

New state temperature record set in 2012

As South Carolina is preparing to turn the calendar to 2013 in a few weeks, it was announced that 2012 will go down in South Carolina's weather history. According to Hope Mizzell, Ph.D., SC State Climatologist, "To be exact, record warmth on June 29, 2012, is the highlighted event. The temperature observation of 113 F recorded that day at the Columbia University of South Carolina National Weather Service (NWS) Cooperative site has been approved as the new state of South Carolina record maximum temperature. This value breaks the long-standing record of 111 F first set on September 4, 1925, at Blackville, at Calhoun Falls on September 8, 1925, and tied at Camden on June 27, 1954. South Carolina's first state temperature record was recognized in 1887, 125 years ago."

According to Wes Tyler, Assistant State Climatologist, who conducted the record temperature evaluation, "It was the state's responsibility to verify the integrity of the observation by presenting a clear understanding of how the value was observed and whether guidelines for instrumentation accuracy, placement and exposure were met. The findings were then presented to the State Climate Extremes Committee to identify the observations authenticity."

Leonard Vaughan, Meteorologist, Columbia NWS, stated "The heatwave that occurred on June 29th and 30th was a rare event. The meteorological conditions included a strong ridge of high pressure extending from the Tennessee Valley into the Carolinas which produced a large area of sinking air across the region. When air sinks it compresses causing even warmer temperatures at the surface. The air mass was also rather dry for late June. These conditions led to the record breaking event."

The investigative process required multiple site visits, observer and administrative interviews, analysis from on-site environmental monitors, and station history. The findings were presented to members of the State Climate Extremes Committee which is comprised of the National Weather Service Eastern Region, the NOAA Southeast Regional Climate Center, the National Climatic Data Center, the Columbia National Weather Service, and the SC State Climatology Office. The committee recommended accepting the value which was then presented to Thomas Karl, Director, NOAA National Climatic Data Center for his endorsement as South Carolina's new maximum temperature record. The complete report can be accessed online at:

<http://www.dnr.sc.gov/climate/sco/Publications/SCStateTemperatureRecord2012.pdf>

For additional information contact: Hope Mizzell, SC State Climatologist, (803) 734-9568; Wes Tyler, Assistant State Climatologist for Service, (803) 734-9091; Leonard Vaughan, Meteorologist, Columbia, NWS, (803) 822-8135 or Katy Vincent, Communications Coordinator, NCDC, (828) 257-3136.



Photo (left): Columbia University of South Carolina Cooperative station, located in Richland County in the central part of the State.