SUMMARY OF THE OCTOBER 1990 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: October 1990 was warmer and foggier than normal but very dry with generally light winds.

Temperature: October 1990 continued the string of months with above normal temperatures, started in April of this year. The overall average of 61.5°F is 0.9°F above the 39-year normal and in the upper third of warmest October’s on record. The daytime temperatures contributed exclusively to this warm anomaly, with 72.2°F as the average daily high (1.8°F above normal). Only six Octobers in the last 39 exceeded this value. Nite-time lows were nearly normal on the average: 50.8°F vs 50.9°F normal.

Only two daily records were set or tied: the 88°F max on 9 October tied the record for the date, previously set in 1966. The warm minimum of 60°F on the morning of 10 October set a new daily record (previous: 58°F in 1982). The combination of high temperatures (84°F) and low relative humidity (less than 10%) contributed to ideal “fire weather” conditions in the vicinity of Highway 68, near Pebble Beach, on 8 October 1990.

Precipitation: The 31st day of October saved Monterey from tying an October rainfall record. Only a trace had fallen through 30 October, equaling October 1959 with only a trace. But Halloween Day came through with 0.14”, mostly during the daylight morning hours, to bring the rain year total (from 1 July) to 0.33” at month’s end. Normal is 1.36” by 31 October; and last year, a dry year, we had 2.67” by this date. Rain on Halloween is not common on the Monterey Peninsula. Since 1952 only two Halloween dates produced rain: 1974 with 0.34” and 1983 with 0.10”. In each case it was dry by the evening trick-or-treat time.

The three-month National Weather Service outlook (November, December, January) for the Central California Coast is not encouraging. The area is shown to be well within the less-than-normal precipitation zone.

Wind: With little storm activity and a sluggish wind circulation in the eastern North Pacific area, wind averages were down in October 1990. The Monterey Airport average hourly wind (6 AM to 11 PM) was 6.6 miles per hour (mph) while the average daily high gust at the National Weather Service Climate Station in Monterey was only 18 mph. The highest gust of the month, 28 mph, was recorded on 4 October 1990.

Fog: Monterey again experienced higher-than-normal fog frequency in October 1990. 19 days with one or more hours of fog easily exceeds the 28-year normal of 14 in October. Only January and September 1990 showed less than normal occurrence in the last 16 months. Even more impressive, June 1989, and January and September 1990, are the only months with below normal fog frequency in the past 26 months.

Earthquake: One minor shake was felt on the Peninsula, about 1104 PM on 4 Oct 1990, centered in the Santa Cruz area. No damage.