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762-1996 StarLine
Storm updates by telephone: Category 1111

WEATHER
Partly sunny
Today: High near 90 with a 20 percent chance of an afternoon shower.
Complete forecast on 10A

Morning Star

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furious FRAN *unforgiving*

Massive cleanup begins; 12 dead

From staff reports

People began digging out, and drying out, Friday after Hurricane Fran smashed the coast late Thursday, causing death, destruction and flooding the likes of which this area hasn't seen in a long time.

The hurricane made landfall around 8:45 p.m. near the mouth of the Cape Fear River in Southport, then traveled up the Cape Fear River, battering New Hanover, Pender and Onslow counties before turning inland toward Raleigh, where it still packed winds of more than 60 mph, said Reid Hawkins of the National Weather Service in Wilmington.

The maximum wind gust was 105 mph at Southport, and rainfall was 6 inches in Wilmington and 8 inches along the coast, the Weather Service reported.

The strongest storm surge, about 11 feet, hit around Mason Inlet, at the northern end of Shell Island, said coastal geologist Dan Pearson.

Statewide, the storm is blamed for 12 deaths.

One Marine died and two others survived a harrowing ordeal at North Topsail Beach. Their car wrecked as they headed toward the high-rise bridge leading into town. The three plunged into the Intracoastal Waterway and tried to hold onto each other, but the current swept away two of them.

One of those two was found hours later clutching a tree in the waterway.

In the Onslow County community of Southwest, an 18-year-old woman died after a tree fell on her mobile home, pinning her to the floor.

A Bladen County man died of a heart attack after rescue workers were delayed trying to get to his home near Dublin during the height of the storm.

Around 7:45 a.m. Friday, emergency workers found an elderly woman clinging to a mattress in a marshy area on the mainland near the Surf City bridge. A Pender County sheriff's deputy said the woman lives in a mobile home nearby that was destroyed by the storm. She apparently floated across the road on the floodwaters. She was taken to a hospital for treatment.

The storm brought high winds, heavy rains and, most of all, a storm surge that flooded barrier islands. At North Topsail Beach, the surge washed over the island's main road, just as it did during Hurricane Bertha in July, and destroyed the town's temporary Police Department and damaged the Town Hall.

Some beach reports even compared the flooding to a standard that for years was practically unthinkable: Hurricane Hazel. The 1954 storm had until now been the benchmark of how badly this area could flood.

Hurricane Fran moved faster

Please see FRAN *on page 4A*

Staff photo / TYLER HICKS

Randy and Tina Parsons wade through knee-deep water about 5 p.m. Thursday on Lake Park Boulevard in Carolina Beach. They and Tracy Stanley (right) were riding out the hurricane.

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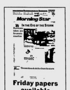


Friday papers available

Only a small number of the Friday, Sept. 6, 'Morning Star' were printed before our presses lost electrical power. Power was not restored until late Friday, too late to resume printing and make home deliveries. Starting Monday, while supplies last, copies of this historic newspaper will be available for sale at the Morning Star customer service counter at 1003 S. 17th St.

Restoring power days away

Staff photo / KEN BLEVINS

At North Topsail Beach, the storm surge washed over the island's main road, as it did during Hurricane Bertha in July. Oceanfront homes were destroyed, as well as the temporary police department.

From staff reports

Daybreak Friday cast harsh light on the damage Hurricane Fran left in Southeastern North Carolina. But residents were advised to enjoy the light while they could.

Hundreds of thousands of customers lost power in the storm's large swath. Damage assessment was still under way and power companies don't know exactly when power will be restored. In many places, expect it to be days.

About 95 percent of Carolina Power & Light Co.'s customers in Wilmington, Wallace and Whiteville lost power, said CP&L spokesman Kyle Hampton. In CP&L's service area in eastern North Carolina and northern South Carolina, about 670,000 customers were without power, he said.

