

# Storm matters Cape Fear

### 105 mph winds smash piers, down power lines and trees; no serious injuries reported

After fishing the North Carolina shore most of Friday, sending driving rains, knocking down trees and power lines and obliterating beaches, piers and piers, Hurricane Bertha made landfall between Wilmington and Swains Ferry.

The eye of the storm grazed the west edge of Bald Head Island in Brunswick County, then passed over the Kure Beaches before moving inland Friday night. By 8 p.m., the storm was headed toward Kinston.

Richard Anthony, head meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Wilmington, said the storm never did bring its full force to New Hanover and Brunswick counties, instead lurching north-northeast at the last minute and scotching the coastline.

But these counties were far from spared. The storm's top winds over New Hanover and Brunswick counties getting untracked all day Friday and into the evening.

"I don't know that we could have taken much more of a brunt," Mr. Anthony said.

The National Weather Service reported the storm's top winds around 105 mph and east waves at Frying Pan Shoals of Brunswick County once hit 26 feet. Six to eight inches of rain fell in New Hanover and Pender counties.

Around mid-morning, hurricane-force winds started ripping area beaches, and although the damage may not have been as devastating as Hurricane Diana in 1984, it was substantial.

Most areas were not as damaged. Kure Beach pier washed away, and John Mercer's Fishing Pier lost 50 feet, or a considerable length. Carolina Beach's piers were damaged.

Hurricane Bill in Surf City lost 40 feet, and Ocean City Fishing Pier in North Topsail Beach lost 200 feet, said the town's mayor, Marty Bostic.

After passing New Hanover County, the storm weakened more havoc in Onslow County. At an emergency shelter at Dixon Middle School, the roof of the gymnasium blew off, forcing evacuees to move to the cafeteria.

Also, wind lifted a small outbuilding and smashed it into the school. No one was hurt in either incident.

At one point, about 15 families who earlier decided to ride out the storm went off the island. Officials couldn't cross the bridge onto the island, so they considered having the Marines help airlift the families out. After the storm subsided, the people decided they could stay.



Keegan Gibbs (left) tests the power of Hurricane Bertha as his father, Richard, reaches for him Friday in Southport, near the mouth of the Cape Fear River. The Gibbses are visiting from California.

### Most won't get power back until this evening

By KRISTINA BARTLETT

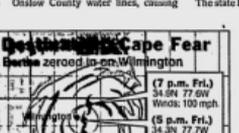
An estimated 113,000 people lost power Friday as trees downed power lines and caused transmission lines to be damaged.

Carolina Power & Light Co.'s damaged lines extended from Wilmington to Whiteville, Wallace, Southport and Hargrove.

The about 7,000 CP&L customers who lost power — about 66,000 of them between noon and 6 p.m. — can expect to wait until at least this evening before it is restored, said spokesman Pam Hubcock said Friday evening.

"It's very dangerous out there," he said. "We haven't been able to assess the damage," Ms. Hubcock said Friday evening. "It's very dangerous out there."

The company's damaged transmission lines in a swampy area between Leland and Eagles Island — must be repaired before a dense distribution



Power outages in Wilmington. (7 p.m. Fri.) 34,000 77,000 Wires: 105 mph (5 p.m. Fri.) 34,000 77,000 Wires: 105 mph (3 p.m. Fri.) 33,000 77,000 Wires: 105 mph (8 p.m. Wed.) 33,000 77,000 Wires: 105 mph (8 p.m. Tue.) 33,000 77,000 Wires: 105 mph (8 p.m. Tue.) 33,000 77,000 Wires: 105 mph

### City under nighttime curfew until Monday

By RODNEY FOUSHEE and VICTORIA CHERRIE

Declaring Wilmington in a state of emergency, Mayor Dan Batts Friday night issued an 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew that will be enforced until Monday.

Except for police, fire and rescue personnel, no one will be allowed on public streets or alleys until further notice, he said.

Wilmington Police Lt. G.B. Hickman said at least one break-in was reported downtown after the storm. To help off any looting, officers were assigned specific areas to keep watch on the city through the night, he said.

An around-the-clock curfew was issued for Carolina and Kure beaches until further notice to prevent looting and until damage can be assessed, said Rick Burkhardt, a Carolina Beach town councilman.

The National Guard, Wilmington Police and New Hanover County Sheriff's Department also will help keep order on the beach, he said.

Most of Carolina Beach's police officers were sent to the town's early, so Wilmington officers

were sent a backup in Carolina and Kure beaches late Friday afternoon. Adults and children in the city are expected to arrive Monday.

Enforce the curfew, which remains in effect until Monday, he said. "We will be in the area to enforce the curfew, which remains in effect until Monday, he said. "We will be in the area to enforce the curfew, which remains in effect until Monday, he said."

"These children are the way to get to this island," Mr. Rose said. "It's not happening."

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Because Hurricane Bertha knocked out electrical power to the Star-News for some hours on Friday, this is an abbreviated edition. We apologize for any inconvenience to our readers. A normal publication schedule will be resumed as quickly as possible.

Emergency information will be available on Station 47, 782-1909, category 1111.

