates at 670K dollars were due to the cost of snow removal.

Mar. 12th-1961...A tornado touched down at 745 am in southern Greene County and moved northeast from near Plainview road towards the KWTO towers. The tornado blew down 2 of KWTO's towers, damaged the roof on the Disney school and damage 3 other homes.

Apr. 10th-1922...A large tornado touched down near Miller in Lawrence County MO and tracked northeast across Greene County. Minor damage and no injuries were reported.

May 4th- 2003...Three tornadic supercell thunderstorms formed over southeast Kansas and moved across the Missouri Ozarks, spawning 13 tornadoes. This was a very rare event for this part of Missouri since many of the tornadoes experienced across this area are short lived small tornadoes. This event surpassed the December 17-18, 2002 tornado event in both loss of lives and property damage, and exceeded tornado events that occurred



over the past 100 Years for this part of Missouri. The hardest hit locations included Battlefield, Stockton and Pierce City. 14 tornadoes resulted in extensive damage and 24 deaths. Several of the tornadoes tracked long distances ranging from 15 to 80 miles.

Jun. 9th-1975...Thunderstorms that developed over the Springfield area dropped 3.62 inches of rainfall in one hour. This was the greatest hourly rainfall rate recorded for Springfield.

Nov. 11th-1911...A high of 80 and low of 13 were recorded on the same day in Springfield. A cold front, ahead of a very cold airmass, moved through the Ozarks making temperatures fall rapidly.

Nov. 29th-1991...An F4 tornado that developed 3 miles north of Nixa tracked southeast for 10 miles to Springfield and lifted over east Springfield. Extensive damage to homes and businesses was reported. 2 deaths and 64 injuries were directly related to the tornado.

Dec. 17-18th-2002...At approximately 1118 pm a tornado struck near Chesapeake Mo. The F2 tornado hit the Lucky Lady trailer park in addition to 1 home northeast and 3 homes southwest of the trailer park. The tornado resulted in 1 fatality and 15 injuries.

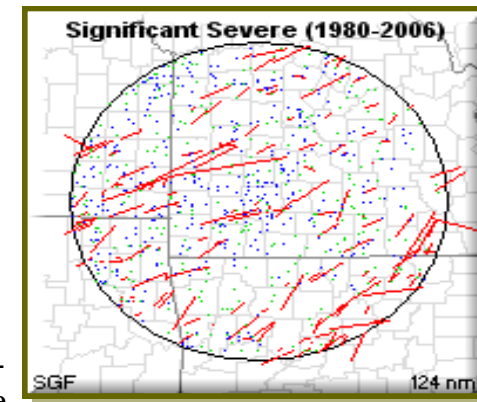


Overview of Weather Hazards in Southwest Missouri & Extreme Southeast Kansas

From 1961 to 2008, 522 tornadoes were reported in the 37 counties that WFO Springfield is responsible for, with an average of 11 occurring each year. There were 71 fatalities from these tornadoes, or near one and a half each year. Tornadoes occurred during every month of the year and at every hour of the day. The majority of these tornadoes are weak, but the occurrence of strong and violent storms is always a possibility and cannot be discounted.

The Ozarks experiences between 50 and 70 thunderstorm days a year. During any given storm, large hail, damaging winds and microbursts are possible. The Ozarks go through three severe thunderstorm seasons during the course of the year. The spring season is the period that supercell thunderstorms are most common, next comes summer as large clusters of storms move across the region, mainly during the overnight hours. Finally fall sees the return of supercells and tornadoes, squall lines and training storms (thunderstorms that form and move over the same area).

The region is affected during the course of any year by flooding, drought, heat and cold extremes and winter storms. Heat extremes and flooding have caused the greatest number of fatalities in the area. Winter storms affect the region in many forms. Ice storms, heavy snow and extreme cold have occurred across the area. Freezing rain is the typical form ice storms in the Ozarks take. Ice storms have deposited 2 to 3 inches of ice during their duration causing power outages, tree damage, and traffic problems.