By 6 p.m. Friday, crews had restored power to about 5,000 customers in the Wilmington area, leaving about 133,000 without power there.

They are concentrating on restoring power to public health and safety facilities first, said spokesman Gayle Van Velsor.

All but about 100 of Four County Electric Membership Corp.'s 26,000 customers were without power in Bladen, Duplin, Pender and Sampson counties. About one-third of Brunswick Electric Membership Corp.'s 52,000 customers were without power in Brunswick and Columbus counties, said member services representative Philip Morgan.

The prognosis may be worst for customers of Four County Electric Membership Corp. Spokesmen say customers could be without power for a week or longer.

"What we know so far is not good," said Joe Johnson, Four County Electric engineering manager. "Our preliminary evaluation tells us that major damage occurred to our transmission line which is the main thoroughfare of our system. Until this is rebuilt we're not able to energize the substations that serve our customers. It will take at least two to three days to rebuild the transmission lines."

Additional crews were en route Friday from electric cooperatives throughout the Southeast to help with restoration efforts.

"The damage is far worse than Hurricane Bertha," said Four County General Manager Edward E. Brown Jr. "For all purposes Four County's electric system is completely down. . . . The cooperative is aware of all outages. Consumers may still want to report their outages; however, it will take at least two days to make transmission system repairs and to start energizing distribution lines."

The news was a little better in Brunswick County, where power

Please see UTILITIES *on page 4A*

The numbers

Electricity: 670,000 area CP&L customers without power, as well as thousands of co-op customers in the region

Phones: 840 reports of lost service at BellSouth

Water: Wilmington's system on backup power; community systems without service

Roads: Massive debris. Problem areas include U.S. 17 at Hampstead, N.C. 132 at Castle Hayne, U.S. 74/76 at Wrightsville Beach

AFTER HURRICANE FRAN

Fran

Continued from page 1A

than predicted and hit early in the evening. It grazed the east end of the Brunswick County coast, but bore inland at Southport, sending the most destructive winds and storm surge into New Hanover, Pender and Onslow counties.

The eye passed Wilmington about 9:30 p.m.

Emergency officials in Southeastern North Carolina counties had trouble estimating damage Friday after finding roads impassible from downed trees, broken telephone poles and dangling power lines. Power in most of the area was out Friday.

Wilmington Mayor Don Betz said 1 percent of the city's houses were destroyed, 24 percent have major damage and 75 percent have minor damage. He said 237 businesses were damaged, compared with 13 during Hurricane Bertha.

The mayor estimated more than $5 million in damage to public property, such as stoplights and street signs.

New Hanover County officials also are predicting huge damage estimates.

"We're 10 percent done and probably have $15 million already — and that's just in the unincorporated area," said Inspections Director Jay Graham.

The amount of debris blown down by Fran was four times the amount stripped by Bertha, officials said. The county plans to extend its contract with D&J Enterprises of Auburn, Ala., the company hired to clean up after Bertha, said County Manager Allen O'Neal.

D&J and three other companies will be hired to help collect debris in the city.

The beach towns have ordered generators to try to get water and sewer systems operating. But without power, it may be four to seven days before residents are allowed on the beach, town officials said.

Schools in New Hanover County will likely remain closed at least for a few days next week, said Dan Summers, the county's emergency management coordinator.

Carolina Beach

In Carolina Beach, portions of U.S. 421 and Lake Park Boulevard were under 6 feet of water by 9 p.m. Thursday. The business district was flooded, and the Fire Department had to find higher ground.

Floating cars and trash bins bumping into a condominium building scared two people riding out the storm. Holed up in The Breakers condominiums at the far north end of Carolina Beach, the pair sought rescue when they thought waves were breaking up the building.

Brian Roberts, assistant fire chief, said the people were fine, though rescuers waited until the eye of the hurricane passed around 9 p.m., when the wind changed direction and began blowing water out to sea.

