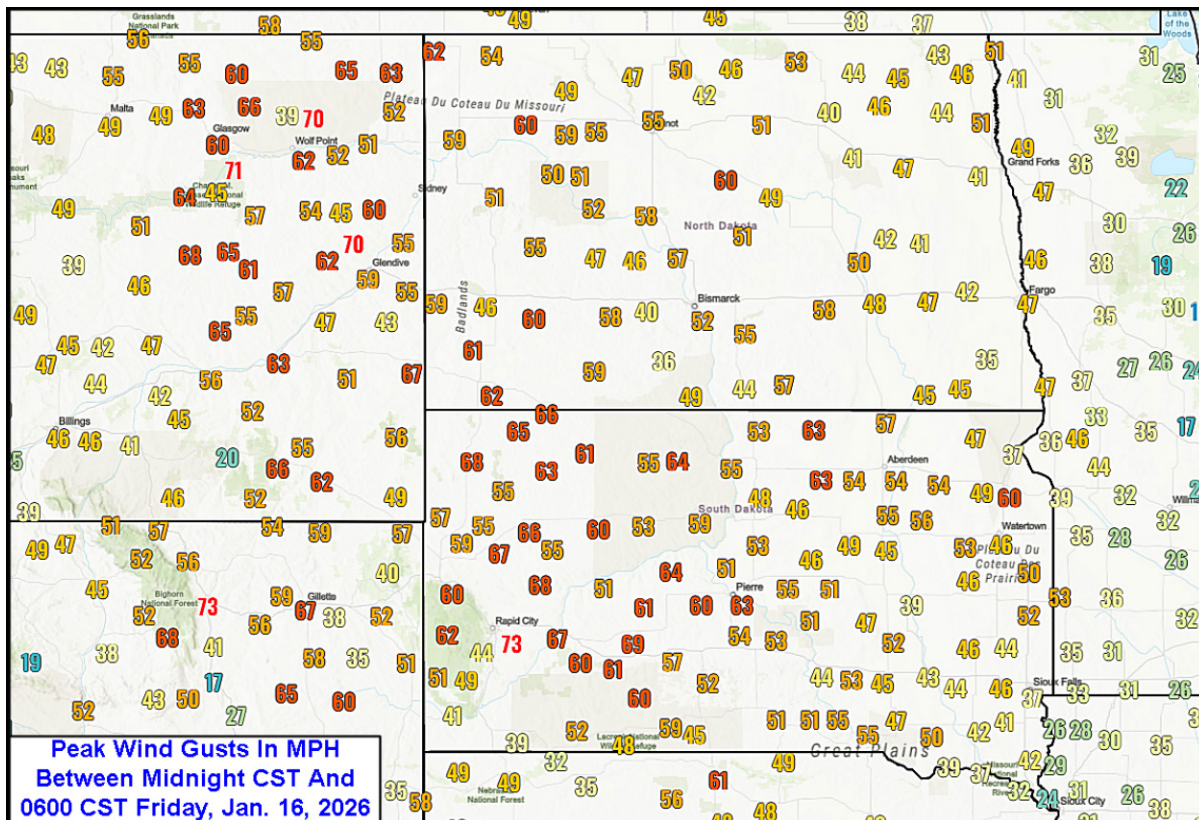


Hazardous Travel, Extreme Wind Chills Impact North U.S. Plains

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, January 16 (World Weather Inc.) – Winter weather has been a bit rare this year across the northern and central U.S. Plains, but today is a different day. Wind gusts of 50-70 mph and morning temperatures in the single digits, teens and 20s Fahrenheit across the northern Plains have combined to produce some very nasty conditions for travelers and livestock. The worst conditions this morning were in the northern Plains, but during the course of the day today the upper Midwest and central Plains will also be impacted. Eventually (this weekend) the wind, blowing snow and falling temperatures will also impact the lower Midwest and portions of the interior southeastern states. **Energy demand for supplemental heating fuel will surge higher through the first half of next week and then relax as some moderating temperatures kick in for many areas.**



