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King of the hill: Flagstaff atop snowfall total so far

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DAILY SUN STAFF | Posted: Wednesday, February 24, 2010 5:15 am | (4) Comments

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[Buy this photo](#) Jake Bacon A 20-foot tall pile of snow and ice sits in the parking lot of the Safeway store on Cedar Avenue Tuesday morning. Flagstaff is beating many cities around the country in the amount of snow recorded after recording almost 10 feet of snow for the winter so far. (Jake Bacon/Arizona Daily Sun)

How Flagstaff compares this winter

Valdez, Alaska -- 230.9

Flagstaff -- 118

Syracuse, N.Y. -- 86

Baltimore -- 80

Burlington, Vt. -- 73.8

Philadelphia -- 73.1

Fort Collins, Colo. -- 68

Buffalo, N.Y. -- 67.5

Des Moines, Iowa -- 62.3

Washington, D.C. -- 56

Anchorage, Alaska -- 44.4

Minneapolis -- 40.6

Boston -- 35.4

Portland, Maine -- 35.4

Salt Lake City -- 25

** Through Feb. 22. Numbers in inches.*

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Full Story

Big snow years for Flagstaff

1972-73 -- 210 inches

1979-80 -- 177 inches

1948-49 -- 167 inches

1964-65 -- 167 inches

1991-92 -- 159 inches

1967-68 -- 150 inches

1992-93 -- 147 inches

1978-79 -- 145 inches

1982-83 -- 143 inches

1974-75 -- 141 inches

1984-85 -- 136 inches

2004-05 -- 131 inches

2009-10 -- 118 inches*

*To date

Source: National Weather Service (figures rounded to nearest inch)

Flagstaff is beating most U.S. cities large and small this year for snowfall, having already surpassed the average snowfall for an entire winter of 109 inches.

There has been 118 inches of snow -- nearly 10 feet -- here so far. The normal through Feb. 22 is 72 inches.

This is only the third winter in the past 11 that has seen Flagstaff top the 30-year average.

March is typically Flagstaff's most snow-filled month, however, and national forecasters are giving better-

than-average odds of more precipitation next month.

Among cities over 100,000 in population, Syracuse, N.Y., leads the list. But its 86 inches to date is nearly 3 feet less than Flagstaff, a city of about 60,000, has received.

Flagstaff has already broken one record this winter, said National Weather Service meteorologist Justin Johndrow: 78 consecutive days with 6 inches of snow on the ground, as measured by whether there is snow of that depth covering more than half of a piece of ground at the Flagstaff airport.

He's forecasting a weak storm that could bring some snow tonight, and a slightly stronger storm for the coming weekend.

"That one has the chance to be more significant than the midweek," he said of the forecast weekend storm.

Hardest hit in this last one was the North Kaibab, with Jacob Lake receiving 18 inches of snow from Sunday night to Monday morning. An employee at the Jacob Lake Inn reported about 2 feet from Saturday night to Sunday morning.

Snowfall in Flagstaff ranged from 5 inches to 9 inches, with 8.6 inches at Flagstaff Pulliam Airport.

Official record-keeping on Flagstaff's weather began on September 9, 1898, and a 30-year period ending in 2000 has been used in the last decade to determine what is average weather-wise.

In that case, the 30-year average for the city's snowfall is 109 inches, or 9 feet, due partly to heavy snow years in the 1970s and 1980s.

Tallying all the winters since 1899, the area averages 7 feet of snow per winter -- about 84 inches.

Flagstaff last beat both averages in the winter of 2004-2005.

Flagstaff averages 198 days annually of what the National Weather Service considers the snowfall season. It begins Oct. 24, on average, and typically ends May 9.

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