Water reached door handles of first-floor condos at Driftwood Village, at Hamlet Street and Lake Park Boulevard, and some roofs have been damaged.

Three feet of sand covered much of the northern end of Carolina Beach Avenue. Sand blew over U.S. 421 along Wilmington Beach, through alleys and into restaurants along the Boardwalk.

About 3 feet of sand poured into the Olde Salt facing the Boardwalk, creating a pile halfway up the bar and leaving chairs overturned.

In some places, mailboxes were almost buried in sand.

Surging water carried cottages along Carolina Beach Avenue from their foundations, destroyed some homes along Kure Beach and Wilmington Beach and destroyed cars parked beneath condominiums and along streets.

The storm surge lifted small cottages off their foundations and deposited them yards to the west. One house sat in the center of Canal Drive, its battered brick foundation about 10 feet away.

"We were in the Atlantic Ocean," joked Donna Benton, whose Carolina Beach Avenue home sat firmly on its foundation while three around it did not. Water flowed in waves into the bottom floor of her home, tossing couches and a countertop around.

"I got scared when I heard the furniture banging around underneath us," she said.

Waves carried air conditioners, washing machines, dryers, fans, drinking glasses, long pieces of roof gutters, pieces of vinyl siding, shingles and even a box of Cascade dishwashing detergent and scattered them across the sand that used to be a road.

Freddy Phelps and his family had just laid 12 new pilings to help repair Carolina Beach Fishing Pier from Hurricane Bertha's damage when Fran finished them off.

The pier, restaurant and arcade were destroyed. Pilings joined wood and pieces of arcade games in a huge pile at least 70 feet from bare pilings where the pier used to be.

"We hadn't recovered yet from Bertha," Mr. Phelps said. "We might go into another business."

Carolina Beach police officers, responding to early morning reports of looting, ordered people to heed the mandatory curfew or risk detention by the National Guard.

Entry to the island over Snow's Cut Bridge was restricted to members of the town's damage assessment team and Kure Beach officials. The National Guard brought in about 30 men by 12:30 p.m. to enforce the curfew.

Down the road at Wilmington Beach, parts of cottages were reduced to piles of wood and inches of mud covered floors. The dunes guarding the beach were gone.

Dorina Risk, 70, stayed in her two-story cottage just north of Atlantic Towers with her 82-year-old husband, her son and her granddaughter.

"My husband has Parkinson's," she said. "You take him to the shelter and people stare and gawk."

She had no luck getting a hotel room before Bertha hit, so she wasn't going to try again.

With her husband too weak to go upstairs, the family stayed on the first floor and tried to fight off the water surge by piling furniture in front of the door.

"We tried at first to mop it up," she said. "But it didn't seem to help much because the waves kept coming in."

Her son tried holding the door.

"When that gush of water came in, it knocked him down."

After it was over, she dug photographs of her children out of a layer of mud that covered her floor.

"Material things," she said. "You realize when this happens, a human life is worth much more."

Wrightsville Beach

From the air, Fran appeared to finish what Bertha started two months before at Wrightsville Beach.

Every fishing pier was damaged. Johnnie Mercer's Pier washed away except for the pier house, and about a third of the Oceanic Pier was knocked down by the waves.

Dunes were flattened all along the coast. In Wrightsville Beach, every road leading to the beach from Lumina Avenue or Waynick Boulevard was covered in sand.

At the north end of Wrightsville Beach, sand covered the public parking lot next to the Shell Island Resort. A neighboring 6-foot dune that separated the sidewalk and approaching Mason Inlet was washed away, leaving little protection for the $22 million resort.

Most of the beachfront houses sustained heavy flood damage. The water breached the protective berms, and Fran Brittain, a real estate agent who manages 100 units, expects people to find sand washed into their houses.

Wayne Bland, a neighbor, called Ms. Brittain to say the first floor of her cottage had water above the door, which means the water was at least 8 feet high, she said.

