

Relief brings floods

Heat wave ending for eastern U.S.

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With relief tantalizingly near, the frazzled East Coast and much of the Midwest endured a 10th straight day of staggering heat and humidity Thursday.

The National Weather Service said the prolonged "hot wave," which at its height Tuesday extended 2,000 miles from the Atlantic to the Rockies, would be ending Thursday afternoon in Boston, Thursday night in New York, Friday or by the weekend at points farther south.

A cooler weather system was moving south and east from Canada, and the weather service said that by mid-Thursday it covered Minnesota, Michigan, northern Missouri, Chicago, Kansas and eastern Oklahoma.

By today the front was expected to extend from

North Carolina to northwest New Mexico.

But even relief carried a price. In many places, its arrival was heralded by thunderstorms that gave people one last taste of misery before the temperature and humidity dropped.

Low-lying areas along the Big Thompson River in Colorado, which flash-flooded and killed 131 persons last year, had braced for evacuation Wednesday as the front approached and rain poured down.

However, evacuation was unnecessary, and damage was minimal. On Thursday, after the front had moved on, thermometers that had read between 90 and 100 degrees were reading in the 80s.

But at the same time, the temperature in New York City was 104, the second-hottest temperature recorded in the city's history.