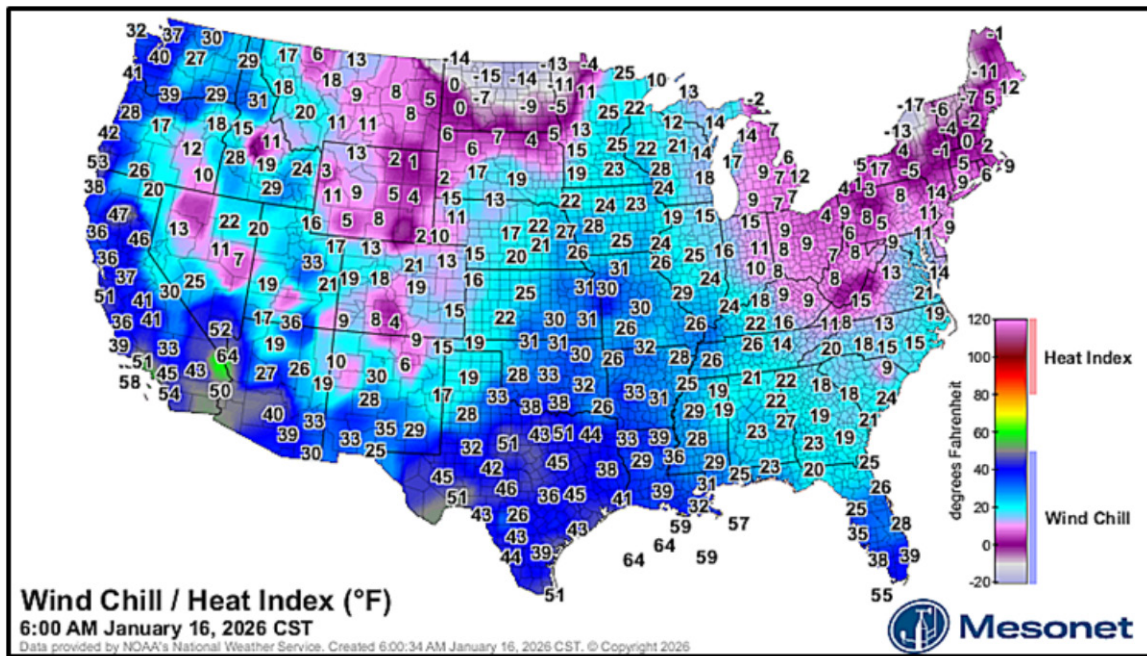
Sustained wind speeds of 25 to 40 mph have been present across the northern Plains this morning with wind gusts reaching between 40 and 70 mph. The wind has occurred in response to a very cold airmass and associated deep low pressure center pushing into central North America.

The wind was being accompanied by falling temperatures and occasional snow and blowing snow resulting in hazardous travel conditions and a very stressful environment for livestock in the region. The stress would be bad enough from the wind and colder temperatures alone; though after weeks of well above normal temperatures the extreme wind chills will prove to be brutal.

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Some wind gusts today will reach between 70 and 80 mph from the northern into the central Plains and between 45 and 60 mph across the upper Midwest. Eventually, the windy conditions will reach into the lower Midwest and possibly into the lower Mississippi and Tennessee River Basins Saturday.

Near dawn temperatures today were in the single digits and teens across the northern Plains and upper Midwest where wind chills have already dropped to the negative teens and negative single digits near Canada's border. Later today some of the wind chills will drop into the -20s and negative teens southward into Nebraska and into the upper Midwest. Wind Chill temperatures in the central Plains and lower Midwest will slip to the single digits and teens with a few readings below zero all of which will prove to be stressful for any animal or person who is outside in the open air.



Based on sustained wind speeds, but remember there are some powerful wind gusts in the northern Plains that should drop those wind chills more into the -20s and negative teens

Low temperatures Saturday will fall to the negative teens and negative single digits in the northern Plains and to the positive single digits and teens in the central Plains and upper Midwest. The cold will advance into the lower Midwest and northern Delta as well as the southern Plains Sunday with lows in the single digits and teens. The airmass should moderate when it gets to the southeastern United States Monday; though some freezes will occur into the Gulf of America and southern Atlantic Coastal States; including northern Florida. The bulk of the coldest air, though, will be confined to the Midwest and northeastern Plains Monday where negative and positive single digit lows will continue with a few negative teens near the Canada border.

The cold will make one final attempt to push through the Tennessee River Basin Tuesday when lows in the upper single digits and teens are expected with teens and 20s likely in the interior southeastern parts of the U.S. Most of the coldest air will begin retreating to the north after Tuesday.

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Total snowfall from this cold blast will be greatest in the Great Lakes region where new accumulations of 3 to 6 inches are likely with much greater amounts downwind from Lakes Superior, Michigan, Ontario and Erie. Some depths from lake-enhanced snowfall may reach over 12 inches. In the meantime, a dusting to an inch or two will impact the northern Plains and a few areas in the lower Midwest.

No winterkill is expected in hard red winter wheat areas, despite the fall of temperatures into the positive single digits and the lack of snow cover. No winterkill is also expected in the soft wheat areas of the Midwest. The cold may be helpful in restoring winter hardiness for these crops and prevent any early season crop development from occurring for a while.

Stronger energy demand is expected over the next few days because of the sudden fall in temperatures from the central through the eastern parts of North America. The greater demand will come from greater supplemental heating fuel usage. The coldest air may last into mid-week next week and then slowly abate especially from the more southern locations in the continent.

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