



Fitzgerald Weather Station

Article & Photos by: Beth Shepperd

Steve Fitzgerald has been interested in the weather since he was a young boy. He says that his father watched the weather closely because his job as a college forestry professor took him outdoors quite often so he needed to keep an eye on the sky. Steve's interest accelerated in 2004 when his wife Cathy gave him a weather station for his birthday/anniversary present. After installing the weather station on the acreage of their North Carolina home, he soon began building a web page and making his weather data available on the internet.

Within days after moving to Tyler in 2006, Steve had his weather station set up and transmitting data to his website. Today, Steve hosts www.tylertexasweather.com, a website that provides real-time weather conditions along with several other types of current and historical weather information. The weather conditions are obtained from a personal weather station located in Steve's yard. In addition to current conditions, the website displays weather forecasts, historical weather data, advisories and warnings, lake levels and water temperatures, radar reports, lightning data and several other aspects of local weather.

Steve produces his own weather forecasts using specialized weather forecasting software. He has found his forecasts to be nearly as accurate as those of the National Weather Service. Information for Steve's weather website is automatically produced twenty-four a day on a dedicated computer running various weather programs and scripts, then uploaded to Steve's website.

The website also provides four live-streaming webcams that show the current weather around his house. A time-lapse video from one of the webcams is also produced each day. Steve's website allows visitors to contact him with questions or leave comments on a guestbook. He once received an inquiry from a visitor asking exactly where in Tyler

the webcams were broadcasting from because the visitor's mother who lived in New Jersey enjoyed checking on the weather in Tyler. A few days later Steve happened to notice a woman stop in front of his house, get out of her car, then start waving to the cameras while talking on her phone. He learned that she was saying hello to her mother. Another interesting inquiry came from a viewer looking for the amount of rainfall that fell on a particular day several months before. He needed the information in regards to an insurance claim and was unable to get it from the Tyler airport because of an instrument malfunction on that particular day. Steve was able to quickly provide the information from his website.

With all the rainy weather we had last year, the activity on Steve's website was, by far, the most it had ever been. It was viewed over 300,000 times last year by visitors from 443 towns and cities in Texas, all 50 states in the US, and 117 countries around the world. People wanting to check the weather, watch the clouds roll in, learn about Tyler, Texas or just check the forecast, go to www.tylertexasweather.com for accurate, up-to-date information. Steve Fitzgerald's passion for weather helps many people stay informed and safe in East Texas.