SUMMARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 1991 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: The Monterey Peninsula experienced another cool dry-season month along with very light rainfall and light winds, but with a near-record number of fog days.

Temperature: The 1991 dry-season signature pattern continued unabated, marked by cool days and mild nites! The 69.5°F average high is 2.4°F below the 40-year normal while the average 53.1°F average minimum is very close to the 52.9°F normal. Overall, the month averaged 61.3°F, which is 1.1°F below normal. The daily highs have averaged below normal for the last seven months, including September. High for this month, 81°F, was reached about 1:30 PM PDT on 29 September while the month’s low, 49°F, was recorded near sunrise on 10 and 24 September. Only one daily temperature record was set, namely the cool minimum of 60°F on 13 September 1991, replacing the 61°F record set in 1975 on that date. (Editor’s note: This was a record cool maximum for the date.)

Precipitation: Only 0.02” fell during the month. Normal for September is 0.33”. At month’s end the rain year total (since 1 July 1991) stands at 0.33” compared to the 0.51” expected. Monterey was “that close” to significant thundershowers on 6 September (around 6 AM) and on 24 September (around 7 and 8:30 AM) as subtropical moisture moved north out of Southern California, but generally stayed inland of the immediate coast. In the 6 September event a band of thunderstorms gave light to moderate shower activity and brilliant lightning displays in the Salinas Valley, while the 25 September thunderstorm event generally favored the North Salinas Valley area, the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Santa Clara Valley. In either case, Monterey added two thunderstorm days to the year but saw negligible increase in the rain totals. As we approach the winter rainy season (mid-November – mid-April) long range precipitation forecasts are being closely watched. The latest 90-day National Weather Service Outlook for the Central California Coast is not favorable for the period through December.

Two thunderstorm days in September, added to the four in March, gives Monterey a total of six for this calendar year, which is one above the annual normal.

Fog: September 1991 contributed significantly to the foggiest five-month period in at least 28 years on the Peninsula. With 27 fog days in September, the five month total is 120 days or 78% of the days (fog day is a day with one or more hours of prevailing horizontal visibility equal to or less than six miles).

As for September itself, 27 days with fog is not a record – there were 28 days in 1974 and 1975. Although October is not a prime month for fog, 14 days is the average. There have been as many as 24 fog days in October 1979.

Wind: Winds were light in September, with a 6.9 miles-per-hour (mph) average at the airport and an average daily peak gust of 20.5 mph at the National Weather Service Climate Station. The high gust of the month, 34 mph, came with a strong sea breeze surge early afternoon 29 September.
Earthquake: A moderate earthquake (5.1 on Richter Scale) at about 2:12 PM, 17 September 1991, centered near San Simeon south of Monterey caused a light jolt in the local area. No damage was reported.