



Celebrating the Mesonet's 20th Anniversary

—by Stephanie Bowen

FOR 20 YEARS, the Mesonet has been providing quality weather data to Oklahomans. We are excited to be celebrating our anniversary at the National Weather Festival on November 1, 2014 in Norman, Okla.

The National Weather Festival, hosted at the National Weather Center, is an annual open house that is free to the public. It features a variety of weather-related organizations including the Mesonet and the National Weather Service Norman Forecast Office. Activities include hourly weather balloon launches with local TV meteorologists, emergency response vehicle and equipment displays, meet and greet with the weather superheroes, and various children's activities around the building.

The Oklahoma Mesonet will be set up on the east side of the National Weather Center parking lot next to the Mesonet tower. We have invited our partners to show Mesonet's impact across the state. The Oklahoma Forestry Department will be set up with their fire dozer and Smoky the Bear. Also, agencies like the Oklahoma Wheat Commission and the

Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association will be joining us. Stop by, visit with us, and get some delicious recipes from these organizations.

To celebrate our anniversary, the Mesonet will have 20th anniversary cookies and hot chocolate to share with our visitors at the National Weather Festival. Make sure to visit the Mesonet table, and pick up a Mesonet chip clip, pen and brochure, too.

If you are on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#), like or follow us to learn some interesting Mesonet facts. The Mesonet will be posting its top 20 extreme weather observations on weekdays during the month of October to lead up to the celebration on November 1.

The Mesonet hopes to see you at National Weather Festival from 10 am to 2 pm on November 1, 2014 at the National Weather Center. If you have any questions about the event, call us at 405-325-2541. ■



MESONET IN PICTURES

OK-First Training Class

- The Mesonet's OK-First Program is an outreach program of the Oklahoma Mesonet that provides Oklahoma's public safety officials with weather education and access to critical real-time weather data. Since beginning in 1996, OK-First has trained more than a thousand public safety officials and currently has more than 200 agencies participating in the program. Pictured below are graduates of our OK-First Certification class, as well as Mesonet instructors James Hocker and Andrea Melvin, from a September 2014 class held in Norman, Okla.



OK-First Weather Briefing Page

- The Mesonet's OK-First Program has an updated website with a new weather briefing page for community officials and emergency managers. The weather briefing page allows users to choose which data they would like to view and the number of panels they want displayed. It gives users more freedom to determine which tools and data are best for them to make timely decisions for their community.

The screenshot displays the Mesonet OK-First Weather Briefing Page interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: **OK-FIRST**, **WX Hazard**, **WX Data**, and **My Products**. A search bar and the Mesonet logo are on the right. The main content area is divided into four panels:

- 3-hr Rainfall (inches):** Shows a map of Oklahoma with rainfall data. A legend indicates data availability and includes a color scale for rainfall amounts (0.01 to 3.00 inches). The map shows various rainfall values across the state, with a timestamp of 4:10 PM May 27, 2014 CDT.
- OK-1 Radar Console:** Displays radar data for KTLX Oklahoma City. The map shows radar returns with a color scale from blue (light) to red (heavy). The timestamp is 5/27/14 4:17 PM.
- Oklahoma Flood Advisories:** Shows a map of Oklahoma with flood advisories. A legend lists categories: Flood Advisory, Areal Flood Advisory, Flood Watch, Areal Flood Watch, Flood Warning, Areal Flood Warning, Flash Flood Watch, and Flash Flood Warning. The timestamp is 4:17 PM May 27, 2014 CDT.
- NWS 3 Hour Flash Flood Guidance:** Shows a map of Oklahoma with flash flood guidance. A legend lists categories: Flood Advisory, Areal Flood Advisory, Flood Watch, Areal Flood Watch, Flood Warning, Areal Flood Warning, Flash Flood Watch, and Flash Flood Warning. The map is titled "National Weather Service Arkansas-Red Basin River Forecast Center 3 Hour Flash Flood Guidance" and is updated as of May 27, 2014 3:45 PM CDT. A color scale at the bottom ranges from $\leq 0.6''$ to >5.0''.

Update *****Apr 05, 2013 8:40am*****Normal message regarding updates or news*****Cleveland County*****

New Improvements to OK-First Program

—by Stephanie Bowen

THE MESONET HAS BEEN BUSY implementing program improvements for our OK-First outreach program this year. Working together, the Mesonet and the OK-First Advisory Committee annually review the program for ways to better serve the community.

“The goal of OK-First since it began in 1996 was to empower public safety officials by providing high quality weather and radar data for use during high impact events,” said James Hocker, OK-First Program Manager. “But it’s not just about blindly creating tools and assuming they will work for our users. We use the opposite approach and have since the very beginning - the direction of OK-First tools, websites, and training is driven by our participants.”

The OK-First Advisory committee consists of 15 program participants from agencies including law enforcement, fire, emergency management, tribal, schools, state agencies, and federal agencies.

