

**West Virginia Climate Summary, August 2006:  
A Hot Month With Highly Variable Rainfall**

West Virginia experienced its 11<sup>th</sup>-hottest August during the 112-year period of record, according to preliminary data provided by the National Climatic Data Center. However, it was not quite as hot as a year ago, which ranked as the 10<sup>th</sup>-hottest August. In August 2006, heat was especially pronounced in southwestern West Virginia, where monthly temperatures averaged more than 4°F above normal in Huntington and Charleston. For many locations the heat peaked early in the month, when readings soared to 98°F (on August 3) in both Huntington and Martinsburg. Later, however, there were a few brief cool spells. On August 13, for example, temperatures dipped below 50°F in locations such as Martinsburg (48°F) and Elkins (49°F).

Excluding southeastern West Virginia, much of the state endured a long spell of mostly dry weather until late August. From July 6 - August 25, a period of 51 days, Martinsburg netted rainfall totaling just 0.65 inch, followed by a 2.69-inch downpour on August 26. More than 75 percent of the month's rain fell from August 27-31 in locations such as Charleston (4.52 of 5.78 inches) and Huntington (4.27 of 4.89 inches). Beckley was wetter throughout the month, including a 3.06-inch deluge on August 7, en route to a monthly total of 8.04 inches. It was Beckley's second-wettest August on record behind a 9.09-inch sum in 1940. Scattered thunderstorms were reported across the Mountain State on several days, but some of the most vicious convection occurred on August 30, when a few Kanawha County vehicles were dented by baseball-size hail (up to 2.75 inches in diameter). In addition, a possible tornado was noted in Kanawha County, while a wind gust to 54 m.p.h. was clocked at Yeager Airport in Charleston. Farther west, 3.25 inches of rain pounded Huntington on the 30<sup>th</sup>. However, in areas bypassed by late-month showers, August totals were quite low. In fact, Elkins (1.78 inches) posted its 10<sup>th</sup>-lowest August total and had its driest August since 1981, when 1.72 inches fell. At month's end, Tropical Storm Ernesto made landfall near Cape Fear, North Carolina, and was poised to bring heavy rain and gusty winds to parts of West Virginia.

**Preliminary Station Data, August 2006\***  
*Temperatures (°F), Precipitation (Inches), and Departures from Normal*

| <u>WV Station</u>  | <u>Avg</u> | <u>Dep</u> | <u>Hi / Lo Temp (Dates)</u>   | <u>Pcpn</u> | <u>Dep.</u> | <u>% of Nml</u> |
|--------------------|------------|------------|---|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Beckley            | 70.6       | +1.3       | 88 (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) / 53 (13 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> ) | 8.04        | +4.59       | 233             |
| Bluefield          | 74.0       | +3.2       | 89 (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> ) / 57 (16 <sup>th</sup> )  | 5.77        | +2.57       | 180             |
| Charleston         | 76.9       | +4.3       | 96 (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) / 57 (16 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> )                                       | 5.78        | +1.67       | 141             |
| Elkins             | 70.4       | +1.9       | 90 (25 <sup>th</sup> ) / 49 (13 <sup>th</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> )                                      | 1.78        | -2.48       | 42              |
| Huntington         | 78.0       | +4.1       | 98 (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) / 58 (23 <sup>rd</sup> )  | 4.89        | +1.01       | 126             |
| Martinsburg        | 75.3       | +0.6       | 98 (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) / 48 (13 <sup>th</sup> )  | 2.97        | -0.43       | 87              |
| Parkersburg        | 74.9       | +1.6       | 95 (2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) / 54 (21 <sup>st</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> )                     | 4.45        | +0.07       | 102             |
| <br>               |            |            |   |             |             |                 |
| <u>Nearby Stns</u> | <u>Avg</u> | <u>Dep</u> | <u>Hi / Lo Temp (Dates)</u>   | <u>Pcpn</u> | <u>Dep.</u> | <u>% of Nml</u> |
| Pittsburgh, PA     | 72.8       | +1.8       | 91 (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) / 51 (13 <sup>th</sup> )                      | 1.60        | -1.78       | 47              |
| Blacksburg, VA     | 72.3       | +2.7       | 90 (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) / 53 (13 <sup>th</sup> )                      | 3.66        | -0.02       | 99              |
| Jackson, KY        | 77.6       | +3.8       | 97 (2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) / 58 (23 <sup>rd</sup> )  | 3.69        | -0.44       | 89              |

\* Preliminary station data were supplied by National Weather Service offices in Blacksburg, VA, Charleston, WV, Pittsburgh, PA, Sterling, VA, and Jackson, KY. Compiled by Brad Rippey, Agricultural Meteorologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture.