

**To: Radio and TV Broadcasters and News Directors**  
**What: Top 5 Weather Events of 2021**  
**Contact: Amy Campbell, Meteorologist in Charge, (325) 944-9445**

### **Top 5 Weather Events of 2021**

In 2021, we endured a variety of impactful weather phenomena, ranging from a highly impactful and historic Arctic outbreak & associated record cold temperatures and snowfall this past winter, to Severe Weather in the Spring and Flash Flooding in September. As we all know, weather across West Central Texas can change dramatically, and is typically characterized by flash floods, drought, wildfires, wind storms, winter storms and tornadoes. Included below are the top five weather events of 2021. The most significant weather event for the year was the February historic arctic outbreak and associated record cold and snowfall. While not included in the top five weather events for the year, this record December warmth and May large hail event surely both deserve an honorable mention.

We are extremely grateful for our first responders who constantly save lives from hazardous weather. We are also thankful to many of our partners in emergency management, fire departments, law enforcement, amateur radio operators, county judges, DPS, USGS, TxDOT, Farm Safety Service, radio, TV, and social media, NWS Cooperative Observers, rainfall observers, and trained spotters who assist us with real time reports. Special thanks to our local emergency officials who work diligently to warn and protect their communities. Following is a recap of the top 5 weather events of 2021.

**(1) Record cold in February; the Valentine's Day snowstorm; record February snowfall; record length of subfreezing temperatures in February; very rare occurrence of bitterly cold wind chill values on Valentines' Day.**

A historic and record-breaking arctic outbreak invaded west-central Texas in the second week of February, bringing with it the coldest temperatures the region had experienced since 1989. Several days of freezing rain and drizzle across the area culminated in a record-breaking snowfall on Valentine's Day. Both San Angelo (10.1 inches) and Abilene (9.8 inches) set their all-time daily snowfall records. With the Valentine's Day snowstorm, falling temperatures and brisk north winds dropped wind chill values into the teens below zero across the Big Country and the single digits below zero in the Concho Valley. Wind chill values this low are a very rare occurrence this far south in Texas. The actual air temperatures across west-central Texas plunged into the single digits above and below zero, for lows on the mornings of February 15 and 16. This shattered several temperature records. Another new record was set, for the number of consecutive days and hours with temperatures at or below freezing, at Abilene (252 hours) and San Angelo (152 hours). The record cold and snowfall resulted in major impacts to the area. With a combination of the major winter storm and record cold temperatures in the middle of February, power outages were widespread across the area and across the state of Texas. There was considerable damage with frozen and burst water pipes. The city of Abilene experienced a

loss of water, as a result of power loss to water treatment plants. In San Angelo, numerous breaks to water lines resulted in the loss of water for several days, in much of the city.

[West Central Texas Historic Arctic Outbreak](#)

[February Monthly Summary](#)

### **(2) Winter Weather Event with Heavy Snowfall on January 10:**

A winter weather event with heavy snowfall across most of the northern and central parts of West Central Texas (including Abilene, San Angelo, and Brownwood). The heaviest snowfall of 5 to 8 inches occurred in the Big Country and Heartland areas. The Concho Valley received 3 to 5 inches of snowfall. Map with January 10 Snowfall Amounts.



### **(3) Tornado in Sterling County on May 17:**

With a severe weather event in the evening and early nighttime hours of May 17, a tornado occurred in northern Sterling County. This tornado, which was rated EF-2 on the Enhanced Fujita Scale, caused damage to a gas plant, along with some other structures. Hail up to baseball size was reported with the tornadic storm in northern Sterling County (12 miles north of Sterling City).

[Damage Survey for Sterling County Tornado](#)

### **(4) Severe Weather in the Heartland and northern Big Country areas on April 28:**

On April 28, severe weather occurred with supercell storms which tracked east across the Heartland and northern Big Country areas. In western Mcculloch County, thunderstorm winds (estimated at 85 mph) damaged trees and power poles 1 mile north of Salt Gap. In northern

Mcculloch County, a combination of strong winds and hail of 1.5 inch diameter (ping pong ball sized) destroyed hundreds of acres of winter wheat. In Brown County, winds estimated at 80 mph caused damage to docks at Lake Brownwood. In Throckmorton County, thunderstorm winds estimated at 80-85 mph damaged several homes and an RV. Wind-driven hail (golf ball size) broke windows of a number of homes and vehicles.