Mr. Bland said his pickup truck floated down Seagull Street away from the ocean almost to Lumina Avenue. The front steps to one of her beachfront cottages was embedded in the truck's windshield.

"The oceanfront damage was pretty bad," Ms. Brittain said. "I know that anything at all on ground level has been devastated."

With more than 90 percent of her units rented, she has had to keep messages on her voice mail telling people who have reservations not to come. Tourists from as far away as Nova Scotia have had to cancel.

Mayor Herb McKim said the town wasn't allowing anyone past the drawbridge into Wrightsville Beach, except power line crews and other workers needed to return things to normal.

Town police and the State Highway Patrol set up a roadblock at the bridge. The Coast Guard patrolled the Intracoastal Waterway to shoo away curious boaters. Several people used surfboards to get across, and others crossed on power boats.

He predicted it would be several days before people are allowed back on the island. Power lines are down throughout town, he said, and debris is making it difficult for fire trucks to get around. Town officials also were checking to see if seawater had infiltrated the water system.

North Lumina Avenue was impassable because of flooding, and water was reportedly up to Babies Hospital on the west bank of the Intracoastal Waterway.

Kure Beach

Flooding in Kure Beach took out Atlantic Avenue, and sand beneath the road was eaten away by the surf.

Fran also wiped out the part of Kure Beach Pier that Hurricane Bertha failed to take down, and the store on the pier is gone as well, Carolina Beach firefighters said.

Initial reports say U.S. 421 in Kure Beach is impassable. Oceanfront damage is severe from E to M avenues, a nine-block area. Several homes were in the water, and others were ready to slide in, said Glen Ivey, a Kure Beach councilman. Homes farther back, in the second through fourth rows, showed some damage, including shingles off the roofs.

"I just saw some helicopter pictures of some cottages that looked like they were broken in half," said Roland Register, New Hanover County tax administrator.

The Riggings and the neighboring Ocean Dunes complex were in bad shape, said Mr. Summers, New Hanover County's emergency management coordinator. "Nothing will be usable there without an engineering study first. Most likely that is a condemnation situation."

The storm surge undermined the sand and concrete foundations that support the buildings, he said.

Pender County

Topsail Island took a severe hit many compared to Hurricane Hazel.

Most roads were covered with sand. Refrigerators and other appliances littered the ground as well as parts of homes, signs and other debris.

"It's a disaster," said Ron Shanahan, a Surf City police officer. "There's a house in the middle of the road."

Another house in Surf City now sits on N.C. 210 in front of the Handy Mart, said Todd Thomas, a Surf City town councilman. He said there were several other homes that had been washed into roads elsewhere.

Mr. Thomas said the Surf City Fire Station was destroyed, with only one wall standing. The Surf City pier is damaged and the pier house is gone. Parts of Barnacle Bill's Pier were also damaged, but the pier house remained, he said.

The road leading to Topsail Beach from Surf City — Anderson Boulevard — is washed out for about a half-mile, said Topsail Beach Town Manager Eric Peterson.

The beach's dunes are flattened, he said.

About 95 percent of the oceanfront homes have substantial damage and between 50 and 100 are beyond repair, he said. One house has been washed into the sound, he said.

Topsail Beach Mayor Kip Oppegaard said he waded through knee-deep water to his house from a nearby pier. At 9:45 p.m., as the eye of the hurricane was apparently passing over, he said water under his house was 4 feet deep. The house is on 9-foot pilings, he said.

"I think when people come over here tomorrow they're going to find devastation that they haven't seen since Hazel," Mr. Oppegaard said.

At Surf City, a tornado rocked the N.C. 211 swing bridge Thursday afternoon, said Mayor Vance Kee. He said the bridge will remain closed to Intracoastal Waterway boat traffic until state Department of Transportation officials can inspect it.

People seeking shelter at Topsail Elementary School were moved out of the cafeteria Thursday after winds peeled off parts of the roof.

