

Snowmageddon 2010; historic winter storm impacts (February 5-6)

February 7, 3:25 PM ■ Jackson Weather Examiner ■ Johnny Kelly



NASA satellite image of the President Obama referred winter storm 'Snowmageddon' on Saturday afternoon.

Parts of the Mid-Atlantic states were pounded by yet another major winter storm Friday and Saturday leaving many areas from Northern West Virginia eastward across Southern Pennsylvania, Northern Virginia, Southern New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware buried under 1-3 feet of snow.

The 'Snowmageddon' storm as referred to by President Obama was the biggest snowstorm in nearly 90 years and was the 2nd, 3rd and even 4th significant winter storm for some parts of the Mid-Atlantic states this winter season.

Delaware set the all-time record for the heaviest snowfall in the state's history with 26.5 inches of snowfall in Wilmington.

In many other locations, this snowstorm ranked in the top 5 on record!!

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania received 28.5 inches of snowfall, making it the 2nd heaviest snowfall in the city. Atlantic City, New Jersey also received its 2nd heaviest snowfall on record with 18.2 inches. Baltimore, Maryland was hit with its 3rd heaviest snowfall with 24.8 inches.

Washington DC was hit hard with its 4th heaviest snowfall with nearly 18 inches recorded at Reagan National Airport. At nearby Dulles International Airport, the record was shattered with 32 inches.

And in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 20.6 inches of snowfall was recorded, making this the 4th heaviest snowfall in this area.

There was much heavier snowfall amounts in other areas. Several locations in Maryland received over 3 feet of snow, with the northern Washington D.C. suburb of Colesville, Maryland receiving 40 inches, and the southern Baltimore, Maryland suburb of Elkridge receiving 38.3 inches.

This was not a very powerful storm overall but it was an extremely moist storm system.

After developing on Thursday in the Western Gulf of Mexico, the storm moved to the east and northeast spreading tons of moisture to the north and east across Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Florida.

Many areas received over 2 inches of rainfall including in Jackson, Mississippi where a new daily rainfall record was set on Thursday.

The over 2 inch rainfalls turned into 1-3 feet of snow once the moisture encountered the colder air mass to the north.

The excessive snowfall totals were also aided by a very unstable atmosphere aloft which led to areas of embedded thunderstorms within areas of heavy snow which is referred to as Thundersnow.

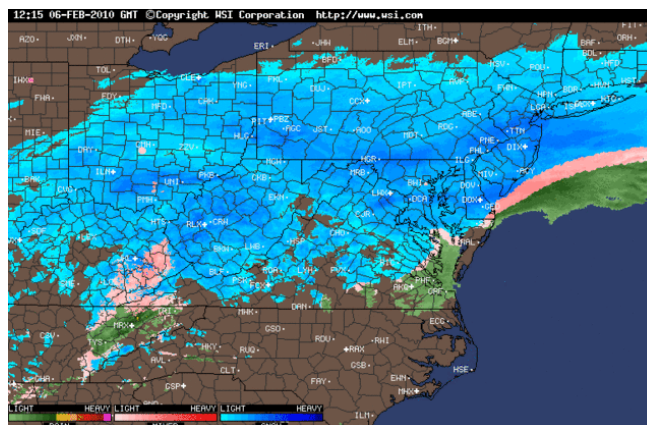
This is a fairly rare phenomenon but thousands got to witness this Friday night through early Saturday morning across portions of Maryland, Delaware and across the Washington DC area.

When thunder and lightning occurs with a snowstorm, this usually signals intense snowfall rates of 2 or more inches per hour, which often leads to excessive snowfall amounts.

The 40 inches recorded in Colesville, Maryland was in an area where lightning and thunder were reported with the heavy snowfall.



Intellicast radar view of the snowstorm Saturday morning



SOME IMPACTS FROM THIS WINTER STORM

- Blizzard Warnings were issued for Washington DC, Baltimore, Maryland, Delaware and portions of New Jersey
- States of Emergency were declared for West Virginia, Washington DC, Virginia, Delaware and Pennsylvania
- The heavy wet snow led to numerous roof collapses in Northern Virginia, Washington DC, Maryland and Southern Pennsylvania.
- Over 300,000 people from Pennsylvania to Virginia were without electricity Sunday morning
- Washington Hospital in DC declared a snow emergency because workers could not get to work through the heavy snow.
- Postal service suspended all services including retail operations, mail delivery and collections across Washington DC and Maryland due to the storm.
- DC-area National Park Service sites including the Washington Memorial
- Abandoned and disabled vehicles were reported along the stretch of I-95 between the Baltimore and Capital beltways
- Many roads were closed and or impassable due to the heavy snow across Southern Pennsylvania and Maryland.