

Only 117°

Temperature
is Tucson's
highest ever

By John F. Rawlinson
The Arizona Daily Star

Sizzling summer seared Tucson yesterday with a record-breaking 117-degree high temperature.

And no relief is in sight for today.

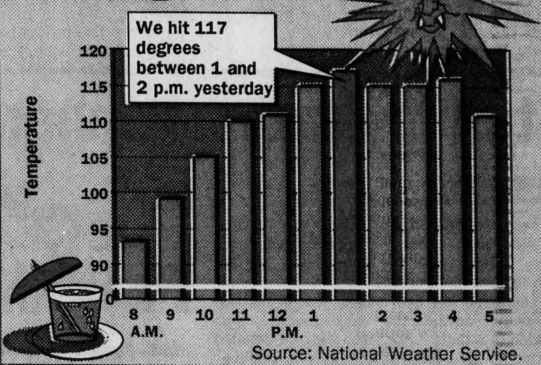
The 117-degree reading at Tucson International Airport broke the city's previous record for highest temperature ever — 114 degrees — set June 22, 1988, and last July 4, according to the National Weather Service.

The same high temperatures, or a little higher, are expected today and perhaps for several more days, said Brent Robinson, a spokesman for the weather service.

Tucson wasn't the only hot place in the state. Phoenix topped the list with a 122-degree reading, two degrees higher than the previous record, set Monday.

Excessive heat caused planes to be diverted from Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix yesterday afternoon to Tucson International Airport. The runways were

Heat goes on



too hot in Phoenix.

In all, about 15 planes from Delta, America West, Continental and Northwest airlines were diverted to Tucson, where they waited until about 5 p.m. before continuing to Phoenix, said Viki Matthews, a spokeswoman for the Tucson Airport Authority.

The first planes that began to leave Tucson for Phoenix were America West jets, which departed at about 4:30 p.m., Matthews said. An

hour later, laid-over planes were still taking off for Phoenix, she said.

An official in the Phoenix tower, who declined to be identified by name, said many of the flights were rerouted over Albuquerque.

Matthews said the decision to reroute planes was made by each airline. It could have been based on how heavy planes behave in high

See **HEAT**, Page 9A

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Tue, Jun 26, 2018

Heat

Continued from Page One

temperatures, she added. "If an aircraft is too heavy and the temperature is really high, then it takes more runway to land and take off on," she explained.

Passengers waited in the terminal at Tucson until their flights resumed, she said. "There were a lot of people over there," she added.

Yuma also hit the 122-degree mark, just one degree shy of its record. Green Valley had a record 112-degree reading, breaking the previous mark — 110 — set in 1983.

The world record for the highest temperature was set in Azizia, Libya, on Sept. 13, 1922, when a 136-degree reading was reported.

The record high reading for the United States and North America is 134 degrees in Death Valley, Calif., a mark recorded on July 10, 1913.

The reason for the record heat this summer is a strong high pressure system sitting over Tucson that forces down hot air, coupled with long hours of sunlight, according to Robinson.

However, there is a 20 percent chance of rain tonight, Robinson added.

The high pressure system is expected to drift into the state's northern boundaries by Friday, the weather service said. This is expected to bring some increase in moisture over Arizona from the east and southeast, which could mean an increase in thunderstorms, mostly in the southeast part of the state, the weather service said.

Yesterday's record marks the eighth time this month that a record high has been tied or broken in Tucson, according to Robinson.

Tucson Electric Power reported

The heat index and heat disorders

Heat index	Possible heat disorders for people in higher risk groups
130 or higher	Heatstroke/sunstroke highly likely with continued exposure
105-130	Sunstroke, heat cramps, or heat exhaustion likely, and heatstroke possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
90-105	Sunstroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
80-90	Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

Judy Margolis, The Arizona Daily Star

Tucson Electric Power reported setting a record peak electricity usage yesterday at 4 p.m. with a 1,356-megawatt reading, breaking the previous mark — 1,304 megawatts — set last July 6, according to Roger Yohem, public information director for the utility.

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"We do expect to set additional peaks, possibly the rest of this week and later this year," Yohem said.

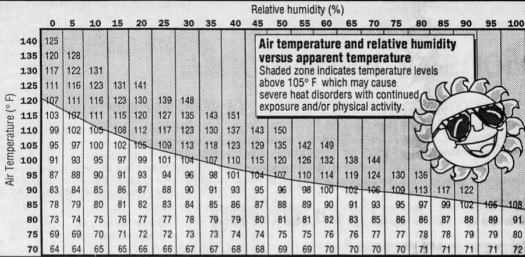
The heat hasn't caused the utility any big problems, Yohem said. "We design our system for the heavy loads like we get in the summer," he added.

TEP has a capacity of 1,700 megawatts. "We have an ample reserve of power to fall back on," Yohem said.

But the heat caused problems for some folks. "I can't even begin to tell you how busy it has been," said Scott Marshall, service manager at TRI-M Air Conditioning, 3740 E. 43rd St. "I got here at 6 a.m. and I haven't been off the telephone since," he said late yesterday afternoon.

"People have been using words you wouldn't find in the dictionary.

Heat index (apparent temperature)



They call it 8 a.m. and wonder why you haven't been there by 8:30 a.m.," Marshall said. "We do take it in stride and try to get out there as soon as possible."

When the temperature tops 110 degrees, Marshall said, air conditioners have a hard time in handling the stress and they stop cooling as well as they should.

"It's been said that an air conditioner that runs through the summer in Tucson is equivalent to putting 50,000 miles on a car," the service manager said.

On Monday, Tucsonans for the first time failed to "Beat the Peak" on daily water use.

Figures compiled yesterday show that Tucson Water customers on Monday used 141,750,000 gallons, the most ever in a single day.

This year's Beat the Peak goal is to stay below 138 million gallons a day.

"We're pumping every well we've

got access to," said Tucson Water spokeswoman Val Little.

The previous record was 136.6 million gallons, set on June 4 and June 18. Those were also Mondays, which historically are the days when demand is the greatest.

Little called this Monday's high pumping "just a fluke" due in part to nine consecutive days of triple-digit temperatures, including five days that topped 105 degrees.

City reservoirs were "doing pretty well," with water at 53.6 percent of capacity, Little said, adding that the demand for water was expected to drop by today.

The city's Beat the Peak program aims to curb peak demand from June through August by urging Tucsonans to water outside no more than every other day and never between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Although no one in Tucson was reported hospitalized yesterday because of heat-related problems, the heat has affected people in Mexico.

Judy Margolis, The Arizona Daily Star

In Sonora, small children have been the main victims of the heat.

"Every year, we have the same problem with heat. The only problem we find now is more dehydrated children. Forty percent of the cases of dehydration are kids under one year," said Dr. Francisco Javier Muro, director of medical services for the state Health Department.

In Hermosillo, where temperatures reached over 120 degrees, the State General Hospital reported that four children under 1 year old have been hospitalized from Sunday to yesterday.

"We haven't had anybody die," said hospital spokesman Augustin de la Rosa. "But we have had a lot of dehydration cases."

Last week, 14 people were treated for dehydration at the hospital, to which most people are rushed.

Arizona Daily Star reporters Eric Healy and Eric Volante contributed to this story.

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