Onslow County

At North Topsail Beach, the hurricane pushed homes into the ocean and tore away whole chunks of roadways.

On Myrtle Drive in North Topsail, what used to be second-row

Please see FRAN *on page 7A*

Staff photo / TYLER HICKS

Norman McAuley and Peanut check out his pickup Friday morning in Carolina Beach after Hurricane Fran dumped mounds of sand into streets and yards.

Utilities

Continued from page 1A

was maintained through 10 p.m. Thursday as the storm raged.

About two-thirds of Columbus County's 12,000 customers were without power, said Mr. Morgan. "Columbus County is pretty bad," he said. "There are a lot of problems with trees down, transformers down. It's really not possible right now to tell you how long it's going to take" to restore power.

Mr. Morgan said CP&L doesn't know how long it will take to restore power.

"The damage is more widespread than Bertha," he said. "It will probably take longer."

About 900 utility and tree service workers from Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama were on their way to Wilmington to help, Mr. Hampton said.

On Friday, workers began assessing damage and deciding where to start. Mr. Hampton said CP&L workers will follow the same plan as with Bertha: Fix substations first, then work their way to feeder lines and finally individual neighborhoods.

Telephone and cable

BellSouth had 840 reports for lost phone service Friday in New Hanover, Pender and Brunswick counties.

Phone crews from Mississippi and Alabama will arrive over the weekend to help fix downed lines and restore service, said Kay Warner, BellSouth spokesman.

Local crews are already deploying generators that will restore phone service, Ms. Warner said. And as electricity is restored, phones will also begin to work. She didn't know how long it will take to restore phone service.

To help people who don't have phone service, BellSouth will install phone banks at the Winn-Dixie at Monkey Junction and in Carolina Beach and Hampstead. The phones will provide free local calls. People also can make collect calls or charge the call to another phone number.

"We are working as quickly as we can to restore service to all our customers," Ms. Warner said.

The trailers, each with about eight phones, will be at Seventh at K Avenue in Kure Beach, 220 Charlotte St. in Carolina Beach and off U.S. 17 between Topsail Elementary and Topsail Middle School in Pender County.

Time Warner Cable saw major damage to cable equipment and estimates that 60,000 customers lost service. Crews are working around the clock to restore service, but they cannot enter an area until CP&L crews complete work.

The cable company has crews coming from as far away as Texas and Maryland to help restore service in Wilmington. The company asks that customers not report a loss of cable service unless their electricity has been restored and their neighbors have cable service but they do not.

Water and sewer

Wilmington kept its water and sewer systems running on backup power, and city officials said the water has been treated and is safe to drink. Though the city can pump 8.5 million gallons of water a day, people are asked to conserve water. After talking with CP&L officials, the city hoped Sweeney Water Plant would have power late Friday.

People who are on New Hanover County water systems that are served by elevated tanks had water, County Engineer Wyatt Blanchard said, but small community systems were without power.

People on those community systems or who draw their water from private wells are cautioned to boil or treat water before drinking it because it could have become contaminated. To treat 1 gallon of water, health officials say, add eight drops of bleach if the water is clear, 16 drops if it is cloudy.

The water problems in some New Hanover communities worried fire officials, who say electrical fires are common when lost power is restored to homes with systems damaged by the storm. In some neighborhoods, there might not be enough water pressure to fight the fires, said Phil Kouwe, fire services administrator for New Hanover County.

Officials are cautioning residents to avoid situations that might cause fires. County officials have banned burning of yard debris, and Mr. Kouwe urged residents not to use open-flame candles and cooking equipment in the house.

"With no water, we just can't take the chance of any fires breaking out," Mr. Kouwe said.

Meanwhile, two pumper trucks used by fire volunteers are out of commission. Mr. Kouwe has asked for six tankers and two pumper trucks from the Asheboro area, which should help ensure there's enough water to fight fires.