Weather in the Ozarks

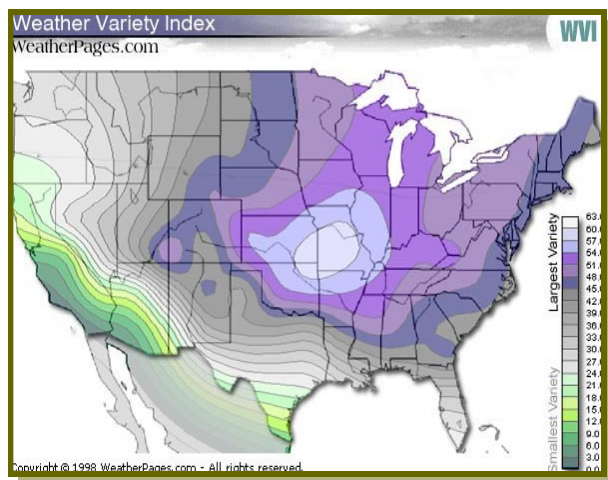
Tornadoes by county for the Springfield County Warning Area from 1950 to 2008

County	F0/1	F2	F3	F4	F5	County	F0/1	F2	F3	F4	F5	County	F0/1	F2	F3	F4	F5
BARRY	20	7	1	0	0	DOUGLAS	8	6	1	0	0	OREGON	9	4	2	1	0
BARTON	23	1	3	1	0	GREENE	19	10	3	1	0	OZARK	21	2	2	1	0
BENTON	18	2	4	0	0	HICKORY	8	1	1	0	0	PHELPS	15	4	2	0	0
BOURBON,KS	10	5	0	0	0	HOWELL	20	11	3	1	0	POLK	16	3	0	0	0
CAMDEN	15	6	1	0	0	JASPER	30	5	4	1	0	PULASKI	9	4	1	0	0
CEDAR	10	2	3	0	0	LACLEDE	9	6	1	0	0	SHANNON	11	1	1	0	0
CHEROKEE,KS	28	5	2	1	0	LAWRENCE	11	2	3	0	0	ST.CLAIR	13	2	2	0	0
CHRISTIAN	19	2	1	1	0	MARIES	4	3	0	0	0	STONE	10	3	0	0	0
CRAWFORD,KS	19	11	3	1	0	McDONALD	11	5	0	0	0	TANEY	6	1	0	0	0
DADE	11	2	2	0	0	MILLER	22	3	0	0	0	TEXAS	14	8	1	2	0
DALLAS	7	1	1	0	0	MORGAN	11	7	0	0	0	VERNON	20	1	6	0	0
DENT	8	1	1	0	0	NEWTON	30	5	1	2	0	WEBTSE	19	7	2	0	0
												WRIGHT	10	4	0	1	0

Historical information for Lawrence County, Missouri

Severe Weather in Lawrence County

In 2000, a private company looked at 277 cities across the United States. They rated each city on variations in temperature, precipitation and other factors. Of all the cities in their study Springfield, Missouri rated number one as the city with the most variable weather in the U.S.

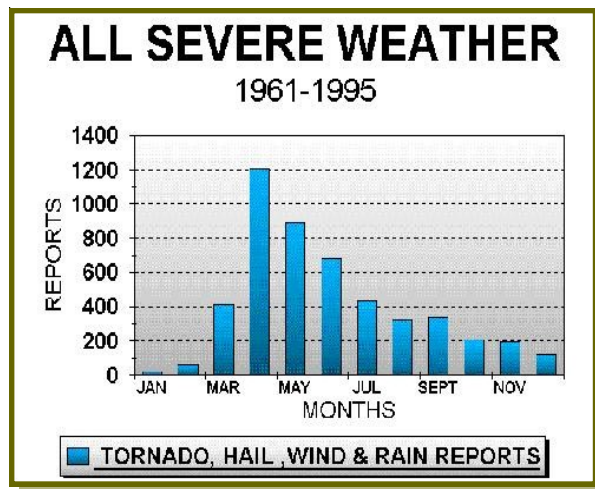


From www.weatherpages.com

Lawrence County Missouri is located on the Ozark Plateau along the eastern edge of tornado ally. Because of its location Lawrence County is subjected to severe thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, winter storms, flooding, ice storms, droughts, tornadoes and other wind storms.

When does severe weather occur ?

Severe weather in the Ozarks can occur in any month of the year. While the months of April through June are the peak severe weather season, there is a secondary peak from September to November.



Severe thunder storms in Lawrence County have dropped hail up to 5 1/4" in diameter, created winds in excess of 90 miles an hour and rainfall rates greater than 2" in an hour. While southwest Missouri receives nearly 11 tornadoes a year, Lawrence County averages an event every 3 1/2 years.

