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Pacific weather system could bring rain to area, state

Most of Texas is still in a moderate-to-severe drought, but a storm forming 2,000 miles northwest of Hawaii may be the key to drought relief for the state, says a Texas A&M University professor who also serves as the state climatologist.

John Nielsen-Gammon, professor of atmospheric sciences, says that precipitation everywhere in the state has been running below normal since Oct. 1.

"So far, this has been one of the five driest October-Novembers on record statewide and the driest since 1950," he explains.

"Most major metropolitan areas of the state received ample rainfall this summer, but it's been a different story to the south and west. For more than half of the state, the drought of 2011 never went away, and Texas is now into its third year of drought.

"I'm expecting a wet weather pattern to develop next week. The seeds for that pattern are being planted right now, as a storm system intensifies way out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean."

Nielsen-Gammon says that the storm will cause a wave to develop in the jet stream, driving it northward toward Alaska.

Downstream, over the western United States, the jet stream will overshoot to the south, causing a stationary trough to form over the Southwest.

"For wet weather in the wintertime, we need the jet stream to dip southward across the southwest United States so that upper-level winds over Texas are strong and from the southwest," he notes.

Such a weather pattern allows moisture to be drawn into the state from the

Gins wind down cotton '12 season

Terry County cotton gins are winding down the 2012 ginning season, but should surpass the 130,000 processed bale threshold this weekend, according to the most recent polling of the 2012 cotton harvest conducted by the *Brownfield News*.

As of 10 a.m. Friday morning, Terry County's six cotton gins had combined to process 128,165 bales of cotton for the current growing season.

According to officials with Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., "very little cotton currently remains on the stalk on the High Plains region of Texas, and gins are running continuously to ensure that the 2012 crop is processed in a timely fashion. Some gin managers expect to be finished by Christmas while others will continue on into the new year."

Although the latest figures from the National Agricultural Statistics Services will not be released for another couple of weeks, PCG estimates a crop of about 3.4 million bales, based on reports from area gins.

Area classing offices remain very busy, as Lubbock has surpassed the 1.7 million bale mark and Lamesa is approaching 500,000. Quality remains good, with more than 80 percent of cotton classed in the Lubbock office at color grade 11 or 21 for the week ending Thursday. Average leaf grade for the week was 2.49 and average staple was 35.43. Average strength was 29.97 g/tex and micronaire 3.78 for the week.

However, bark remains an issue at almost 30 percent. Typically, bark is in the 10 percent range, and last year's average was 16.6 percent. This could be caused by a wide array of factors, but it primarily depends on the condition that cotton is in when it is harvested. The early freeze may have had an impact.

December cotton continues to hover around the 70 cent mark while March futures are slightly higher at just more than 73 cents.

As per tradition, the *Brownfield News* will monitor the harvest with weekly bale counts from the county's gins.

2012 Bale Count

Lone Star*	18,141
Meadow Co-op	28,850
Southwest	33,680
Terry County	28,211
West*	5,677
Needmore	13,606
Total	128,165

*Finished for the season

Atlantic, while at the same time providing the weather disturbances that convert that moisture into clouds and precipitation.

Forecasts from the Lubbock office of the National Weather Service called for cooling temperatures in Brownfield and the South Plains and slight chances for moisture in the coming days.

Winds will blow 10-20 mph Saturday and the thermometer will drop into the lower 20s, according to the forecast.

The NWS predicts a 20 percent chance of snow locally Sunday evening.

Lows will dip below the 20-degree mark Monday, with highs in the mid-40s.

"When that trough forms over the weekend, we'll have the necessary ingredients in place for at least one widespread rain event across Texas, and hopefully several of them," Nielsen-Gammon predicts.

If the storm does develop, it wouldn't end the drought statewide, but it would improve reservoir levels and provide some last-minute hope for the winter wheat crop, he says.

"Much of the state is bone-dry," Nielsen-Gammon says. "We really need this wet weather pattern in order for reservoir levels to start moving in the right direction."

Drought conditions have rapidly expanded across the state. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, more than 80 percent of the state is in drought, the highest total since March 2012.

Last summer, there had been widespread hope among forecasters that a developing El Nino event in the tropical Pacific would lead to above-normal rainfall across Texas this winter, but the El Nino never materialized, he points out.

"This year's neutral conditions in the Pacific favor neither an unusually wet winter nor an unusually dry winter," Nielsen-Gammon explains. "That's why the dry weather so far has been a surprise."

A recent report from the U.S. Drought Monitor showed that 60.1 percent of the lower 48 states were in some form of drought.

The amount of land in extreme or exceptional drought — the two worst classifications — increased to 19.04 percent of the country, according to the report.

Locally, Terry County remains well below average rainfall totals.

The city of Brownfield has received almost twice the precipitation that fell in 2011, but that amount is barely half of the community's yearly average.