Loose propane tanks pose a serious threat in areas that have been flooded, he said. In some areas, the roots of fallen trees also cut gas lines. Both situations can create a fire hazard, he said. Residents should report loose tanks or cut lines to emergency officials.

In New Hanover, sewage spilled from several county-owned pump stations, but county officials didn't have details. Mr. Blanchard said the only major damage he knew of was a generator that was destroyed by a falling tree at the Whiskey Creek pumping station.

To try to prevent sewage spills, Wilmington crews used a mobile generator at small pump stations long enough to keep sewage flowing before moving to the next one, said Susan Dankel, city budget director.

City officials didn't expect a significant restoration of power on Friday.

Roads

Hurricane Fran blew down about twice as much debris onto the region's roads as Hurricane Bertha, said Keith Craig, division operations engineer for the N.C. Department of Transportation.

"If Bertha was a five, this is a 10," he said.

Fifty transportation maintenance workers from other parts of the state and South Carolina will be in town today to work through the weekend clearing roads, Mr. Craig said. The DOT did not ask for outside help after Bertha.

DOT workers will clear debris and ditches, reconstruct road shoulders and fix signs, he said.

Mr. Craig did not know when the work will be finished.

The crews had Interstate 40 cleared by early Friday afternoon and expected to have most primary roads like U.S. 17 and U.S. 74/76 cleared by the end of the day.

All roads in Wilmington were cleared of trees by Friday afternoon, Mr. Craig said. The only roads closed are U.S. 74/76 leading to Wrightsville Beach and U.S. 421 South leading to Carolina Beach and Kure Beach.

The worst problem areas were U.S. 17 at Hampstead, which was covered with trees and debris, and N.C. 132 near Castle Hayne, where Prince George Creek was still running over the road at midafternoon Friday, Mr. Craig said.

U.S. 74/76 on the Wilmington side of Wrightsville Beach bridge was scoured — the water washed over and underneath the road, Mr. Craig said. He expected crews to have it fixed by late Friday.

City workers began clearing major thoroughfares in Wilmington Friday morning, but it may be Sunday night before all streets are passable, said City Manager Mary Gornto.

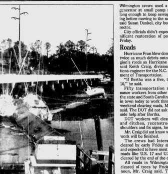
She asked people to watch out for workers who are trying to clear streets. Some crews, she said, were endangered by inconsiderate motorists.

Because most traffic signals were out in the city, Mrs. Gornto said, people should treat each intersection as a four-way stop.

Most street lights also didn't work, making the city much more vulnerable to looters after dark, she said.

Police officers from Charleston and North Charleston, S.C., arrived before daylight Friday to help direct traffic in the city and beach towns, Mrs. Gornto said.

Staff writers Lee Roberts, Tricia Vance, Claudine Williams and Bettie Fennell and Regional Editor Scott Whisnant contributed to this report.



Staff photo / KEN BLEVINS

Sailboats tossed about by the hurricane litter Bradley Creek at low tide Friday morning.

Fran

Continued from page 4A

homes are now a few feet from the ocean. There is no sign of the first row of homes.

A few feet away, a crater 60 feet wide and 10 feet deep is all that remains of a stretch of N.C. 210. At another spot, a house wall rests atop another portion of the road, now buried beneath 2 feet of sand. Asphalt is torn, and chunks of it are tossed about.

The top of the green road sign for Myrtle Drive and N.C. 210 was all that could be seen Friday above the water that filled the roadway crater.

In at least six places on Topsail Island, Hurricane Fran has created new inlets, where water runs from the sound to the ocean. The marshy land at Osprey Point, which has been rezoned for development, was flooded.

"I've got a pickup truck sitting on my front porch," North Topsail Beach Assistant Fire Marshal Bill Poe said Friday after learning his sound-front home still had four walls and a roof but not much else.

Officials had a hard time getting to the northernmost section along Secondary Road 1568 because the bridges were washed out near Villa Capriani, said Jason Oliver, a North Topsail Beach volunteer firefighter.

