SUMMARY OF THE DECEMBER 1981 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: December 1981 registered warmer than normal temperatures but below normal rainfall. Foggy days were well above average while winds were generally light.

Temperature: December 1981 was on the warm side with an average of 53.5°F compared to a 30-year normal of 52.5°F. Warm night-time lows (46.1°F vs 43.6°F) were completely responsible for the overall above normal temperature since day-time maxima averaged below normal (61.0°F vs 61.3°F). High for the month, 68°F, occurred on 7 and 8 December, while the month’s low was a mild 40°F on three days: 11, 23, 28 December. Based on 30-years of record, the 28 days with minima greater than 41°F was beat only by December 1958 and 1977 with 29 days, while 1959 and 1976 also recorded 28 days. There were no daily temperature records set in December 1981.

1981 temperatures were warmer than normal: 56.8°F vs 56.5°F. As with December, the above normal year was due entirely to warmer than normal nites (48.5°F vs 47.6°F) while days averaged slightly below normal (65.1°F vs 65.3°F). This is the sixth straight year of above normal temperatures.

Precipitation: After a wet October and November, December 1981 turned in a less-than-normal amount: 1.67” versus 3.00”. The rain year total (since July 1, 1981) now stands at 9.67” compared to a 6.53” normal at month’s end. Thus, the rainfall to January 1 represents 52% of the normal year total (18.52”) compared to a 35% expectation at this date. There were 10 days of measureable rainfall (0.01” or greater) while eight such days is normal. December has been as wet as 9.79” in 1955 and as dry as 0.37” in 1975. Rainfall was considerably greater from San Francisco northward and scanty at best south of Salinas during the month.

The calendar year rainfall, 23.51”, aided by a wet January and November, is classified as above normal when compared to the 30-year normal of 18.52”. Only two thunderstorm days occurred in 1981; one in January and one in October. Average is four such days per year.

Winds: Winds were light in December except for the brief periods of storminess: gusts to 42 miles per hour (mph) on 20 December and 46 mph on 29 December. Maximum wind gust for 1981 is the 62 mph recorded on 13 November.

Fog: The 15 days with fog, on some of the days persisting for most of the day, were near record for December. Only December 1977 beat the value with 19 days while December 1975 matched the 15 days.

There were 168 days with some fog in 1981, as compared to a 19-year average of 141 days. In the last nine years, seven have turned in an above-average number of fog days.