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1-2 snow punch puts year into records 2006-07 snowiest consecutive Decembers in history

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The snow that fell on Fort Collins on Thursday pushed December snowfall to more than double the 30-year average, making it the eighth-snowiest December in 119 years.

With 47 total inches of snow in the last two Decembers, 2006 and 2007 rank as the snowiest consecutive Decembers in the city's recorded weather history, said Nolan Doesken, state climatologist and Colorado State University senior research associate. December 2006 brought 29.3 inches of snow, the second most in recorded history.

The 6 inches that fell on Fort Collins on Thursday made roads slippery, sent workers home early and brought residents out to play.

With snowflakes falling all around, Lesley Clayton and a friend strapped on snowshoes at City Park on Thursday afternoon, preparing to travel across the new-fallen snow on the ground.

"Isn't this gorgeous? We're so blessed," Clayton said. "This makes the best adventures."

The two had walked over from their nearby homes to find untouched powder and chuckled as a Subaru station wagon full of teenage boys whipped past, towing a sled and rider.

Atop the small hill at the park, Chad Allen and Jonah Greene took turns sledding through the powdery snow.

Allen, wearing some borrowed winter gear, was visiting his girlfriend's family and flew in from Charleston, N.C., on Wednesday. The temperature at the airport: 55 degrees.

"It worked," yelled Greene, 14, as Allen blasted through the powder and over their jump.

On the other side of the city, Rick Atkinson went about his work as a U.S. Postal Service letter carrier, though he was wearing shorts.

"It does look kind of silly, walking around all bundled up with shorts on," said Atkinson as he delivered mail on the 500 block of Smith Street. "It's not bad."

Atkinson said he gets hot easily, especially when wearing a hat. He said his legs are usually warm, regardless of the weather.

Thursday, he was sporting rubber galoshes over his shoes, plowing through calf-deep snow in yards. He said he's not worried about the snow because it

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Bradley Wakoff/Loveland Connection

A snow-dusted squirrel pauses on a tree trunk in Loveland.



Michael G. Seamans/The Coloradoan

As snow falls and the thermometer drops to minus 5 degrees Celsius (23 degrees Fahrenheit), Ramiro Harrara works up a sweat Thursday shoveling the walkways outside Well Fargo Bank at 401 S. College Ave in Fort Collins.

The forecast

There's no snow in today's forecast. Highs are expected to get into the mid-20s, but the wind-chill factor could make it feel like it's below zero during the day, according to the

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was very dry and not melting. When things melt and refreeze, he said, his job becomes much harder.

City law requires homeowners to clear off their sidewalks within 24 hours after the snow stops. People who fail to clear their walks may be billed by the city for having a private contractor do the work.

Landscaping companies, which turn to snow removal during the cold weather months, were largely maxed out Thursday, putting in long days and turning away potential new clients.

Richard Rodocker, power equipment general manager at Bath Power Equipment, said he had 10 plows and eight Bobcats running Thursday.

The company has contracts with Foothills Mall, Wellington schools and the Coloradoan. Rodocker sent out crews at 4:30 a.m. Thursday and expected them to be out all day and into the night.

This December has been one of the snowiest in history, but Fort Collins is only slightly above the average snowfall for the year.

As of Thursday night, the city has had 22.3 inches of snow. The 30-year average is 20.1 inches.

"We were falling quite below average until this series of moderate storms," Doesken said.

December 1913 saw a record 40.3 inches of snow, but the years on either side of that - 3.3 inches in December 1912 and .8 inches in 1914 - were meager.

At least 1 inch of snow has covered Fort Collins for 21 consecutive days, Doesken said.

"That's going to be hard to get rid of now for the next month or so with the low sun angle," he said.

Last year's twin blizzards covered Fort Collins in snow in late December and didn't melt completely until February.

"This year we have only half as much water content in the snow as we did last year," Doesken said. "That's what determines how long (the snow) lasts."

National Weather Service. Lows tonight will be in the single digits, and wind gusts could reach 30 mph.

By the numbers

Top 10 snowiest Decembers in Fort Collins in 119 years

> **1913:** 40.3 inches

> **2006:** 29.3 inches

> **1979:** 20.7 inches

> **1988:** 20.4 inches

> **1978:** 20.3 inches

> **1985:** 18.8 inches

> **1967:** 18.1 inches

> **2007:** 17.7 inches

> **1987:** 17.2 inches

> **1975:** 17 inches

Source: Colorado Climate Center

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STORYCHAT 

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Comments by: **phoenix** Posted: Sat Dec 29, 2007 6:13 pm
Thankfully "they" haven't gotten to everyone yet. I can't believe it, but there are people still having fun out there. Way to go!

Comments by: **Boomerjinks** Posted: Sat Dec 29, 2007 3:27 pm
And kids listen to too much hip-hop these days. Also, what's with airline peanuts?

Comments by: **Greg R Snyder** Posted: Fri Dec 28, 2007 9:14 pm
We had a neighbor with a team of ponies, when we got hit with ice storms (such as hit Iowa earlier this month) we would ride our sleds down the hills on the roads and let the ponies pull us back up. They had shoes which allowed them to get a grip when anything without tire chains couldn't move. I would relate other things we did for fun involving sleds, snow, ice, fire, and large ditches, but I am afraid the safety Nazi's here would be offended.... 😊

Comments by: **skinny** Posted: Fri Dec 28, 2007 7:04 pm
When we had major snowstorms where I came from, dad would tie our tobogan onto the back of his truck and tow us around our neighborhood. The plows would have gone through so there were huge snowbanks on the sides of the road and we'd "bank" off of them going around corners. He drove slowly but it was a lot of fun. I never noticed anyone calling child protective services to save us from our crazy dad, they were more likely to come out and jump on the tobogan with us. 😊

Comments by: **gibby** Posted: Fri Dec 28, 2007 5:24 pm
Anyone who is pulled by a car while riding a sled or holding the bumper is not exactly the sharpest tool in the shed. Kids are killed doing this as they misjudge speed, traffic, or zig when they should zag and get wrapped around a parked car's bumper. Would you want your kids doing this? I suspect not.

We did not have much money growing up either but at least had good parents that taught us some common sense and how to be creative in our play...even as a teen.

Snowboarding or skiing you control your speed.

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