

Eastern Portion Of State Tries To Dig Out Of Snow

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The eastern two-thirds of South Carolina attempted to dig out Sunday from a record-shattering winter storm that left at least four persons dead, up to 21 inches of snow, and virtually paralyzed an area unaccustomed to such severe weather.

About 3,000 persons were in public emergency shelters and approximately 6,000 were staying in private homes, South Carolina Civil Defense officials reported.

A spokesman said helicopters from Shaw Air Force Base at Sumter and McEntyre Air Force Base near Columbia were expected to complete evacuation of persons stranded in cars by Sunday night. However, it was estimated that several hundred more persons were awaiting rescue. Officials agreed it would be some time before the full impact from the storm would be known.

One of the hardest hit areas

is Sumter, 43 miles east of Columbia. Sumter County Sheriff I. Byrd Parnell said at least three persons — two in the county and one in the city — had died from exposure.

Authorities said Sunday at least 1,000 stranded motorists were rescued in the Sumter area alone. Snow depths ranged from 21 inches to 4-foot drifts that covered cars in this mid-state city of about 25,000 residents.

"We are completely immobile," John Miles, manager of Radio Station WFIG, reported Sunday afternoon. "It looks like Nome, Alaska. It's unbelievable. We are just not prepared for a storm like this."

Parts of Sumter were without heat and water, Miles said. He said a roof on a mobile home manufacturing plant collapsed causing the sprinkler system to go off and that workmen were unable to shut it off immediately.

Only military vehicles

equipped with chains from the nearby Air Force Base and the National Guard were able to move through the city.

Sheriff Parnell said most of the motorists were rescued from I-95 and U.S. 76-378. He said approximately 500 persons had to spend Saturday night in a motel south of the city.

The National Weather Service office in Columbia said snow depths across the state were still coming in Sunday afternoon. Reports indicated that the heaviest snowfall was in a band from around Orangeburg to Florence where 15 to 21 inches fell.

The weather service said the greatest official measurement was 21 inches at two locations near Orangeburg. The 21-inch measurement in Sumter was unofficial.

Elsewhere, five inches of snow was reported in the Piedmont and along the extreme south coast.



Slow Going

LOCUST GROVE, Ga. — Motorists and large tractor trucks begin the slow pace southbound on Interstate 75, as roads returned to normal Sunday. Hazardous conditions caused many central Georgia highways to be closed. (AP Wirephoto)