Number of Tornadoes in Greene Co. (1950 to 2008)

<u>F0/ F1</u>	<u>F2</u>	<u>F3</u>	<u>F4</u>	<u>F5</u>
11	2	3	0	0
69%	13%	18%	0%	0%

During the winter season Lawrence County averages 12.6 inches of snow. With the most snow in one season at 30.4 inches, falling during the 1958 to 1959 winter season. Ice storms also affect the county during the winter season causing significant damage to homes, trees and utilities.

Dam Failure

Dams in Lawrence County

Lawrence County contains 3 dams. While the majority of these dams are small and used primarily for storm water management, irrigation and recreation, some are a part of local reservoirs. All of the dams in Lawrence County are of earthen construction and there have been no recorded failures.

Where are they Located

- Poirot Lake Dam: Coon Creek Lamar
- Pyle Lake Dam: Coon Creek, Lamar
- Mendenhall Lake Dam: Johnson Creek, Pennsboro

Most of the dams in Lawrence County are less than 100 feet high. Many are located on private land and fall under private ownership.

Additional dams may be located in Lawrence county however they are not large enough to pose a significant hazard.



Spillway gates open to release water after heavy rain.



Heat, Drought and Wildfires



Excessive heat is the leading cause of weather fatalities in the nation. With the variability of the weather in southwest Missouri, it is not surprising that excessive heat impacts Lawrence county on almost a yearly basis.

Lawrence County averages 13 days a year with temperatures at or above 95 degrees. July and August are the two warmest months, which average 5 days at or above 95 degrees.

Year	Days 95* +	Days 100* +	Days in a row
1964	24	8	14
1970	19	6	8
1980	59	24	21
1983	29	1	8
1998	25	3	5
2000	23	9	11
Normal # of Days	13	3	▲ Above 95*

Years with above average summer heat

Drought and wildfires can, and often do accompany excessive heat. Lawrence County has gone through dry periods and drought. The latest droughts occurred in 1999 and 2000 when well below normal rainfall and high temperatures combined to produce drought conditions.

Longest periods without rainfall in Lawrence County

- 41 days: 10 Dec 1980 ~ 19 Jan 81
- 38 days: 26 Sept 1963 ~ 2 Nov 63
- 31 days: 22 Nov 1979 ~ 22 Dec 79
- 31 days: 19 Dec 1985 ~ 18 Jan 86
- 28 days: 29 Dec 1966 ~ 25 Jan 67
- 28 days: 24 Jun 1980 ~ 21 July 80

While no major wildfires have affected Lawrence County, small grass fires do pose a hazard.

A twenty year study by the Missouri Department of Conservation, from 1970 to 1989 determined that over 5600 fires occurred during that time in the Neosho fire district which includes Barton, Jasper, Newton, Lawrence, McDonald and Barry counties. This represented nearly 9% of the wildfires in the state with over 88,000 acres burned.

There are numerous ways wildfires can be started, but when dealing with weather related phenomenon, namely lightning, only 0.8% of the wildfires in the Springfield fire district were the result of lightning.

Tornado Information

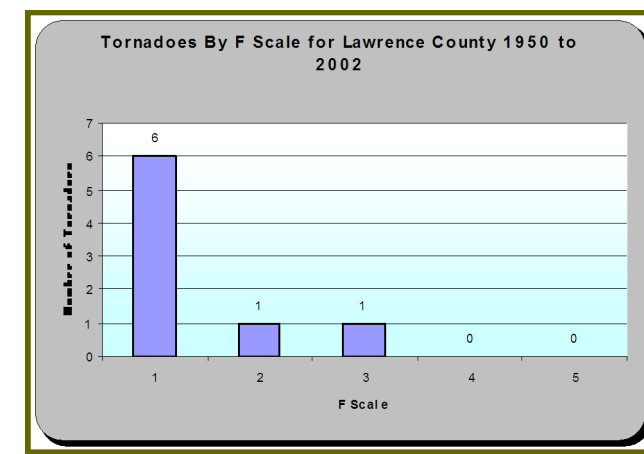
Lawrence County lies at the eastern edge of tornado ally and receives on average a tornado every 3 1/2 years. From 1950 to 2008 Lawrence county recorded 16 tornadoes from F0 to F3 in strength. The strongest tornado, an F3, passed across the county on December 17th, 2002. Along its 4 mile track it caused 500 thousand dollars in damage, injured 17 and killed 2.

