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2011 is year of extremes

by Melinda McCutchen,
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The first month of 2011 brought Coke County snow and ice, but the remainder of the year has brought extreme heat, extreme drought conditions and extreme fire danger.

It seems like pictures of fire, smoke or helicopters dumping water have been the mainstay of the front page of the Observer/Enterprise since April. The June 24th issue included a map showing where over 30% of Coke County had burned. Since that issue, the Malone Fire contributed another 2,000 acres to the totals.

Fire is the result, but high temperatures and little rain are the underlying factors. We are nearing the record number of 100+ degree days in one year. That record was set in 1969 at 60 days. In second place with 52 days was 1960, and third place with 49 days was 1962. There were 42 days of 100+ degree heat in 2010. 2010 took the top spot for most consecutive days of 100+ degree heat with 26 (July 30 to August 24). There were 18 days of these temperatures from June 18 to July 5, 1969. As of presstime, we have had 48 days of 100+ degree heat and the 10-day forecast shows highs ranging from 104 degrees to 106 degrees. That puts us at 58 days of 100+ degree heat on July 23. According to a spokesman with the San Angelo office of the National Weather Service, "We will kill that record by the end of July".

The heat wouldn't be so hard to handle if it were broken up by days with rainfall.

County Rainfall Totals													
Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total for Year
Dee & Dessie Kendall • Edith Area													
2008	0.0	0.00	3.50	2.30	3.85	3.00	1.50	6.40	1.75	1.80	0.00	0.00	24.10
2009	0.0	0.00	1.50	1.20	2.60	3.55	4.25	0.45	2.60	1.50	0.00	2.75	20.80
2010	NA	NA	NA	3.70	4.50	0.90	5.40	0.20	5.10	0.60	0.00	0.90	29.90
2011	0.0	0.09	0.10	0.0	0.10	0.40							0.69
Dolores McCabe Seal • Divide Area													
2008	0.25	0.10	2.89	1.64	2.33	2.00	2.88	4.95	2.17	1.18	0.00	0.00	20.39
2009	0.07	0.45	1.54	1.54	0.97	6.39	4.25	2.00	1.68	2.11	0.19	2.78	23.97
2010	2.24	3.00	2.11	4.21	2.99	1.44	6.51	0.50	4.62	0.64	0.00	0.68	29.04
2011	0.05	0.65	0.10	0.00	0.52	0.86							2.18
Bobby & Jeffie Roberts • Valley View Area													
2008	0.06	0.60	3.29	1.92	2.41	2.15	0.52	6.01	1.73	1.60	0.01	0.01	20.31
2009	0.05	0.04	1.50	2.10	2.90	1.57	4.11	0.85	3.17	1.84	0.02	2.10	20.25
2010	2.03	2.69	1.02	2.78	4.71	3.01	4.41	0.07	5.90	0.90	0.00	0.70	28.22
2011	0.23	0.60	0.16	0.0	1.10	0.01							2.10
Fran Sonnenberg • 3 miles East of Bronte													
2008	0.30	1.00	5.70	3.10	1.10	3.00	0.95	7.92	2.16	1.28	0.00	0.00	26.51
2009	0.00	0.45	1.47	1.48	1.75	1.36	5.84	0.45	1.75	3.10	0.04	2.31	20.00
2010	3.68	3.09	1.92	2.11	4.33	2.20	4.33	0.75	5.50	1.25	0.05	1.00	30.21
2011	0.12	0.80	0.10	0.10	0.55	0.02							1.69
Charles & Dorris Sonnenberg • Bronte Area													
2008	0.26	0.67	4.02	1.51	1.09	2.14	0.47	8.43	2.05	1.25	0.00	0.00	21.89
2009	0.09	0.48	1.50	1.95	1.26	1.75	5.40	0.22	1.11	2.52	0.06	2.16	18.94
2010	3.76	3.17	2.07	2.45	3.74	2.19	3.27	0.15	6.69	1.13	0.00	1.25	29.87
2011	0.14	0.72	0.07	0.03	1.20	0.02							2.18
Paul Sheffler • 7 Mile Hill													
2010	NA	NA	NA	4.00	3.67	3.02	4.66	0.21	6.65	0.94	0.00	1.10	33.56
2011	0.15	0.65	0.05	0.0	1.24	0.0							2.09
Wayne & Melinda McCutchen • 3 miles North of Bronte													
2008	0.00	0.90	5.10	2.90	1.45	1.65	0.30	7.80	2.30	2.20	0.00	0.00	24.60
2009	0.00	0.60	1.50	1.80	1.35	2.20	5.00	0.40	0.68	2.52	0.15	2.20	18.40
2010	3.54	3.43	1.78	2.87	3.69	4.09	3.43	0.00	5.20	1.34	0.00	1.02	30.39
2011	0.23	0.45	0.15	0.0	0.99	0.04							1.86
Jerry & Susan Wellborn • 12 miles West of Robert Lee													
2010	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4.35	0.50	5.20	1.25	0.00	1.10	25.45
2011	0.25	0.0	0.10	0.0	0.40	0.30							1.05

However, that hasn't been the case this year. The table on this page traces monthly rainfall from January of 2008 to June of 2011 for different areas of our county. So far this year, the average rainfall total for the period of January through June is

1.73". That is 14% of the rainfall totals of the previous three year average of 12.02". The average of the Observer/Enterprise's rainfall contributors for July of 2010 through June of 2011 is only 13.86" inches. Over the last three years, the yearly aver-

age stood at 24.31". If you remove July, August and September of 2010, the average total for the last nine months is only 3.71". We would need 20.60" in July, August, and September to meet our normal 12 month average of 24.31". We, as a

county, need to continue to pray for rain.

Also, with these dry conditions, everyone needs to be extremely careful to guard against starting a fire. The current burn ban prohibits all outside burning or open flames within Coke County.

Robert Lee Pool should reopen today

The swimming pool in the Coke County Park in Robert Lee was closed last week by inspectors with the Health Department. Acid levels in the pool failed the annual test and the pool was forced to close.

To remedy this situation, half the water from the pool had to be drained and replaced with fresh water. The water drained was used to fill tankers needed to fight

last week's Malone Fire and also to water the football field at Robert Lee ISD.

Robert Lee City officials have agreed to let Coke County have the necessary water to refill the pool.

According to Coke County Judge Roy Blair, the pool should open today (Friday).

Genealogy meeting set

The next Coke County Genealogy Society meeting will be Monday, July 18, at 6 pm at the Coke County

Library in Robert Lee. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Robert Lee Adult/Child Golf Scramble continues

Wednesday, July 6, was the 4th week of the 5 Week, 6-Hole, Adult/Child Scramble at Mountain Creek Golf Course. The kids from previous weeks came back, along with new kids to enjoy the scramble. These young golfers were excited and many

will be back next week. We encourage the parents to stay and watch their golfer enjoy this experience.

For more information call 325-453-2317.

Emergency Grazing for CRP

Coke County has been approved for emergency grazing on certain CRP acres. Some of the CRP practices are not eligible to graze. Producers with CRP acres need to come in to the

Coke County FSA Office to see if their CRP acres are eligible for this emergency grazing. Producers will be required to give up 25% of their 2011 annual CRP payment.

Please contact Coke County FSA for more information.

Pee Wee football sign-up to begin

If any parents are interested in their childrens participating in Pee Wee football (2nd grade - 6th grade), please call C.R. Tijerino at 656-3822.