

Cooler Regional Temperatures Welcomed

August 2008's temperatures have been nearly 20 degrees cooler on some days than August 2007. Dave Nadler, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Huntsville, said high temperatures are expected to continue being slightly cooler than normal. "Last year at this time, temperatures were very much above normal," Nadler said. "We're back into a more normal weather pattern this year and it's been nice."

The return to normal temperatures has been welcomed by the Tennessee Valley Authority, which was struggling a year ago to meet the power demand and was asking customers to conserve electricity. TVA spokesman Gil Francis said the power demand during this period a year ago was setting records. Demand for electricity continues to be strong this year, but TVA is having no problems meeting the demands of its customers.

"People think we like record demands because we sell a lot of electricity," Francis said. "While we do sell a lot of power when the demand is at record levels, you don't want to be setting records when you have to buy power on the open market at very high prices like we were doing last year." TVA set 13 power demand records in August 2007. Included was the agency's all-time record at 33,499 megawatts at 5 p.m. Aug. 16 when the average temperature across the Tennessee Valley was 102 degrees.

Nadler said high temperatures in the mid-to upper-80s are expected through mid-August. He expects there will be some days later this month when temperatures rise into the upper 90s, though. "It's still August, and we are going to have some hot days, but nothing like last year when it 100 degrees or hotter day after day after day."