

THE ELY TIMES

2012 U.S. record temperatures merely a coincidence

By: Thomas Mitchell – January 25, 2013

Earlier this month the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration breathlessly reported that 2012 was the hottest year in a century of weather data for the 48 contiguous states of the United States. In fact, the temperature was a full 1 degree Fahrenheit hotter than the previously hottest year of 1998.

Hard on the heels of this startling revelation came the National Resources Defense Council with its compilation of smashed heat records state by state, which lists Nevada as setting the sixth highest percentage of new heat records with busted heat records in 12 of 17 counties.

There were 17 new records for highest monthly maximum temperature, most set by no more than a degree or two and most in April. For example, Ruby Lake saw its April record climb from 81 degrees to 82 degrees. On April 23 Caliente broke a 1981 record of 92 by hitting 93 degrees and broke that the next day with 94 degrees. The longest standing record to fall was Virginia City's 1966 record high for June, which was bested by 1 degree, 96 degrees, on June 21. Records also tumbled in Ely, Reno, Gerlach, Lovelock, Battle Mountain and other reporting stations.

Another 19 records were set for the highest monthly minimum temperature. North Las Vegas recorded an overnight low of 89 degrees on Aug. 10, beating the previous record by a degree. Other such records fell from Tuscarora to Tonopah.

A National Resources Defense Council senior scientist, Kim Knowlton, said, "2012's unparalleled record-setting heat demonstrates what climate change looks like. This extreme weather has awoken communities across the country to the need for preparedness and protection. We know how to reduce local risks, improve our lives and create more resilient communities. Now our leaders must act."

The NRDC also pointed out:

- The summer of 2012 was the worst drought in 50 years.
- Wildfires burned more than 9.2 million acres in the U.S., including 86 large wildfires in Nevada.

— Hurricane Sandy’s storm surge height, 13.88 feet, broke the all-time record in New York Harbor.

So, what does this litany of lament forebode for the planet?

Not much.

To begin with, the continental United States accounts for less than 2 percent of the planet’s surface.

Nor does this sliver of data in anyway counter the fact that there has been no significant global warming since the fall of 1996.

“In other words,” as Patrick Michaels, Cato Institute’s director of the Center for the Study of Science and editor of the book “Climate Coup: Global Warming’s Invasion of Our Government and Our Lives,” says, “we are now in our 17th year of flat temperatures.” He predicts there will be at least a quarter century of flat temperatures.

Michaels explains why we are always reading about the extremes and the doom gloom instead of the facts:

“Science historians have repeatedly documented that we are particularly reluctant to abandon widely held views, or scientific paradigms. When professional advancement (i.e., research money) is particularly dependent upon a certain view (we wouldn’t spend billions on climate research unless it was important, right?), it’s even harder to let go, but that is what we may be seeing.

“People are beginning, cautiously, to dial back 21st century warming because there has been none. Because dreaded sea-level rise is also proportional, those estimates are going to have to come down, too.”

In fact, the United Kingdom’s Met Office, one of the sirens of the global warming stampede, reports global temperatures haven’t increased in 15 years. “Although the first decade of the 21st century was the warmest on record, warming has not been as rapid since 2000 as over the longer period since the 1970s,” the Met concedes.

Therefore, the current story about records in the U.S. and Nevada isn’t about climate, but merely about weather.

But there are two things you can count on: It will be hot this summer in Nevada and politicians in Carson City and Washington will continue to demand that you spend more of your money — via taxes and power bills — on renewable energy facilities to save the planet from the peril of global warming due to greenhouse gases, and don’t dare try to confuse them with facts. They’ll hear none of it.

It's not that I don't believe there is global warming, but Dick Cheney and I prefer to call it by its more common name: Spring.