Historical Tornadoes of Lawrence County

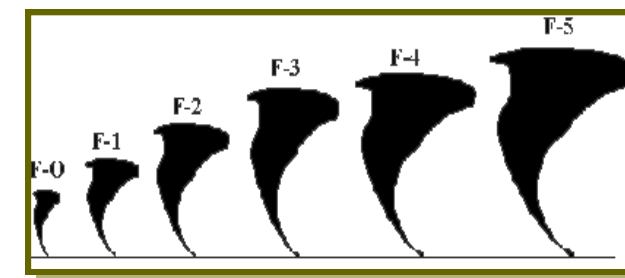
- Dec 4, 1880 (F3) 7 inj, 0 dead
- Jun 22, 1909 (F3) 7 inj, 1 dead
- May 27, 1910 (F2) 3 inj, 0 dead
- Apr 10, 1922 (F4) 1 inj, 0 dead
- Mar 26, 1976 (F3) 2 inj, 0 dead
- Oct 30, 1979 (F2) 0 inj, 0 dead
- Dec 17, 2002 (F2) 17 inj, 2 dead
- May 4, 2003(F3) 33 inj, 5 dead

For the Record Lawrence County

- Has experienced one F4 tornado.
- No F5 tornadoes
- Most recent Tornado March 31, 2008 (EF0)
- 8 deaths and 70 injuries since 1880.

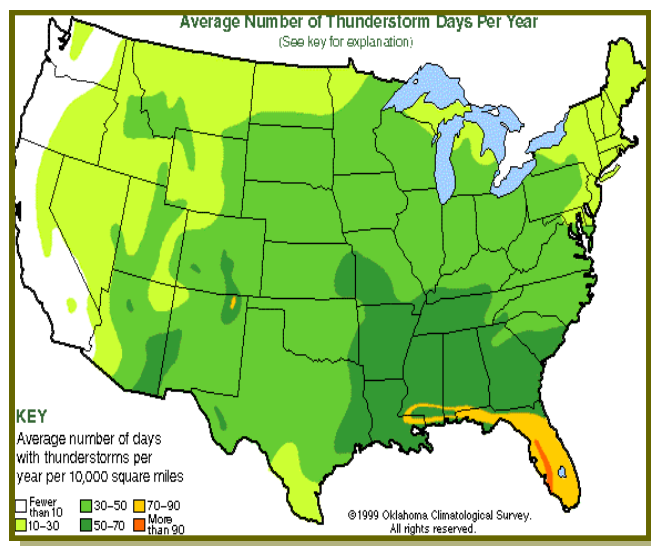


The tornado outbreak of May 4, 2003 was the one of the worst that southwest Missouri has had since the late 1800's. Fourteen tornadoes touched down across the Ozarks during the evening of May 4th one of which was an F3 that struck the town of Pierce City. This F3 is the latest killer tornado to strike Lawrence county since an F2 that struck Mount Vernon in December of 2002.



- **EF-0:** 40-72 mph, chimney damage, tree branches broken
- **EF-1:** 73-112 mph, mobile homes pushed off foundation or overturned
- **EF-2:** 113-157 mph, considerable damage, mobile homes demolished, trees uprooted
- **EF-3:** 158-205 mph, roofs and walls torn down, trains overturned, cars thrown
- **EF-4:** 207-260 mph, well-constructed walls leveled
- **EF-5:** 261-318 mph, homes lifted off foundation and carried considerable distances, autos thrown as far as 100 meters.

Severe Hail, Lightning, Wind and Winter Weather



Average number of thunderstorm days per year.

Thunderstorms occur in the Ozarks on the average of 50 days per year.

April and May are the two most active hail months in the Ozarks. There is also evidence of a minor secondary peak in September. The greatest number of hail reports over 2 inches occur in the months of April, May and June with the largest report being 5.25 inches in diameter in Lawrence county on April 26, 1994. Hail can cause considerable damage to homes, vehicles, and crops.

Severe thunderstorm winds are defined by the NWS as convective wind gusts that reach or exceed 50 knots (58 mph). June is the most active month with April a close second. In general, the most active period for damaging wind events occurs from April to August. This is due in part to the shift from supercell thunderstorms to large clusters of storms and squall lines. The highest wind gust recorded in Camden county reached 92 mph and occurred in 2002 on the 17th of December. Since 1961 high winds have caused around \$2,081,000.00 in damages.

With any thunderstorm, lightning will be present and the safest place to be is indoors. In August of 2002, four people were killed near Willard in Greene County during a funeral. As a thunderstorm moved into the area, the victims sought shelter under a tree.



