

**CATHY:** When we started the show, Moorhead was at four degrees below zero. It's now one above in Fargo-Moorhead. It's a little crisp for this time of the year this time of the day. Joining us right now is our chief meteorologist Paul Huttner with word of an impending, what? Late winter, early spring storm. Joy.

**PAUL HUTTNER:** Oh, I know.

**CATHY:** How joyous is that?

**PAUL HUTTNER:** I know. I'm trying to make it stop, Cathy. I keep whacking the computer models, and they keep coming up with the same solution. You know, and it's interesting because this persistent pattern has been going on since December with almost a storm every week, and it seems like a lot of them have come on Thursday and Friday because it seems like you and I are talking about them coming in every Wednesday.

**CATHY:** Great. I know, I've noticed that. Yeah, so this one looks like it's kind of interesting. Complicated.

**PAUL HUTTNER:** It is. It's really complicated. It's messy, is the way I would put it. This was spun into California yesterday. It dumped 30 inches of snow in the Sierra. Going through Colorado tomorrow, and it will make a beeline for Minnesota as we head into Friday.

Still a lot of uncertainty about precipitation types with this, and interesting to note, the first risk area from NOAA Storm Prediction Center for southern Minnesota on Friday. Rochester, Austin, Winona, you're in a marginal risk for severe storms Friday afternoon into the evening.

Even a slight risk down near the Iowa border, and Cathy, this will be a pretty big severe weather outbreak south of Minnesota in the Mississippi valley, all the way down to like Clarksdale, Mississippi, the delta blues country. So that's happening in the warm air to the South.

For us, it's a wild mix. This may start as a little mixed ice and snow Thursday morning. I think it's going to transition to all rain for the Twin Cities Thursday afternoon, Thursday night, probably through most of Friday, and then most of the models saying it'll slam back to wet snow Friday night in the Twin Cities, and it could come down heavy for a while.

It looks like the heaviest snow will fall most likely north of the Twin Cities. Willmar, Saint Cloud, up to Brainerd, maybe over to Lake Mille Lacs, up toward the Duluth area could see another very plowable snow. It's still more than 48 hours out from snow, so early to talk totals, but I will tell you this.

Some of the forecast models, it's a big range again. I've seen as little as an inch in the Twin Cities to more like seven inches, and I think some folks north of us are going to get at least 4 to 8 inches of snow, so to be watched for sure as we head through tomorrow into Thursday.

**CATHY:** But not unusual. I mean, really, it's-- I mean, it's at the end of March. We do get snow in April.

**PAUL HUTTNER:** Yes, you're absolutely right. That's a great point. We get the strong storms this time of year. We're starting to build that temperature contrast. It's been in the '70s parts of Iowa, Kansas, south of the Twin Cities, and we still have the lingering cold air, what, 14 below in Fargo-Moorhead this morning?

So that winds up big storms, and that contrast will be there for another couple of weeks, I think, until we really start to warm up. Although on the positive side, it does look like Sunday, Monday we could get close to 50.

**CATHY:** I do want to ask you about that. For just a moment here, I did get an email from a listener who thought it was unusual to get severe thunderstorms this time of the year, but that reminds us that it can happen. I mean, it was just 25 years ago today where it was that huge tornado outbreak in southern Minnesota that, what, was an EF4 that devastated Comfrey and hit Saint Peter?

**PAUL HUTTNER:** That's right. There were a number of tornadoes, and of course, the Saint Peter tornado was renowned coming through. Late March, yeah, severe weather can happen again. It's the same scenario. That wild temperature contrasts.

There's going to be a squall line, Cathy, from southeast Minnesota all the way down through eastern Iowa down the Mississippi river valley Friday afternoon. I think we're going to see a bunch of severe weather warnings and probably some tornado warnings.

**CATHY:** So let's talk about the flood update. It looks like the chilly March, though, is a good thing for the flood threat.

**PAUL HUTTNER:** It is so far, and that's a little bit of good news in there. A silver lining. Most of the days in March, we've been running about three degrees colder than average in the Twin Cities. 10 degrees colder in the Red River valley. Twin Cities, we've been between 32 and 45 every day, so that melts snow slowly, especially during the afternoon and evening hours.

And then the nights have fallen below freezing, so that kind of shuts it down or slows it down, so that's been a slow release of this snow cover into area rivers. That's some good news.

Now, they just updated the flood forecast this week. The hydrologist at the North Central River Forecast Center. Still a moderate to high risk of flooding for the Mississippi in Saint Paul and the Saint Croix in Stillwater, so still lots of snow water equivalent in that snow out there.

We're still going to see some flooding. It's just a question of what the weather does between now and say mid-April. If we get a slow warm up, that's better. If we warm up and get a lot of rain, that's going to push those rivers higher.

**CATHY:** OK, so getting back to this warm air coming in. Incoming-- at least on the weekend here-- will we see our first 50 in the Twin Cities this weekend?

**PAUL HUTTNER:** Yeah, we might. We have a shot Sunday and again Monday, I think. A lot of the computer models have been pointing that out. Some of that might depend on how much snow we actually end up with by Saturday morning, but it does look a little milder as we head into next week.

I still don't see the huge long term warm up yet, but boy, I hope it comes soon. I'm kind of done with this. I think everybody else is, too.

**CATHY:** I kind of am, too. Say, because we are going to be heading into severe weather here soon, very soon, the national weather service has the sky warn classes. You and I have taken them. Well, you of course, you're an expert. I've taken them just because I think they're cool.

**PAUL** They are.

**HUTTNER:**

**CATHY:** Can you get training through the national weather service still? Are there classes coming up?

**PAUL** You can. They have a whole schedule if you go to the Twin Cities national weather service website, and basically,  
**HUTTNER:** you can take the training to become a storm spotter.

They'll teach you about storm structure. They'll teach you about how to communicate this in real time to the national weather service during storm outbreaks, and that's kind of the ground truth that they can look at the doppler, but if they have people on the ground that can spot wall clouds or funnel clouds, it really helps during severe weather, Cathy.

So hey, a lot of classes. I posted that on Updraft yesterday. You can find it there, and you can also find it on the national weather service website in the Twin Cities.

**CATHY:** Yes, and before you go, what's on Climate Cast?

**PAUL** Well, this latest UN report came out, and again, they were sounding more alarm bells if we exceed 1.5 degrees  
**HUTTNER:** Celsius warming, so we're going to look at, you know, are we acting quickly enough with policies in Minnesota, in the US, and the world. Where do we stand? What's the big picture there?

We're going to talk about that on Climate Cast tomorrow during All Things Considered.

**CATHY:** All right, I appreciate your time here today. Thank you so much, Mr. Huttner.

**PAUL** My pleasure. Thanks, Cathy.

**HUTTNER:**

**CATHY:** That's NPR'S chief meteorologist, Paul Huttner.

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