

CLEVELAND AREA

TODAY Partly sunny and continued cold today but not as windy. High 27. Wind southwest at 8-16 mph increasing to 10-20 mph late. Rather cloudy tonight with a snow shower late. Low 22.

TOMORROW Considerable cloudiness with a rain or snow shower. High 40. Wind southwest at 15-30 mph. Mostly cloudy and turning colder at night with a few flurries. Low 24.

Weather forecast table for Cleveland area from Sunday to Thursday, including icons for sun, clouds, rain, and snow, along with high and low temperatures.

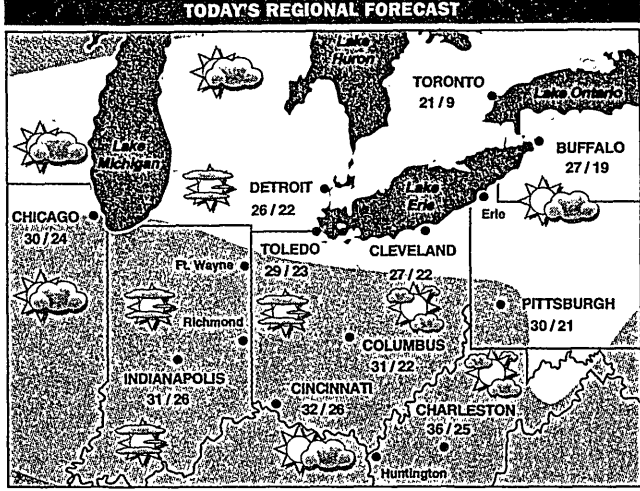
OHIO weather forecast table listing cities like Akron, Athens, Ashland, etc., with their respective high and low temperatures for the day.

Central and SE Ohio, SW Pa., and W.Va.: Partly sunny and not as windy today, but continued cold. Highs 29-36. Cloudy tonight with a snow shower. Lows 19-26. Rather cloudy with a rain or snow shower, then turning colder late. Highs 38-45.

NW Ohio, S Mich., N Ind., S Ont., and Chicago: Sunny intervals and not as windy, but still quite cold. Highs 26-33. Rather cloudy tonight with a snow shower. Lows 19-26. Considerable cloudiness with a rain or snow shower, then turning colder late. Highs 37-44.

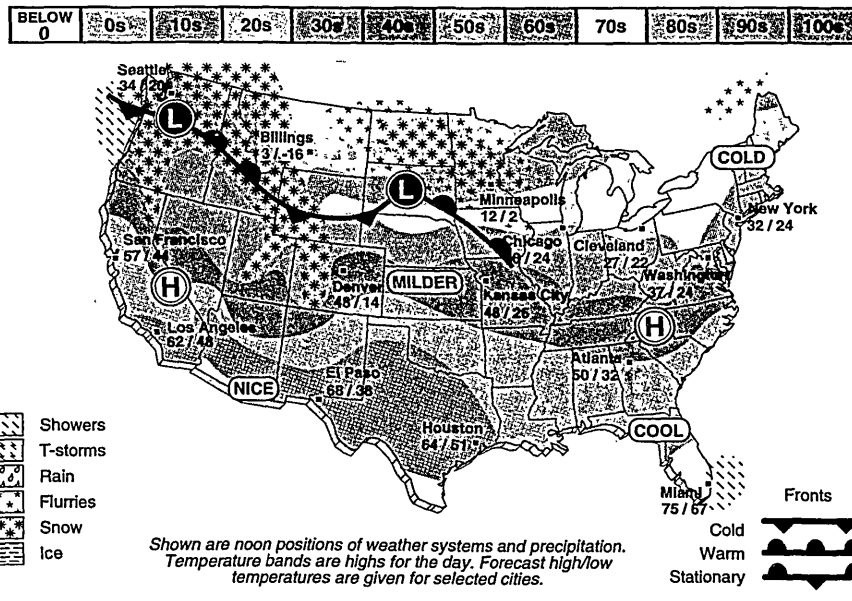
SW Ohio, S Ind., and N Ky.: Some sunshine and not as windy today, but still rather cold. Highs 29-36. Partly to mostly cloudy tonight with a snow shower. Lows 19-26. Breezy and milder Monday with a few showers, then turning colder late. Highs 39-46.

REGIONAL NE Ohio, NW Pa., and W.N.Y.: Some sunshine and not as windy today. Highs 25-32. Rather cloudy with a snow shower late tonight. Lows 18-25. Considerable cloudiness with a rain or snow shower, then turning colder late. Highs 37-44.



TODAY'S NATIONAL FORECAST

NATIONAL WEATHER SUMMARY: Arctic air will remain entrenched across the northern Rockies and the northern Plains today. Snow and flurries will streak eastward across the Dakotas into Minnesota and Wisconsin. Snow will also fall in much of the Pacific Northwest and northern Rockies. Today will be blustery and cold with some sunshine in the Northeast and Middle Atlantic regions.



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day. Forecast high/low temperatures are given for selected cities.

