

THE ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR

Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management

ARBCON Celebrates 30 Years

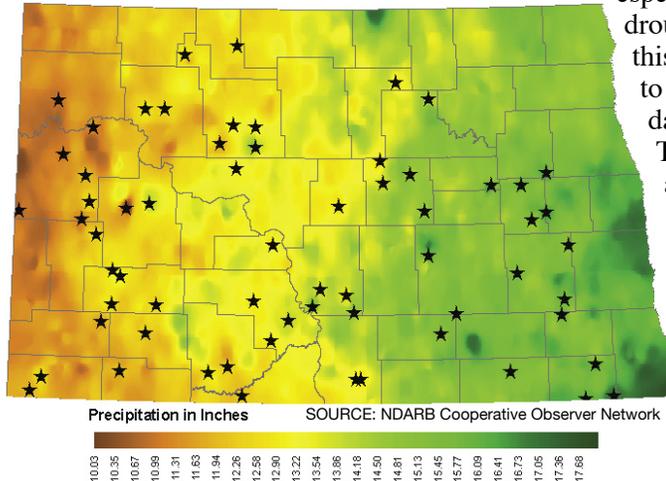
By Daniel Brothers

The end of September brought to a close the 30th year volunteers have been collecting precipitation data for the Atmospheric Resource Board Cooperative Observer Network (ARBCON). The 30th anniversary of ARB-CON brings with it some exciting new changes and opportunities for the network. Why is the 30-year milestone important? Data such as precipitation averaged over a 30-year period is considered the climatological normal by the National Climatic Data Center. This means that in order to obtain a true average you need 30 years of measurements.

One new component of ARB-CON will be the start of a service recognition program. Every observer that reaches 10, 20, or 30 years of reporting will receive a certificate acknowledging their commitment to ARBCON. This year everyone who has reported for at least ten years will receive a certificate. In addition, special recognition will be given to 10, 20, and 30 year observers on the ARB website. Those volunteers who have reported all 30 years will be the inaugural members of the ARBCON Hall of Fame. There are an astounding 70 volunteers in this group.

Now that a 30-year data set exists, monthly and seasonal average rainfall maps can be developed. This will allow for many other products, such as percent of normal rainfall maps and average number of days with precipitation, to be produced

April to September 30-Year Average Rainfall
With 30-Year ARBCON Observers



for each month and season.

As a result of the ARBCON 30th anniversary, there will be changes on the website under the ARBCON section. While the rainfall maps and Internet reporting will remain, additions will be made to the site. The average rainfall maps will be added, as well as the service recognition for ARBCON observers. There will also be sections added for ARBCON-related news and links to the reporting procedures for volunteers in the network.

ARBCON observers also completed their first year of Internet reporting in 2006. The system worked very well this year, and hopefully the number of internet reporters can be expanded for next year. Internet reporting is very helpful in relaying the precipitation data to Bismarck in a quick and efficient manner. Volunteers who report via the Internet will no longer have to fill out monthly postcards and send them to Bismarck. This allows for quicker access

to the data for the public and was especially useful in assessing the drought during the summer. Before this year, it would have taken up to a month before precipitation data would have been available. This year, data was immediately available for those areas which had observers reporting via the Internet.

The information collected by ARBCON is used by many local, state, and federal government offices, as well as private companies, universities for a number of research applications, and students from elementary school to high school.

Information from the ARBCON database is available on the Internet at <http://swc.nd.gov/arb>. Monthly and seasonal rainfall maps from 1977 through 2006 are available, as well as daily rain and hail data. You can also contact the ARB office at 1-800-654-5981 for information or questions about ARBCON. If you would like to become a volunteer observer you can call the above number or e-mail us at dabrothers@nd.gov.

Thank you to all the observers who have helped make ARBCON as successful as it has been. We look forward to many more years of cooperation with the many volunteers throughout the state.

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