

Utility shows it's been cold winter

In case you've been wondering, the winter of 1977-78 has been warmer than last year's frigid period of intense cold.

But this winter is still colder than normal, according to information compiled by Consumers Power Co.

Just past the midway point of the winter season, the weather has been 11 per cent warmer than 1976-77, but is running seven per cent colder than the average for the past 30 years.

The percentages are based on data from Nov. 1, which is the date each year the utility begins keeping a record of weather conditions, through Feb. 11.

The company maintains such heating season records through the end of April.

To show what the weather has been, the utility released a new type of weather information chart which it calls the "Jack Frost Index."

The chart depicts the "degree days" accumulated since the start of the heating season and compares them to both last year and the 30-year norm.

A degree day, according to E. A. Waggener, Metro Region general manager for Consumers Power, is the difference between a day's average temperature and the commonly accepted base of 65 degrees.

The higher the number of degree days, the colder the weather, Waggener said.

From last Nov. 1 through Feb. 11, the utility has recorded a cumulative total of 3,946 degree days, compared to 4,446 for the same period in 1976-77. The 30-year average for this period is 3,683 degree days.

The Jack Frost Index shows that a warmer-than-normal period began at the end of the first week of November and extended into early December.

Since that time the weather has been colder than normal except for a few days in mid January.

During the frigid winter of 1976-77, the degree days were far above normal from November until early March.

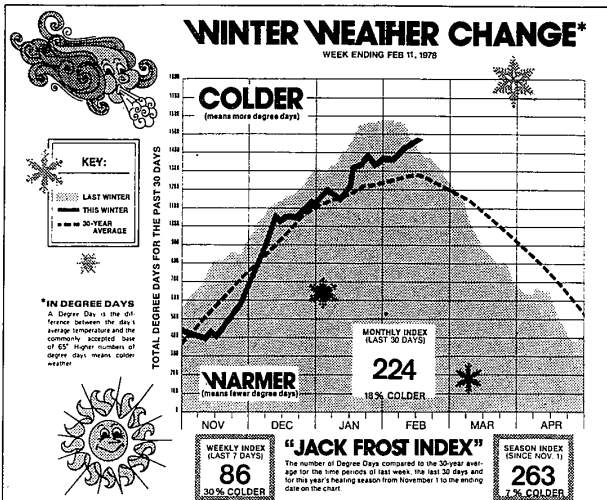
Waggener said the index will be issued each winter and will be updated

at the end of each week. He said the information is intended to alert customers to the effect of weather on their utility bills.

Waggener noted that while temper-

atures have been somewhat more bearable this year than they were the previous year, old man winter has been making his presence felt in another way.

According to the National Weather Service in Lansing, the snowfall there has totalled 60 inches so far this year, compared to 45.1 inches for the same period last winter.



County will underwrite deputies' bill

Oakland County will continue to subsidize townships contracting with the sheriff's department for police services.

The townships—Oakland, Avon, Orion, Addison and Commerce—pay nearly \$30,000 for each sheriff's deputy contracted. However, most of the contracted deputies have salaries, ben-

efits and costs well in excess of \$30,000.

The county will make up the difference in the amount the township pays and the deputy's salary. More than half of the 54 deputies under contract already cost at least \$34,000 annually.

An attempt to have the townships pay more for the service failed at last

week's county board of commissioners meeting.

According to some of the commissioners many townships contracting with the sheriff for police services have low tax bases and can't afford to maintain their own police departments.

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