

 **39°** Cloudy
Hi 41° | Lo 18°



UMass experts confirm regional cold records

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In this area, 1934 no longer reigns supreme.

UMass climate experts say that with February now concluded, weather observations show that Amherst, Hartford, and several other locations throughout New England will establish new record lows for February, and for any month on record.

At Amherst the average temperature was 11.2, eclipsing the previous record for any month of 11.6 set in February 1934. While the official period of record for Amherst begins in 1893, unofficial measurements extend to 1835, initiated by Ebenezer S. Snell at Amherst College. This makes the archive one of America's longest continuous histories of weather observations, according to the UMass Climate System Research Center.

Hartford averaged 16.1 in February, now the coldest month on record, breaking the previous record of 16.5 set, like Amherst, in February 1934. New lows for any month were established at several other locations throughout the region including Worcester at 14.2, which breaks the previous record of 14.4 from 1934, and Bangor, Maine. Boston's average temperature ranks second all-time.

February temperatures in Amherst since 1836 illustrate how extreme cold is becoming increasingly rare. Over the first 50 years from 1836 to 1885 five Februaries averaged 17 or colder. None have been as cold over the 81 years since 1934, until this year. Temperatures have warmed by some 4 over the period of record.

During the month Amherst broke or tied the existing record low on five days. On three days the high did not reach the normal (1981-2010) low for the day. On only one day did the observed high surpass the normal high for the day. Temperatures were below average for 28 consecutive days from Jan. 26 through Feb. 22. For Hartford the existing record low was tied or broken on four days. On seven days the high did not reach the normal low. The normal high for the day was surpassed twice. Temperatures were below average from Jan. 25 through Feb. 22.

The average temperature for meteorological winter (December-February) will rank 11th at both Amherst and Hartford. To date this season Hartford has received 54.8 inches of snowfall, nearly double the normal value. The record for a season is 115.1 inches set in 1995-1996. Snowfall in Amherst has totaled 56.2 inches, twice the normal to date.