See RAIN CHANCE...Page 4

SANTA'S MAILBOX

Deadline for turning Santa Letters in to the Brownfield News:

Friday, DEC 14 at 5:00 PM



Boys and girls of all ages entertained thousands of visitors to the Brownfield ISD Christmas Open House held Friday in the newly finished Cub Stadium Field House. Students from Bright Beginnings, Colonial

Heights and Oak Grove sang and danced throughout the open house while visitors toured the impressive new facility and enjoyed food and drink catered by Brownfield High School's Silver Spoons.

Christmas in the Park scheduled for Dec. 14-15

The Boys and Girls Club of Brownfield is in the Christmas spirit. Are you?

The newly-formed local chapter of the nationwide after-school program invites the community to their upcoming Christmas in the Park. The long-planned fundraiser will be from 6-9 p.m. both Friday, Dec. 14 and Saturday, Dec. 15 in Coleman Park.

As with other events in the park such as Harvest Festival, admission is free, but donations will be accepted. All contributions will benefit the BGCB.

Visitors to Christmas in the Park will arrive near the Brownfield Family Aquatic Center, then travel southwest and around the park up through the Party House.

Various attractions will include a live nativity scene sponsored by the Terry County Ministerial Alliance - complete with live animals - near the baseball field, and

live entertainment in the amphitheater by local school choirs. Christmas carolers will parade throughout the park, while Santa Clause will make an appearance in the Party House. Carriage rides will be offered with BGCB donations encouraged. About 20 vendors are anticipated, giving guests a chance to purchase candles, jewelry and other stocking-stuffers.

The BGCB's board of directors have been preparing for Christmas in the Park since June, and aim to promote their new organization through the event as well as raise start-up costs.

"Our whole goal when we started this was to make our presence known in the community," said board President Sheryl Vaughan.

They also plan to turn it into an annual event, with more and more participation each December.

"We hope it will grow every year," Vaughan said.

Goodfellows off to slow start

The Brownfield and Terry County Goodfellows continue to collect toys, clothing, food and cash for the community's less fortunate -- a holiday tradition we all can be proud of, but organizers report that donations are coming in slow this year.

The organization works hard to make donating easy, according to Co-chief Jeff Davis.

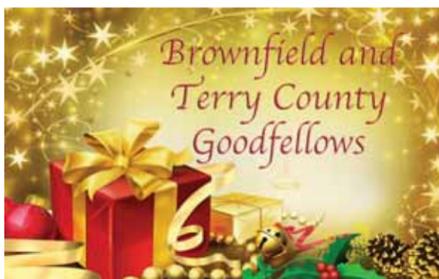
Donations can be dropped off at City Hall or several locations around town, including Dollar General, B&E Implement, NAPA Auto Supply, Lone Star State Bank, Wal-Mart and United Supermarket.

"We have barrels out at the stores again and we need everyone to fill them up this year," Davis said. "Our city always takes care of its own, but it's important to remember to participate and not take for granted that someone else will. We all have to do our part to make it a Merry Christmas for everyone in town."

Two long-standing local charities joined forces in 2009 to spread holiday cheer and continue their traditions of helping those less fortunate in the city.

The Christmas Tree for Children, administered for years by Terry County employees, and Goodfellows, operated by City personnel, opted to combine their efforts in hopes of being more efficient and helping more people.

The Brownfield and Terry County Goodfellows will be headed this year by Co-chiefs Jeff Davis and Larry Gilbreath.



"This is always a special time of year and the people of Terry County can be counted on to make it enjoyable for every family," Gilbreath said. "Our donations are a little low so far this year, but I have faith in this community and I know they will get to the stores and buy some gifts for the kids and families among us who can't afford to do so on their own."

Friday was the deadline for names of children and families to be turned in to the organization.

Brownfield citizens and businesses annually donate thousands of dollars worth of food and toys, which are delivered to homes throughout the city on Christmas Day or Christmas Eve each year.

The Co-chiefs stressed the importance of providing a good address with each application so the

holiday goods can be delivered to the families who need them.

"It's a lot of work beforehand but it's absolutely worth it when you see these kids and families when you deliver them," said Davis. "Sometimes it's evident that what we're giving them is all they're going to get and the appreciation they have is very humbling."

The Christmas meal and gifts will be delivered at 8 a.m. Christmas Eve morning this year. The group will help children up to the age of 14 and each child gets at least one new toy.

"Brownfield is a special place and we take care of our own," Davis said. "This is a special project every year and even when the economy is down and we expect donations to slip, the people of Brownfield come through and help out those among us who are less fortunate. That's what the holidays are all about."

Only children living in the household and dependent on the family for their needs should be submitted. If the address of the residence is in a rural area of the county, directions to the home should be included.

It also is important to distinguish if the children are boys or girls so the appropriate toys can be delivered to each home. All donations should be forwarded to City Hall.

Sat 12/17	Sun 12/18	Mon 12/19	Tue 12/20	Wed 12/21



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