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## HURRICANE BERTHA

### Bertha

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Residents who stayed home to ride out the storm began to get off the island later, calling local police and fire officials for a ride out. Ms. Medlin said.

Scott and Betty Wilson were shaken, but unharmed, after firefighters and police rescued the couple from their Fort Fisher Boulevard home after their roof blew off.

There was severe erosion on the already this strand, the mayor said. "I'm covered with debris from the pier, but it's still there," Ms. Medlin said.

### Pleasure Island

On Pleasure Island, homes, businesses and beaches were battered. Two of the island's three public fishing piers were ripped apart as the storm passed over the island and a third, Center Fishing Pier, was also damaged.

Officials estimate Bertha's eye passed over Carolina Beach around 3 p.m. Powerful waves carved deep ridges as they spilled over the north end of the island.

Winds topped to 100 mph ripped porches, shingles and parts of roofs off homes in Carolina Beach. High winds smashed out windows and ripped the roofs off businesses along the boardwalk.



A toppled palm tree is covered by a sawing that was ripped from shops on the Carolina Beach Boardwalk by the hurricane Friday.

### New Hanover

In Wilmington, sparking power lines hung like tinsel from trees through the city, igniting several small fires including two on McBratney and Marsteller streets. Firefighters snuffed more than 50 calls in the first hour of the storm, said Wilmington Fire Captain W.E. Glenn.

A gas tank crashed through the roof of Vince Landwehr's forest Hills home. Mr. Landwehr, 74, spent the heaviest winds hit, and reported "mild to moderate" erosion.

Reports from police officers who drove through Wightsville Beach the mid-afternoon indicated no major damage, just some porch roofs blown off and broken windows.

No boats tied up in the Intracoastal Waterway appeared damaged, but Aurice Road was temporarily blocked by downed power lines and trees. At Lane's Gate, a community of townhouses on Eastwood Road, toppled pine trees damaged four cars and blocked the entrance.

Damage in the northern part of New Hanover County seemed limited mostly to downed trees and by the road. Three pines on Gateway Road in Wyndwood subdivision that damaged roofs. But residents were trying to clear a path even before the storm ended.

The new four-car status flat in a field on Blue City Road. Given tomatoes in someone's garden were ripped from their bushes and lay on the road.

Incidents reported that Wood Street in Wightsville subdivision was impassable because of flooding. A power line on Castle Hayne Road was pulled down by a tree and roof panels from a car wash at Hatter's restaurant company at the airport were stream beds gashed nearby.

Celia Rosenbark and Scott Williams compiled this report with contributions from staff writers Mary-Maxine, Holly Robertson, Victoria Christie, Chris Davis, Rodney Foushee, Philip Harris, Tracy Vause, Jeff Solberg and Ben Fennell and correspondents Matt C. Lee.

### Shelter

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was so strong that he literally had to pull her two daughters into a closet to prevent them from being sucked into the storm.

After 60 years at Carolina Beach, Emma Robinson was "seen 'em all." In 1954, she and her family rode out Bertha in the house where she still lives.

"We didn't even run," said Mrs. Robinson, 75. Her cousin, Iris Owens, 73, finds the violent storms a little exhilarating.

"I'm a hurricane person," said the outgoing Kamea Hayes resident. Diane Jones of Kure Beach likes her privacy, so she chose to ride out the storm in her car.

She parked outside Trank Middle School and came inside only to use the restroom.

"If it gets too bad, I'll come back inside," she said as she washed her hands. "I've got a leauge in the back and a confessor. I've got books and I can listen to the radio."

"I've got a pizza, it's cold, but it's there. I've got my Pepsi. They're warm."

To suggestion that she was brave to wait out the storm in her car, she replied, "I'm not brave, I'm a Christian. It's in God's hands now. He'll do what he wants with me."

Around 10 p.m., as wind gusts continued to howl stronger, Mrs. Jones had a change of heart. She sought shelter made the school.

### Utility

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Crews from Rutherford County are helping repair the lines, mostly downed by fallen trees.

Four County Electric spokesman John Johnson said the company's crews — 17 from other parts of the state — wouldn't start to assess damage or make repairs until Friday evening, after the storm winds subsided.

BellSouth reported only 200 calls for repairs Friday evening in New Hanover, Pender and Brunswick counties. The number does not include customers who lost phone service when they lost power.

But that number will increase, BellSouth spokesman Kay Warnstead.

"No many people have lost their homes," Ms. Warner said. "And I'm sure as they come back, there will be some more trouble calls."

About 10 percent of the company's phone lines run underground and could be damaged by flooding, Ms. Warner said. She said most of Friday's damage was probably due to wet or fallen above-ground wires, but crews had only started damage assessments Friday evening.

Some phone line distribution sites were running on battery power Friday, but 100 generators being shipped from South Carolina will be installed starting this morning.

The company is setting up public telephone banks for people without service. The banks will be at shopping centers at Landfall, Garden Road and Market streets and Monkey Junction, Ms. Warner said.

Wilmington and New Hanover County officials and they know of no problems with the city's water supply or with any sewer lines.