

Changing spring climate should put Nebraskans on alert

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Severe Weather Awareness Week starts Monday.

As Nebraska moves into spring, National Weather Service officials remind residents of Severe Weather Awareness Week, March 24-28.

“It’s been cold and dry so far but spring snows, rain and severe weather will come as the temperatures warm and seasons transition,” said Michael Moritz, NWS warning coordination meteorologist in Hastings. “Each year brings its own unique challenges so now is the time to take this opportunity to prepare, even for just a few minutes. It could cost us all in the end.”

The statewide tornado warning drill is set for March 26.

Although last year’s tornado season was below the 30-year average of 54, Moritz said 49 were reported throughout the state.

The first happened on March 19 with a brief landspout tornado that touched down near Shelton.

Moritz said April 8 and 9 were active wind and hail days.

“The severe weather took a break and a rare and historic early May snow was reported across parts of central and eastern Nebraska on the first and second,” he said.

Severe weather really took off May 17-19 and also the week of May 24-30.

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Typically, Moritz said June is the peak month for tornadoes. However last year, a peak of 23 tornadoes occurred in May with only nine in June.

Four tornadoes were reported in August.

That tally was close to the long-term average of six. However he said a second peak of nine tornadoes occurred in October.

Notably, Moritz said the only EF4 tornado (fifth highest for wind speed and damage on the Fujita scale) for the year occurred on Oct. 4 in Wayne.

Moritz noted that social media has grown tremendously over the last few years.

As a result, each NWS office strives to have a strong presence on both Facebook and Twitter.

For more information, go to the NWS home page at www.crh.noaa.gov.vvv

2013 STATE TORNADO FACTS	
Tornadoes.....	49
Deaths.....	0
Injuries.....	17*
Longest track.....	19 miles
Greatest width.....	1.29 miles
Strongest.....	EF4
Most in a county.....	4 (Clay County)
Days with one or more.....	17
Most in one day.....	10
Most active hour.....	13 each (From 3-4 p.m. and 4-5 p.m.)
Most in one month (May).....	23
First of the year.....	March 10
Last of the year.....	Oct. 4
*15 in Wayne and 2 in Macy during an Oct. 4 tornado that also the strongest with the widest track and greatest width	
Source: National Weather Service	