#### [Summary Local Storm Report](#)

#### **(5) Flash Flooding in Abilene on September 30:**

On September 30, very heavy rainfall caused flash flooding of streets in Abilene, resulting in several water rescues. A home in Abilene was also flooded. The Abilene Regional Airport recorded 2.18 inches of rainfall.

#### [Flash Flooding Report in Abilene](#)

#### **Honorable Mentions:**

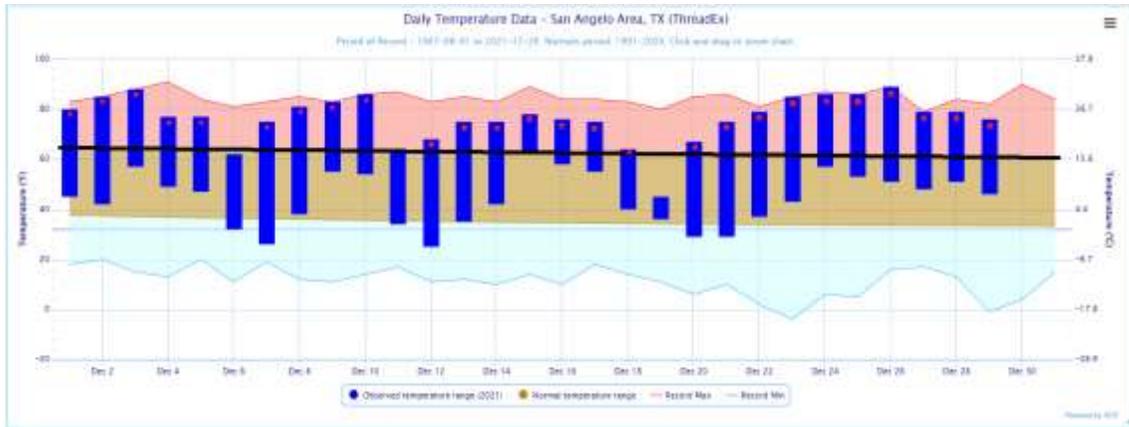
#### **Severe Weather Event May 10 with large hail in southeastern parts of the area:**

A severe weather event occurred May 10 with large and very large hail across southeastern parts of the area. This occurred with left-moving storms (from storm splits). The largest hail reported was baseball to softball size 10 miles northeast of Cleo (Kimble County). Other reports in Kimble County included golf ball to baseball size hail. Hail up to golfball size was reported in Mcculloch and southern Brown Counties. In Sutton County, hail larger than hen egg size was reported (18 miles east-southeast of Sonora). In all, a total of 15 severe weather reports were received for this event.

#### [Severe Weather Reports May 10](#)

#### **Record December Warmth:**

The average temperature for December was the warmest on record at Abilene and San Angelo. Abilene set a new record for its warmest high temperature (90 degrees on Dec. 26) and warmest low temperature (64 degrees on Dec. 15) for the month of December. During the month, numerous new daily record high temperatures, and record warm low temperatures, were set at Abilene and San Angelo. In addition, a new record was set for the highest number of days in December with highs 80 degrees or above, at Abilene (10 days) and San Angelo (10 days). As you can see in the image below, out of 31 days in December so far, only 3 days had Max temperatures fall into the normal range (Depicted by the blue bars whose tops remained under the black line). So far we have had 28 out of 31 days in December with above normal Max Temperatures (depicted by the blue bars with red dots in them that reside above the black line) .



**Three ways to keep safe:**

- 1) Always have more than one way to receive forecast & warning information via the web, apps, and NOAA weather radio. [weather.gov/sanangelo](http://weather.gov/sanangelo).
- 2) Know what to do by having a plan, and practice executing your plan regularly.
- 3) Review NWS Weather safety tips at [weather.gov/safety](http://weather.gov/safety).

*On behalf of the staff of the National Weather Service located in San Angelo, we wish you and yours a happy and safe holiday season!*

**Thomas Pepe**  
Lead Forecaster

**Matthew Groh**  
General Forecaster

*Working Together To Save Lives™*