Nationally, Missouri ranks 27th in Lightning fatality rate, 44th in injuries and 38th in property damage related to lightning. During the period from 1960 to 1994, the total number of lightning casualties in Missouri was 165. This is nearly five casualties per year in the state.

Winter weather across the Ozarks comes in many forms. Freezing rain or drizzle, sleet and snow are common occurrences during the winter season. In the past the Ozarks have had up to 54 inches of snow, Sleet storms that produced inches of sleet and ice storms that laid a covering of one to two inches of ice on most surfaces. While the immediate impact of these storms is to travel, winter storms cause hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages across the region on a near yearly basis.

21 Feb 2001: Sleet, freezing rain and embedded thunderstorms caused ice accumulations from one quarter, up to two inches in places across southwest, central and south central Missouri. The heaviest ice accumulations occurred along and north of Highway 60, and along the I-44 corridor. Howell-Oregon electric cooperative reported numerous power outages due to the ice around the communities of Willow Springs, Birch Tree, Mountain View, Winona, Eminence and Dora.

Flooding

From 1993 to 2002 Flooding has occurred in Camden County in every year. While usually nuisance flooding such as water on city streets, significant flooding has caused numerous problems in the county. During the previous decade, only one injury and no deaths have been attributed to flooding in Camden County. Camden County contains numerous low water crossings.

Typically, flooding in the county is caused by heavy rainfall associated with high rain producing thunderstorms which move very slowly. In towns, rainfall of one to two inches will cause streets and ditches to flood and make some low water crossings impassable. When rainfall rates reach 3 to 4



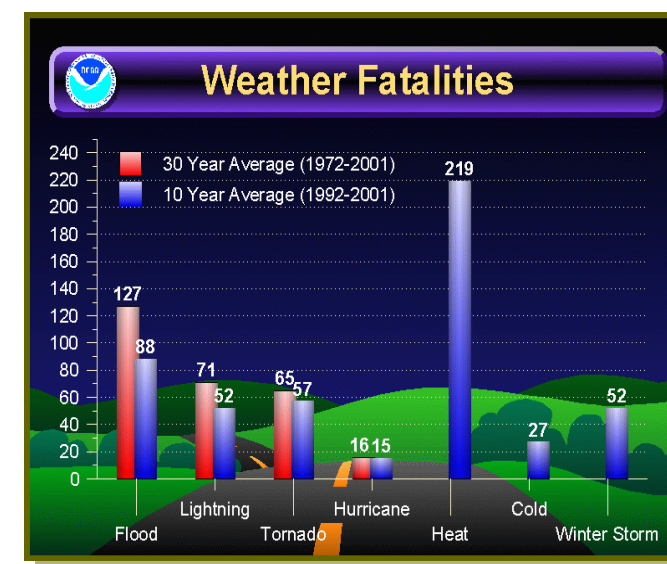
inches, major flooding can occur, and amounts over four inches creates significant flooding that affects most of the county.

Floods in Camden County

8 May 1995: One to three inches of rain that fell on the area the night before caused the Spring River to climb out of its banks in southwest Missouri. In Lawrence County, a 81 year old man drowned after driving into flood water on county road 1150 to the west of Mt. Vernon.

10 June 1995: Thunderstorm rains lead to flooding along creeks and streams. Water flooded over Highway 59 between Noel and Anderson. Police had to evacuate sections of Neosho due to flooding. Highway M southeast of Mt. Vernon also flooded.

13 Aug 1998: Thunderstorms produced flash flood



National Weather Fatality Statistics

ing on several roads in Lawrence County. County law enforcement reported a couple of vehicles washed off the road along Highway 97 in Lawrence County. Flooding was also reported on Chestnut Expressway near Interstate 44 in Springfield.

1 July 2000: Thunderstorms produced an estimated 3 inches of rain in a short time. A county road and a low water bridge were flooded in Lawrence County and highway flooding was reported near Greenfield and Everton in Dade County.

6 Nov 1996: Additional heavy rainfall caused flooding along Farm Road 1000, 2 miles south of the Southwest Missouri State Research Center, and along Farm Road 2150, one-eighth of a mile east of County Highway H.

26 Sept 1996: A large storm system brought heavy rain to the county beginning late on September 25th and continued into the early morning of the 26th. The first batch of heavy rains caused localized flooding across the county. Highway H 1 mile north of Friestatt was closed due to flooding.