“Having this group of users review OK-First annually has been instrumental in moving us forward and ensures that improvements are in tune with the needs of Oklahoma’s public safety community,” Hocker said. “We are really excited about the program improvements we have been implementing this year. It’s a fairly long list and includes a new website, training requirements for all of our participants, individual user accounts, online class capability, and certification testing. What we’re perhaps the most proud of is the fact that all of these changes have been encouraged and inspired by participants in OK-First.”

One of the big changes for the OK-First participant website is a new weather briefing page that allows the user to choose the data they want to view in multiple windows.

“The concept for our new weather briefing page came from the popularity of the 4-panel page on our old site,” Hocker said. “When we started to design the new site, we asked our users a lot of questions, and quickly found that we needed to take that 4-panel concept to the next level. What we ultimately designed was a completely customizable, multi-panel page where we gave the user complete freedom to select the number of panels they needed as well as what was showing on each.”

The new training tools are being implemented during this fall training season. Hocker is on the road this fall giving classes to community decision makers across the state. Positive feedback is being received with the new program improvements and training.

“I have never had a class like this,” said an OK-First participant in one of the fall trainings. “I learned more in four days than I have learned in almost my entire undergraduate career. The level of training was way more than expected. Great Job!”

If you are a decision maker in your community or know someone that is and would like to sign up for OK-First, contact James Hocker at jhocker@mesonet.org. ■

Below: The OK-First Advisory Committee meets once a year to review the program and find ways to better serve the Oklahoma public safety community using the Mesonet.





Dry September Diminishes Drought Recovery

By Gary McManus, State Climatologist

SEPTEMBER WRAP-UP

Hopes were high for much-needed rainfall across Oklahoma after August's disappointing totals. June and July were exceedingly wet, lending optimism that August's step back would be but a brief interruption. Unfortunately, that script did not play out as written and September became yet another dry month in the now four-year-old drought. According to preliminary data from the Oklahoma Mesonet, the statewide average rainfall total was 2.6 inches, 1.3 inches below normal and the 46th driest September since records began in 1895. Of the 48 months since the drought began back in October 2010, 34 have been drier than normal, amounting to a deficit of over 30 inches during that span. Hugo led all Mesonet sites with 8.7 inches of rain during September while Buffalo received a scant 0.3 inches. August and September combined for a statewide average of 3.9 inches, 2.6 inches below normal and the 22nd driest August-September on record in the state. Much of the state had less than 4 inches of rain throughout the two months, with many of the stations across western Oklahoma receiving less than 2 inches. The January-September statewide average reflected the dry start to the year, coming in at 21.7 inches, 6.7 inches below normal and the 18th driest such period on record.

Not surprisingly, temperatures across the state were a bit above normal with the lack of rainfall and accompanying storm systems. The statewide average as measured by the Mesonet was 73.1 degrees, 0.7 degrees above normal and the 63rd warmest September on record. Grandfield led all Mesonet sites with 102 degrees on Sept. 1. The lowest temperature of the month was 40 degrees from several locations on the 12th and 13th. The August-September temperature was also 76.9 degrees and 0.5 degrees above normal. The first nine months of the year were substantially cooler, again a reflection of the chilly winter through early spring as well as the below normal temperatures of June and July. The January-September statewide average temperature was 61.9 degrees, 1.1 degrees below normal and ranked as the 21st coolest such period on record.

The last U.S. Drought Monitor report of the month, released on Sept. 25, gave a clear indication that drought was once again gaining strength. Drought impacts began to worsen across most of western and northern Oklahoma where farm ponds, vegetation and soils showed increasing signs of water stress. By the end of September, more than 49 percent of the state was considered in at least "severe" drought, and 14 percent of that area was in the more significant "extreme" and "exceptional" drought categories. The Drought Monitor's intensity scale slides from moderate-severe-extreme-exceptional, with exceptional being the worst classification. Soil moisture appeared to be critically low across much of the western half of the state according to data from the Oklahoma Mesonet, including the important wheat-producing north central region. The Oklahoma Field Office of the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) reported 54 percent of the state's topsoil and 77 percent of the subsoil to be in "short" or "very short" condition. Eighty percent of the state's pastures and rangeland were rated from "fair" to "excellent," a benefit of the rains that occurred from late May through July.

46th DRIEST

September since records began in 1895

2.6"

average statewide precipitation for September

73.1°F

average statewide temperature for September

49 PERCENT

of the state in at least severe drought according to the U.S. Drought Monitor on September 25

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- ▶ 2nd: OK-First Re-certification Class, Ardmore
- ▶ 13th-19th: OK-First Online Re-certification Class, new website
- ▶ 13th-19th: OK-First Online Re-certification Class, dual-pol radar
- ▶ 14th: OK-FIRE Workshop, Ardmore
- ▶ 22nd-23rd: OK Governor's Water Conference & Institute, OKC
- ▶ 22nd: Canadian County Master Gardener Training, Norman
- ▶ 28th: A Sooner and Cowboy Success Story: The Oklahoma Mesonet for OU's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
- ▶ 29th: OK-FIRE Workshop, Bartlesville, OK
- ▶ 30th: OK-First Advisory Committee Meeting, Norman