NATIONAL TEMPERATURES

Table of national temperatures for various cities, including Albany, Albuquerque, Anaheim, etc., with columns for city, set, today, mon, and Tues.

AIR QUALITY

Yesterday's pollution information not available on Sunday and Monday. Today's Outlook: Good. (Pollution Standard Index Rating: 0-50, Good; 51-100, Moderate; 101-200, Unhealthy; 201-300, Very Unhealthy; 301-500, Hazardous.)

ALMANAC

Almanac table showing moon phases (Full, Last Q., New, First Q.) and sunrise/sunset times for Feb 4, 12, 18, and 26.

SKI FORECAST

Cold temperatures will continue to allow for snowmaking into tonight. A few snow showers will cross the area late tonight, leaving a coating in spots. Milder Monday afternoon.

FOR THE RECORD

Table of weather records for Cleveland, including high and low temperatures, wind speeds, and precipitation for various dates.

WORLD TEMPERATURES

Table of world temperatures for various cities like Acapulco, Amsterdam, Athens, etc., with columns for city, today, and conditions.

Alignments alter Cleveland's medical landscape

HEALTH FROM 1-B

If all the Health Action Council members join the initiative, some 350,000 area residents will be involved. Patrick Casey, executive director of the Health Action Council, said member businesses made a commitment to reward hospitals that provide quality care, as identified in the Cleveland Health Quality Choice program.

tine Health System includes St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland, St. John West Shore in Westlake, and Timken Mercy in Canton.

Columbia/HCA's plans to put another \$500 million into the Cleveland area and have a significant presence throughout the state have created a climate of uncertainty about other possible acquisitions. Those plans have also slowed or scuttled some agreements that were in the works.

Columbia/HCA's strategy in other parts of the country has been to buy suburban hospitals and then add a large, high-expertise facility in the city to its network. It's entrance into Ohio, with St. Vincent downtown, has been a little different. What's similar, however, is the fast pace of Columbia/HCA conversations with other hospitals across the area and the state, according to industry insiders.

Characteristically, Columbia/HCA officials decline to discuss any possible mergers or acquisitions until a letter of intent is signed. "It's our policy not to mention who, unless a deal is complete," said Rebecca Flynn, spokeswoman for Columbia/HCA.

Since the Sisters of Charity deal, Flynn said, Columbia/HCA has not signed any letters of intent in Ohio. The entrance of the nation's largest hospital company stalled Blue Cross and Blue Shield's plans to add several hospitals as partners in its for-profit subsidiary with Meridia Health System, Blue Cross spokesman William Silverman said.

Aultman Hospital, in Canton, and Massillon Community Hospital had been close to a merger until Columbia/HCA came calling on Massillon. Aultman withdrew its offer recently, and Massillon continues to talk with Columbia/HCA, which is based in Nashville, Tenn.

"They [Columbia/HCA] are kind of like the 900-pound gorilla," said Tim Kraft, director of public relations for Aultman Health Foundation, parent company of the hospital. Silverman said Blue Cross's chief executive officer, Jack Burry, might create a partnership with another company to get bigger. The company's chief competitor in Ohio, Community Mutual,

has grown by merging with the Blue Cross plans in Indiana and Kentucky into an entity now called Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

"We need to be bigger to compete and in order to do vertical integration," Silverman said. Vertical integration means all health care components — insurance, hospitals, doctors, nursing homes, surgery centers, home health care and other areas — are all in one company, under one roof.

Who Blue Cross will do business with remains to be seen. "He [Burry] can pick and choose," Silverman said. "He's had many, many come to him with different kinds of deals."

If Columbia/HCA bought into Blue Cross, as has been rumored, it would signal a major change for the hospital company. Insurers and managed-care companies that now contract with Columbia/HCA hospitals and surgery centers throughout the country might rethink their contracts with the company if it is about to turn into a competitor.

3 main players

Three main hospital-health care groups emerged in the Greater Cleveland-Akron area before Columbia/HCA's entrance. Two of them, centered on University Hospitals Health System and Blue Cross and Blue Shield, have three main components — insurance, hospitals and doctors.

The third major group, the 11-hospital Health Cleveland Network, which includes the Cleveland Clinic, Summa Health System from Akron, EMH Regional Medical Center and others, has not joined with a particular insurer or managed-care company.

Columbia/HCA could establish a fourth powerhouse or it could gobble up one of the others. Questions remain about the potential impact of the other for-profit company in Cleveland, the Pennsylvania-based Primary Health Systems. Primary Health Systems owns St. Alexis and Deaconess hospitals and recently announced it would buy Mt. Sinai Medical Center.

The limited partners of PHS, who are financing some of their deals with capital from the huge Japanese investment firm Nomura, have said they plan to operate a low-cost, high-quality community-based health network that will be attractive to local businesses and managed-care companies.

Turnpike's wisdom in borrowing questioned

TURNPIKE FROM 1-B

A 1986 General Accounting Office report said that of 34 states surveyed, 19 tied long-term borrowing to the purchase's life.

