



WEATHER OUTLOOK

on Wednesday, January 21.

by Gary Sprung

A big day for Rye

This is a week when the past is more interesting than the future. Let's get the present out of the way first: The jet stream today, Wednesday, flows directly overhead from due north. Paradise Divide causes a wave in that upper-atmospheric flow, resulting in cloudiness north of town. Cold air is flowing fast from the north, so our low last night was -25.

The jet today has the same shape it had last Friday and will have next Friday: due north to south, then a sharp turn toward the

then a sharp turn toward the northeast. It's maintaining that shape as it travels eastward. Before today, Crested Butte was on the jet's north side, inside a trough. Tomorrow, we'll be on the south side, with the ridge bringing gradually warming temperatures and clear skies through the weekend. A storm now just off the West Coast will flow northward over the ridge, missing Colorado. So much for the future.

Rye, Colorado, got 63 inches in 24 hours last Thursday! That's close to the world record of 78 inches in 24 hours in Silver Lake, CO. Both locations are on the east side of the Front Range at elevations around 7500 feet, a height where the atmosphere is warm enough to carry copious moisture. Rye is located about 25 miles southwest of Pueblo, on a part of the Front Range known

as the Wet Mountains.

The chin-deep snow caused no major problems and was even fun. Asked how he moved through it, one resident told the *Rocky Mountain News*, "Very slowly. You just push with your arms and dig with your feet. It was a weird sensation, with snow around your body."

Monday/Tuesday's short-wave brought Rye another 15", again the most in the state.

On Saturday morning temperatures dropped to -36 in South Park and to -14 in normally balmy Pueblo. Crested Butte reached -28.

As I predicted last week, the fury was caused by winter's first strong flow from the arctic colliding with a Four Corners low riding the jet stream through New Mexico. The Colorado mountains blocked the northern flow from New Mexico, while the San Juans blocked the low from Gunnison and northern Colorado.

Only on the Eastern Plains could the airmasses collide directly. The east side of the

Four Corners low sent strong southeasterly winds into southeast Colorado, while the high north of Colorado sent strong northerly and north-northeasterly winds down the Front Range metro region. The collision centered on Rye.

The Four Corners low persisted through Tuesday, yet the Gunnison Country was totally clear by Saturday. The Monday/Tuesday "storm" was no more than a short-wave disturbance which kicked up a Colorado atmosphere still restless from Friday's intensity.

Accuracy rating for last week: 60%.

Weather in Crested Butte

—courtesy L.C. Adams

Date	High	Low	Snow
1/14	28	-11	
1/15	23	-22	tr.
1/16	22	3	3.0
1/17	20	-28	
1/18	19	-22	
1/19	22	-5	tr.
1/20	22	-15	2.0
1/21		-25	

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