

Fresno had its second hottest August on record. Here's what we know about September

By Carmen George

Fresno Bee, Thursday, Sept. 3, 2020

Last month was the second hottest August on record for Fresno, and relief from the heat isn't expected soon, with triple-digit temperatures forecast into next week.

August 2020 in Fresno saw an average temperature of 86.2 degrees, narrowly missing the record for that month's hottest, an 86.5 average in 2012, said meteorologist Jim Andersen with the National Weather Service at Hanford. That's looking at all years since 1887, when the weather service started reporting records.

Record-breaking heat is also possible this weekend. Andersen said Saturday in Fresno is forecast to hit 104 degrees, challenging a 105-degree record set for that date in 1985, and Sunday should hit about 108, potentially topping a 106-degree record set in 1988.

Monday is expected to be just as hot as Sunday. Tuesday could drop to a high of 102 degrees in Fresno.

Leading up to the weekend, highs are expected in the mid- to upper-90s until Friday, when temperatures should reach 100 degrees

The heat wave expected Labor Day weekend also puts California's power grid at risk. An alert was issued Wednesday as the state tries to avoid more rolling blackouts.

Smoke and haze from wildfires burning across California could bring temperatures down a couple degrees, which meteorologists continue to monitor closely. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has warned the region of unhealthy air quality until the fires are extinguished. Air monitors in Fresno showed particulate matter in the air, PM 2.5, as unhealthy for sensitive individuals on Wednesday.

Andersen warned that this heat is also keeping temperatures warmer than normal at night, making the heat even more stressful on the body. He cautioned people to drink enough fluids, stay indoors with an air conditioner, and check on vulnerable individuals, including the elderly, to make sure they are OK.

Sequoia fires consume 42,000 acres, pour more smoke into Valley

By Jim Guy

Fresno Bee, Modesto Bee and other papers, Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2020

As the complex of fires in the Tulare County mountains continue to move east, consuming more than 42,000 acres by Wednesday, two hotshot crews were deployed in its southeast path to slow the blaze, officials said.

Spokesman Don Smith added that firefighting aircraft would be parachuting relief supplies to fire crews in the path of the blaze, and also installing water tanks for helicopters involved in the battle.

The fires, now designated the SQF complex, include the Castle and Shotgun fires burning in both the Sequoia and Inyo National forests. The Shotgun fire has burned 375 acres in the Golden Trout Wilderness.

A separate fire, designated the Rattlesnake Fire, burned 84 acres by Wednesday in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. The lightning-sparked fire was discovered Aug. 16 as vegetation dried after recent rainfall. Spokeswoman Shanelle Saunders said.

Authorities reported that the SQF fires are only one percent contained. With stable air conditions, smoke will remain unhealthy for sensitive groups, according to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control Groups.

Evacuation orders remain in effect for Cedar Slope, Ponderosa and Pyles Boys Camp. An evacuation advisory covers Camp Nelson, Rodgers Camp, Coy Flat and Mountain Aire. The Red Cross has set up an evacuation point at Porterville College Stadium Gate 2. Sherman Pass across the Sierra is also shut down.