

## Hot summer might mean higher electricity rates!

STATE COLLEGE, PA (May 16, 2007)

A Long, Hot Summer is On the Way.... "Air Conditioners will be getting a Workout," Says AccuWeather.com's Bastardi.

AccuWeather.com Chief Long-Range Forecaster Joe Bastardi and his team expect this summer to be hotter than normal across a large part of the nation, including the most heavily populated areas of the Northeast. While a broad swath of the country will experience close to average levels of precipitation from June through August, the Southwest and Rockies will see below-normal rainfall, continuing the threat of wildfires in the region. The Southeast, already contending with raging wildfires, will likely see little relief until tropical storms and hurricanes bring moisture as the season progresses.

Said AccuWeather.com Director of Forecast Operations Ken Reeves, "Whenever you start talking about a hotter-than-average summer in the Northeast, especially the middle and late summer, you have to consider the hit that consumers will take to their wallets and pocketbooks as they are forced to cool their homes and businesses longer and more often." Reeves added that effects on consumers would be muted should energy prices fall.

It is in the second half of the summer that most of the Northeast, the Great Lakes region, and the Midwest will experience the warmest temperatures relative to normal. Texas will be one of the few exceptions to a hotter-than-normal summer.

Bastardi and his team are basing the AccuWeather.com Summer Forecast in part on parallels they see to conditions that existed in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. "During that time, torrid heat waves were common across the United States, and hurricanes attacked our coasts more frequently," he said.

"There is a very impressive resume of nasty weather events that occur whenever we see a transition from warmer-than-normal waters in the tropical Pacific to near normal or even cooler ocean temperatures, such as we're seeing now," added Bastardi. "The overwhelming majority of these events are hurricanes or extreme heat and, in about half of the years, both cause major disruptions."

While some may be quick to ascribe this summer's potentially extreme weather conditions to global warming, Bastardi warns against this. "The weather events that occur in individual seasons don't provide conclusive proof of global warming," he said. "Also, conditions this summer will be similar to the summers of the 30s, 40s, and 50s, and no one attributes the severe weather that occurred then to human-induced global warming, particularly since we entered a period of cooler temperatures soon thereafter."

As for the summer's precipitation forecast, Bastardi detailed that most of the nation will experience near-normal rainfall, other than the wildfire-prone Southwest and the Rockies. The Great Lakes area, Texas, and peninsular Florida are projected to receive above-normal levels of precipitation.

Said Bastardi, "While the Southeast will experience close-to-average rainfall amounts, we don't expect any significant relief from the ongoing drought until hurricanes and tropical storms bring additional moisture later in the summer. Though, of course, when you're talking about the possibility of hurricane strikes, that arrival of moisture is a double-edged sword."

Bastardi pointed out that the Southeast is the prime target for this year's hurricanes, as detailed in the AccuWeather.com Hurricane Season Forecast released on May 8, 2007.