

Local

TOP STORY

# Cold and snowy winter makes way for above average spring temperatures

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## JANESVILLE

The winter of 2017-18 brought lower-than-average temperatures, higher-than-average snowfall and unseasonable flooding.

With the official start of spring coming Wednesday, better weather should be just around the corner.

This winter was nearly two degrees colder than average, according to Gazette weather data.

High temperatures averaged 31.1 degrees this winter, down from the 69-year average of 32.9 degrees. The low temperature this winter was also down 2.7 degrees for an average low of 12.7 degrees.

There were also 3,793 heating degree days this winter, according to weather records. A heating degree day is a measurement of the demand for energy needed to heat a building. This winter's total was up 113 heating degree days from the average, according to records.

Larry Brown of Brown Oil in Janesville, a company that delivers heating oil to homes, said business was better this year than in past years with the increase in heating degree days.

Even though business was better this winter than in others, Brown said he's still happy to see winter coming to a close. His company also delivers diesel fuel, so the busy season will ramp up in spring as Brown delivers fuel for agriculture and construction equipment, he said.

The Janesville area also exceeded expected snowfall.

The average snowfall recorded by The Gazette is 24.8 inches per winter. This winter saw 35.9 inches of snowfall, up 11.1 inches from the average.

Despite record snowfall, the City of Janesville Public Works Department is on track with its snow removal budget, said John Whitcomb, operations director for the Janesville Public Works Department.

The budget runs on a calendar year, so this budget will include the upcoming November and December, Whitcomb said.

As of now, the city has used about 74 percent of its snow removal budget, which is right where Whitcomb said he expects it to be.

## Springing forward

March will remain cooler than average, and that is likely to carry into the beginning of April, said Mark Gehring, lead forecaster at the National Weather Service in Sullivan.

March has been dry, too, Gehring said, and if that trend continues, the chance of outdoor fires will increase. Grass will also take longer to green.

Precipitation is predicted for Saturday into Saturday night which, if it happens, would help the dry spell, Gehring said.

Because of these trends, it is unlikely that farmers and gardeners will see an early growing season, Gehring said.

Low temperatures, including consistent below-freezing overnight temperatures, are preventing the ground from thawing, Gehring said. Right now, the ground is frozen down to about 11 inches and is likely to stay frozen for a number of weeks.

While spring has been cool and dry so far, forecasters think the average high temperatures for April, May and June combined are likely to be higher than average, Gehring said.

Precipitation predictions follow suit, with higher-than-average levels of precipitation predicted in the same time frame, Gehring said.

With the highly variable weather, travelers can count on potholes opening up, Whitcomb said.

Those looking to report a pothole can call the city at 608-755-3110 or do so online at [ci.janesville.wi.us](http://ci.janesville.wi.us). Whitcomb said the city tries to respond to pothole reports as quickly as possible.