"There's things destroyed everywhere," he said.

Mr. Oliver owns one of the two houses that survived on Myrtle Drive.

The battered beach town, heavily damaged by Hurricane Bertha, lost its police station Thursday night. Officials said the mobile unit flipped upside down. The Town Hall was also damaged.

Ocean City Pier lost its tackle shop and part of the pier. Scotch Bonnet pier lost about 100 feet as well as its game room.

In Onslow County, residents were told not to expect power for seven to 10 days. The county also called for mandatory water conservation, with County Manager Ron Lewis saying water levels were dangerously low.

Yet people were seen washing their cars Friday.

The county has advised people with private water systems to boil water before drinking it and has asked residents to lend the county water pumps, helping officials pump from its reservoir.

Wilmington

In Wilmington, winds ripped down power lines, jerked up trees and snapped off a church steeple.

Part of the steeple blew off First Baptist Church at Market Street and Fifth Avenue, landing on Market. Bricks, wood and insulation from the steeple were strewn across the road, and part of the roof was damaged.

A huge tree was covering North Fifth at Kenan Plaza, but the Kenan Fountain apparently wasn't damaged.

The storm ripped off the roof of the Days Inn on Market Street.

Fierce winds blew out signs around the city, including at Bojangles restaurant in the 4000 block of Market Street where the sign flew off the frame and shattered.

City lamp posts in the 100 block of Market Street were ripped off their poles.

Water Street earned its name after the downtown street flooded. By 10:30 p.m., though, the water had subsided.

The hurricane tore off part of the roof of Galloway Hall, a dormitory at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. The dorm had water damage on all six floors below the hole in the roof, UNCW spokesman Mimi Cunningham said.

The university will remain closed until further notice. Campus officials are barring entry to students, faculty, non-emergency staff and sightseers.

In addition to the damage at Galloway, the university lost hundreds of trees and lots of shingles, Ms. Cunningham said.

In unincorporated areas of New Hanover County, officials reported trees down and some structural damage in almost every neighborhood. The Porters Neck area, particularly Bald Eagle Lane, was full of felled trees, said County Manager Allen O'Neal.

Commissioner Matt Mathews, who lives on the road, couldn't even get to his house to determine whether there was any damage. It was difficult to tell the extent of structural damage because no one could see beyond the trees, he said.

Looters

Less than an hour after Fran's winds calmed early Friday morning, looters lurked around several downtown businesses where shattered windows exposed drenched T-shirts and nautical knick-knacks.

About 50 officers from the Charleston Police Department in South Carolina arrived in Wilmington around 8 a.m. The crew that helped patrol Carolina and Wrightsville beaches during Hurricane Bertha will be based at Roland-Grise Middle School and will help Wilmington officers as needed.

About 150 National Guard troops were being called in Friday morning, and a public works crew from Charleston arrived to help with debris pick-up.

A curfew was imposed shortly after midnight Thursday and was effective until sunrise.

As long as power remains out around the city, residents should expect the curfew to continue, said Bill Whisnant, assistant city manager.

At least two people were arrested as officers were dispatched throughout the city to assess damage.

The break-ins occurred in the downtown area, said Wilmington Police Lt. G.B. Hickman.

Someone apparently also broke into the Sam's Club in the 400 block of South College Road. The wind stripped part of the roof off.

The New Hanover County Commissioners authorized a curfew for Friday night and said they would decide daily whether to renew it.

Sheriff Joe McQueen said some looting had been reported, especially at Kure and Carolina beaches.

Regional Editor Scott Whisnant compiled this report from staff writers Dana Allwein, Kristina Bartlett, Victoria Cherrie, Bettie Fennell, Phil Hervey, Marty Minchin, Holly Roberson, Jeff Selingo and Tricia Vance and correspondents Anne Minard and Misti Lee.