Turnpike officials say their financial practices are prudent. For years, the commission used turnpike revenues to pay for everything from resurfacing to toll collector wages to new interchanges. But expenses began rising faster than revenues because tolls had not been raised since 1982, officials said.

Much of the money from the 1994 bond issue went for big-ticket items such as the new Baumhart Rd. interchange in Lorain County. But nearly one-third went to pay for the 1994 resurfacing and to reimburse a turnpike construction fund for the cash spent on the 1992 and 1993 resurfacing, records show. The paving from 1992 to 1994 is expected to be due for replacement no later than 2001. Under the current repayment schedule, the turnpike will be paying for the paving until 2010, including about \$17.4 million in interest.

Turnpike Executive Director Allan V. Johnson, Comptroller Craig Rudolph and Commission Chairman Umberto Fedeli referred questions about spending and budget matters to spokesman Stephen G. Lorton. Lorton said it was important to focus on the turnpike's overall borrowing picture "rather than an isolated issue or two."

In a written statement, he said: "While in the final analysis, bond proceeds may ultimately be applied to some projects with shorter average lives than was originally anticipated (and also, current revenues may be applied to longer-lived projects the flexibility afforded by averaging allows the totality of the investments in the enterprise to be maximized.)"

Lorton said some of the projects are short term, but most, such as new interchanges and maintenance building renovation, will last for years after the bonds are repaid in 2024. The averaging approach "is the only practical way to conduct such a wide-ranging, complex program as that of the Ohio Turnpike," he wrote.

Officials from the state Office of Budget and Management said that when the state includes short-term purchases as part of a larger package — such as personal computers as one element in a \$100 million education construction bond issue — the deal is structured to include accelerated repayment in the early years to pay off the short-term items quickly. "We haven't borrowed longer than the asset would last as far as I'm aware of," said debt coordinator Herb Kruse, a 16-year veteran of the office that tracks all state-issued debt. "You don't want to spend 15-year money on five-year

equipment."

Lorton said paying for resurfacing with borrowed money was not a change from paying for it with money that has not been borrowed. "There is no change in philosophy. ... It's still money we have. I don't understand the point," he said.

"Clearly, it's a departure from past practice," said David F. Schulz, director of Northwestern University's Infrastructure Technology Institute. "It's a departure that could raise some eyebrows" among public finance experts.

Analyst Bozzo said she was not aware of the turnpike's intent to borrow long term to pay for resurfacing when Fitch gave the turnpike bonds an A-plus credit rating before they were issued in 1994. She said the practice would not affect the current rating, which is Fitch's opinion of the turnpike's ability to repay its debt.

But Bozzo said continuing the practice could affect the turnpike's future credit rating. "Management is definitely a factor."

The turnpike appears ready to continue borrowing for resurfacing, according to financial records. The turnpike is planning to borrow more than \$13 million to cover 1995's resurfacing work, according to a declaration signed last June by Chairman Fedeli. And the turnpike's financial adviser has recommended borrowing \$71 million more to pay for resurfacing work through 2000.

Lorton said the documents do not commit the turnpike to borrow. The commission will decide soon how much it will borrow this year based on factors such as interest rates and the turnpike's fiscal condition, he said.

Turnpike Commissioners Jerry Wray, director of the Ohio Department of Transportation, and Marilyn R. Baker, secretary-treasurer for the commission, said they were concerned about the borrowing. The other three commissioners would not comment or could not be reached.

Wray said it would be unfair for him to second-guess the turnpike staff. But he said he would view resurfacing as basically a fixed cost of annual operation.

"Using some of that [borrowed] money on an as-needed basis to maintain the system I think is an acceptable practice, as long as you don't make it a long-term consistent practice," Wray said. "I will probably raise questions about that with the other commission members."

Baker, who joined the commission in July, would not directly address the resurfacing issue. But she said that at the October turnpike meeting "I was concerned about the level of debt, and that has not changed."

Voinovich to honor Pilla, five Ohioans

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBUS — Bishop Anthony Pilla and a Cleveland Catholic school principal are among six Ohioans who will be honored next month by Gov. George V. Voinovich. Voinovich will present the 47th annual Governor's Awards in Columbus on Feb. 8. The awards are co-sponsored by the Ohio Newspaper Association. Voinovich said the winners are "a diverse group ... but they all share the

same determination, motivation and commitment to make a positive difference in their pursuits."

Pilla, president of the National Conference of Bishops, is well-known for his humanitarian activities. Lydia Harris is principal at St. Adalbert School, where students have a 100 percent high school graduation rate.

Other honorees are: Eddie George of Abington, Pa., Ohio State University's Heisman Trophy

winner who set single-season and single-game rushing records last season.

Roger Ailes, a Warren native and Emmy-winning journalist who was media consultant to Presidents Reagan and Bush.

Arthur Kobacker of Columbus, founder of the Kobacker Co. and creator of the "I Know I Can" program in Columbus schools. Ronald Rosser of Roseville, a Medal of Honor winner.