



# National Weather Service

## Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



April 1997

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons Killed	Injured	Estimated Damage Property	Crops	Character of Storm
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### NORTH DAKOTA, Central and West

NDZ003

**Renville**

**04 1800CST**  
**07 0400CST**

**0      0**

**Blizzard**

Warm weather the first 3 days of April lead much of North Dakota to believe that spring had arrived with temperatures in the 60s and 70s. Mother Nature had other plans. A very strong area of low pressure moved out of the Colorado area into the northern plains. Warm moist air ahead of the low collided with cold air coming down from Canada. The result was the worst blizzard of the season for North Dakota, bringing much of the state to a complete halt. The precipitation began to fall during the afternoon of the 4th(Fri), as rain in the east and freezing rain or sleet in the west. By Friday evening the freezing rain and sleet had changed over to all snow in the west. By Saturday afternoon the heavy snow moved into the central part of the state, reaching the eastern part of North Dakota later that night. Snow acculations were on average 1.5 to 2 inches an hour with 50-60 mph winds as well. The blizzard ended in the west on the morning of the 6th(Sun), but continued into the evening across the east. Some snow amounts include 16 inches at Jamestown and New Salem, 17 at Bismarck and Center, 18 at Dickinson and Washburn, 20 at Hebron, Carson and New England, 22.5 at Mott and 24 inches at Bowman. The additional snow at Bismarck brought the season snowfall total to 101.4 inches, which set an all time record. The old record was 91.8 inches. In Jamestown, they received 1.62 inches of rain before changing over to snow. After the devastating January blizzards, this was the storm that may have broke the back of many of the state's ranchers. An estimated 100,000 head of cattle(10% of the state's heard) was lost, with a large percentage of that being calves and yearlings. Estimated dollar loss is well over 5 million dollars. An estimated 21.5 million dollars worth of damage was done to farm buildings that collapsed under the weight of the heavy snow. Because of the closed roads, an estimated 200,000 pounds of milk had to be dumped when the trucks couldn't make it to pick up the milk. The dairy company that was supposed to pick up the milk also suffered damages. The roof collapsed under the heavy load, killing 40 dairy cows and injuring 45 others. Many power poles fell from the weight of the ice and snow combined with the strong winds. Its estimated that over 3000 wooden poles had to be replaced, with one power company reporting about 100 steel towers damaged or destroyed with over 200 miles of transmission line down. An estimated 75,000 homes were without power for sometime over the weekend, with a few houses having to wait 4-5 days before power was fully restored. The state's electrical grid was in such patch work condition that the governor requested that people conserve as much energy as possible for fear of overtaxing the system and creating a widespread brownout. On a 22 mile stretch in Stutsman Co, there were 67 power poles that were destroyed. National Guard helicopters were used to help power companies assess the damage done to power poles and lines. With the widespread power outages, many people had to resort to burning wood or running gas powered generators to keep their homes warm. This lead to a few reports of carbon monoxide poisoning. A 46 yr old man died in LaMoure Co. after becoming overcome with carbon monoxide fumes in his shop. Numerous vehicles were stranded in and out of towns, as well as people. A coal mine crew in Mercer county was stranded in their dragline. Drifts as high as 15 feet were common. I-94, I-29 and all other major highways in the state were closed for the weekend. In Oliver Co, it took 13 hours to open up a 5 mile stretch of road. In Kidder Co, a dramatic rescue took place to save the life of a farmer that had a heart attack. With all major roads drifted shut to the farmhouse, neighbors and county crews pitched in to save the mans life. County plows were able to get within 5 miles of the farmhouse, but couldn't go any farther. Neighbors with 4x4 tractors then pulled the ambulance and road plows through the snow to get to the farmyard. It took 10 hours to reach the man, and luckily he is still alive. A 64 yr old Kintyre(Emmons Co) man didn't fare so well. He also had a heart attack, but because of the closed roads and zero visibility, the rescue crews couldn't reach him in time.



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### NORTH DAKOTA, Central and West

**NDZ003>005-010>013-017>023-025-031>037-040>048-050>051**      **Renville - Bottineau - Rolette - Mountrail - Ward - Mchenry - Pierce - Mckenzie - Dunn - Mercer - Oliver - Mclean - Sheridan - Wells - Foster - Golden Valley - Billings - Stark - Morton - Burleigh - Kidder - Stutsman - Slope - Hettinger - Grant - Bowman - Adams - Sioux - Emmons - Logan - La Moure - Mcintosh - Dickey**

<b>04</b>	<b>1800CST</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>44.7M</b>	<b>Blizzard</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>0400CST</b>				

Warm weather the first three days of April lead much of North Dakota to believe that spring had arrived with temperatures in the 60s and 70s. Mother Nature had other plans. A very strong area of low pressure moved out of the Colorado area into the northern plains. Warm moist air ahead of the low collided with cold air coming down from Canada. The result was the worst blizzard of the season for North Dakota, bringing much of the state to a complete halt. The precipitation began to fall during the afternoon of the 4th (Friday), as rain in the east and freezing rain or sleet in the west. By Friday evening the freezing rain and sleet had changed over to all snow in the west. By Saturday afternoon the heavy snow moved into the central part of the state, reaching the eastern part of North Dakota later that night. Snow accumulations were on average 1.5 to 2 inches an hour with 50 to 60 mph winds as well. The blizzard ended in the west on the morning of the 6th (Sunday), but continued into the evening across the east. The additional snow at Bismarck brought the season snowfall total to 101.4 inches, which set an all time record. The old record was 91.8 inches. In Jamestown, they received 1.62 inches of rain before changing over to snow. After the devastating January blizzards, this was the storm that may have broke the back of many of the state's ranchers. an estimated 100,000 head of cattle(10% of the state's herd) was lost, with a large percentage of that being calves and yearlings. The estimated dollar loss is well over 5 million dollars. An estimated 21.5 million dollars worth of damage was done to farm buildings that collapsed under the weight of the heavy snow. Because of the closed roads, an estimated 200,000 pounds of milk had to be dumped when the trucks couldn't make it to pick up the milk. The dairy company that was supposed to pick up the milk also suffered damages. The roof collapsed under the heavy load, killing 40 dairy cows and injuring 45 others. Many power poles fell from the weight of the ice and snow combined with the strong winds. It's estimated that over 300 wooden poles had to be replaced, with one power company reporting about 100 steel towers damaged or destroyed with over 200 miles of transmission line down. An estimated 75,000 homes were without power for sometime over the weekend, with a few houses having to wait 4-5 days before power was fully restored. The state's electrical grid was in such patch work condition that the governor requested that people conserve as much energy as possible for fear of overtaxing the system and creating a widespread brownout. National Guard helicopters were used to help power companies assess the damage done to power poles and lines. With the widespread power outages, many people had to resort to burning wood or running gas powered generators to keep their homes warm. This lead to a few reports of carbon monoxide poisoning. Numerous vehicles were stranded in and out of towns, as well as people. I-94, I-29, and all other major highways in the state were closed for the weekend. On the 7th(Monday), President Clinton declared North Dakota a disaster area for the 2nd time this winter, freeing up grants and making lo interest loans possible. The effects of the April '97 blizzard will be felt for some time to come. The fear now is that as the snow melts revealing the cattle that perished during the storm, ground water contamination is now possible as cattle decay in the spring sun. Ranchers also fear that the storm may have weakened the surviving cattle and calves to the point that disease may now take over and kill off part of the herd. Property damage dollar amount estimated. M64PH, M46PH