NOVEMBER

- ▶ 1st: Oklahoma Mesonet 20th Anniversary Celebration at National Weather Festival, National Weather Center, Norman
- ▶ 4th-5th: Oklahoma Ag Expo, Midwest City
- ▶ 11th: OK-FIRE Workshop, Woodward, OK
- ▶ 14th-15th: Oklahoma Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Tulsa
- ▶ 18th: OSU Science Cafe Forum, Stillwater

CONTACTS

Accessing recent (within the past 7 days)
Mesonet data

Contact: [Mesonet Operator](#)

Instrumentation, telecommunications, or
other technical specifications

Contact: [Chris Fiebrich](#)

Mesonet agricultural data and products

Contact: [Al Sutherland](#)

Mesonet meteorological data

Contact: [OCS Data Requests](#)

Earthstorm - K-12 educational outreach

Contact: [Andrea Melvin](#)

OK-First - Public safety outreach

Contact: [James Hocker](#)

OK-FIRE - Fire management outreach

Contact: [J.D. Carlson](#)

Not sure?

Contact: 405-325-2541 or [Chris Fiebrich](#).

Tweet of the Month

@AltusReady - Sept 23 - Happy to have @OKmesonet in #AltusOK today for training!

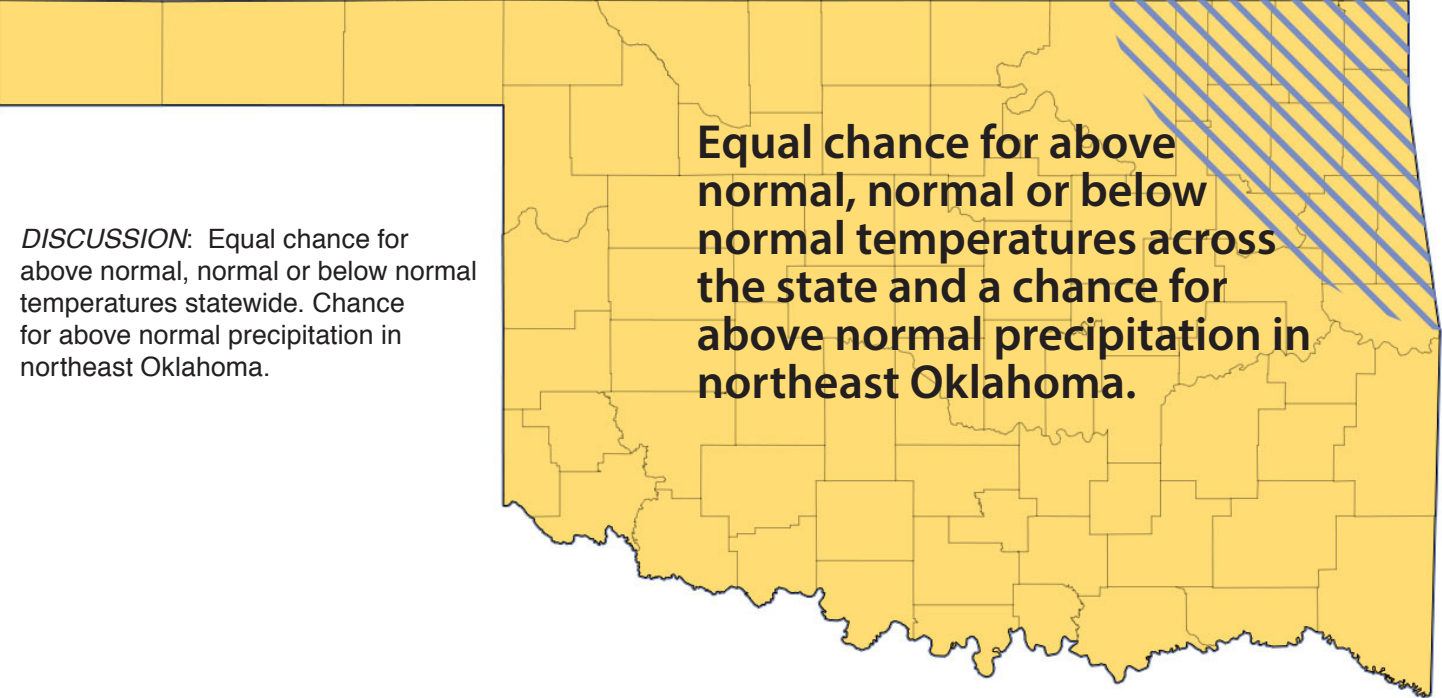
Find us on



FORECAST FOR OCTOBER

[Click here to view the original maps from the Climate Prediction Center.](#)

DISCUSSION: Equal chance for above normal, normal or below normal temperatures statewide. Chance for above normal precipitation in northeast Oklahoma.



Equal chance for above normal, normal or below normal temperatures across the state and a chance for above normal precipitation in northeast Oklahoma.