

Storey County Emergency Management

The "What If" Times

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SO HERE COMES El Nino ???

Oh, sure, its shorts and tee shirts now...but.....

What does all this talk about El Nino mean to me !

The period of time they talk about is the November thru February for us. As most of us well know, it could go either way for us. My friend at the Nat. Weather Service tells me this specific area is, without a doubt, the hardest location in the U.S. to predict what the weather will do. So we need to think in terms of worst case scenario. Everything, as of now, is saying 50/50 for moisture and temperatures. They don't know what will happen in Western Nevada. So.....

➔ 1. KNOW YOUR RISK:

Check your local weather. Two good options here:

Go to: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/rev/> or <http://www.weather.gov/>

CHECK it every morning before you leave home to make sure you are prepared for what the weather might bring for the day. You know how our weather can change in a few minutes.

➔ 2. TAKE ACTION !

Think about your personal needs. If you have lived in Nevada a while you know the fall and winter can be fickle and who knows what it may bring from day to day. Make sure you have a quality **snow shovel** at your home or business. If you use a **snow blower**, now is the time to get it tuned up and be sure it is functional. If you have a **plow** on your truck, **check it all out now** before we get into the heart of any possible winter snows. Super cold, below 0 temperatures. Be sure you are prepared to **NOT** get **frozen water pipes**. You, know, your **sewer** can freeze up too...so think about the trouble that would cause you.

➔ 3. BE PREPARED TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

Lay in a supply of **non-perishable foods** in case you get either snowed in for a few days or stuck at home (or work) due to washouts if we have lots of rain. Remember the **72-96 rule**. Be ready to take care of yourself for 72 to 96 hours.

➔ 4. EMERGENCY SUPPLY KITS, and Family communications plans for emergencies.

➔ **5. GET A NOAA Weather Radio.** They are **battery powered**, will give you weather alerts as well as general emergency or disaster information with alerts going out around the region. (*oh, yeah, lay in a supply of batteries for the winter....its a good idea*)

➔ **6. WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS,** is another area you want to think about. You spend the day there and often conditions deteriorate by the time you get off work. Be sure you are prepared to be able to get home.

REGARDLESS OF THE SEASON, Northern Nevada can have surprises for us all year around. Snow, hail, rain, floods, heavy winds, wildland fires, icy roads, rocks on the highways, sudden cold, hot in the summer, etc.

I have seen it snow in EVERY month of the year here on the Comstock at one time or another. ...and boy, do the tourists get a surprise !

My mother always told me (for winter preparedness in your car) to have two Hershey bars in the glove box, a pair of gloves (in case you gotta put on chains), a light jacket and a heavy jacket in the car and a bottle of water.....ALL YEAR AROUND.....that's how you survive in Northern Nevada. She told me other stuff too, but it was mostly about behaving myself. Ha! Not sure if it worked.

GET PREPARED NOW, Not when you wake up in the morning and there is 20 inches of snow on the ground and its below 0 degrees and your faucet is frozen.

Remember this, what happens in Storey County, weather wise, can be significantly different from what happens in Reno, Carson or even Lake Tahoe.

We are a micro climate in our own right. The Virginia Range, in which we live, causes the weather coming over the Sierra to do strange things to us. Un-predictable things. We get a lot or we get nothing. I have seen it do everything you can think of (except hurricanes). Being on the leeward side of the mountains (east side) we are downwind, except when it decides to blow from the east or north, and up slope. Look up the term "Tonopah Low" and find out what phenomenon does to Comstock weather. These aptly named systems tend to form in the lee of the Sierra Nevada mountains, in the vicinity of Tonopah, NV. These systems can produce heavy precipitation on the east-facing slopes of the Sierra and in other regions that experience the typical rain shadow associated with approaching Pacific storms.

Snow? *we can get lots and it can hang around for days or weeks;*

Wind? *can be as strong as the strongest hurricane or tornado;*

Rain? *we get both slow and flash flooding;*

Cold? *it gets below zero often. Are you prepared for frozen pipes?*

Expect the unexpected to see all kinds of extreme weather for our area. You know well how we have to extrapolate our weather from what the TV says.

Here is something else to consider..... COSTS.... Weather (El Nino) has impact on everything from cost of propane & natural gas, to food prices, gasoline and diesel, hardware prices (batteries), heating bills, vehicle maintenance, damage to homes and businesses, plumbing costs if you get frozen pipes, and any number of other things. Sandbags, salt or brine for the roads, overtime for plow drivers and emergency service folks

A strong El Nino is a pretty high bet at this point. Super El Nino? We could see that for a period in the fall but it may back off just a little bit at the start of the new year. *(The Weather Pros)*.

The INCREASED or elevated chance for above normal precip in California can spill over into Nevada.....will we be "shadowed" out?....or will get above normal precip too????

NOW.....your guess is as good as mine and probably as good as my contact at the National Weather Service.

I am personally concerned and preparing !

BETTER PREPARED, THAN NOT !