

# State Of Emergency Continued...

By TOM PREWETT  
ITEM Staff Writer

A blanket of snow measuring from one to eight inches in depth, depending on what part of the state one is residing has left Sumter and other cities literally crippled in the near blizzard conditions which have persisted since mid-day Friday.

With four more inches of snow expected before Sunday, driving conditions remain very bad, according to city police and the highway department, unless snow tires or chains are used.

POWER and telephone firms have their repair crews on stand-by, but state that the only icing damage is expected near the coast.

According to Kauren Green, spokeswoman for Carolina Power and Light Co. in Sumter, "We're in real good shape and have had very little trouble all night."

"Of course," he added, "snow alone doesn't give that much trouble." One CP&L employee, who did not identify himself, said there have been a few reports of limbs causing sparks on some of the lines, but no major powerline in Sumter reported nothing out of the ordinary since the snowfall began yesterday.

C. E. Pritchard, radio dispatcher at the City Police Department said that no crime or accidents of any consequence have been reported.

"Not too much was moving last night and not many people have gotten to their places of business to check for possible breakins," Pritchard said.

THE STREETS are completely impassable unless you have snow tires or chains. Our police cars are getting stuck everytime they try to go anywhere and many of the wreckers have gotten stuck trying to answer calls from cars which have slid into ditches.

"Nothing is moving right now except the snow," he said.

"My advice is to stay where you are unless you have special provisions like snow tires or chains," Pritchard said.

Pritchard suggested that persons having cars with four-wheel drive might be capable of limited travel in the city.

William A. Jordan, dispatcher for the Sumter office of the S.C. Highway Patrol had similar reports from the out-of-city roads and streets.

"Nothing can move fast enough to have any real accident other than running into ditches," he said.

"Unless you have snow tires or chains," he said, "you've had it or you're going to."

Fire calls answered by the Sumter Fire Department, since the snow began have been routine except for one snow-related accident and fire at Thomas Ellison Jr.'s Gulf service station, 742 N. Main St. at 2:15 a.m., today.

According to Lt. Charles Holland of the fire department, a car skidded off the road and into a gas pump, knocking it completely off its foundation.

The base of the pump caught fire but the car drove away from the scene.

Ellison, who lives at the station, extinguished the gas fire with a portable fire extinguisher before firemen arrived at the scene. The only damage was to the pump.

Just about all activities planned for the weekend have been postponed or cancelled.

According to W. Andre Dowling, president of the Sumter County Heart Assn., Heart Sunday has been tentatively postponed until next Sunday unless there is a big change in the weather.

LOCAL WEATHER authorities predict no change in the weather, other than "more snow."

Although a halt of the snow is predicted by noon today or earlier, a resumption is expected tonight. A clearing which earlier had been predicted for today has apparently been delayed until Sunday.

High temperatures Friday were approximately 40, dropping to near freezing during the afternoon and to below freezing after dark.

Continued from 1  
this sort of situation.

"Our biggest need now is to get snow plows in here to get this snow and ice off the streets so our citizens can move around and so we can get food and fuel to them."

West told Kolb that snow plows and other machinery would be moving in to Sumter and other stricken areas from cities in the upper part of the state and from North Carolina to help in the clearing operation.

He also noted that the Farmers Home Administration and other agencies would be making loans to help restore conditions to normal in Sumter.

"I have heard that your water supply ran out yesterday," Gov. West mentioned to Kolb. "Has it been restored yet?"

"Our water supply is in good shape now," Kolb replied. "The water pressure dropped in the city Saturday night as a result of roof cave-ins at two of our local manufacturing concerns, but the pressure has been completely restored."

"There was a false rumor started Sunday that the water now in use since the pressure was restored is not pure," Kolb said, "but this is not true. Our citizens may use the water without fear."

"I don't know what we would have done without your National Guard to help us in this emergency situation," Kolb told Deputy Adjutant General Henderson.

"It takes an emergency situation like the one we are experiencing now to appreciate the true value of the National Guard," Gen. Henderson replied.

Gov. West and Gen. Henderson spoke briefly with Sumter Mayor Richard P. Moses, Sumter Fire Chief T. A. Green, Police Chief L. W. Griffin and Sumter County Sheriff I. Byrd Parnell toward the conclusion of his meeting with them.

Sheriff Parnell told the Governor that he would appreciate him urging people to stay off the highways for the duration of the crisis.

"If people would just stay off the highways we could get them cleared," Sheriff Parnell told Gov. West.

"We are fortunate that we haven't had any more fatalities due to exposure than we have," he concluded.

## THREE DEATHS REPORTED

Sumter County Coroner Howard Parnell has attributed three deaths which occurred in Sumter since Friday to exposure and freezing.

Maymon Pack of Gasser Street, age undetermined, was found outside 1035 Bass St. at 11:30 p.m., Saturday, by Herbert Bell of that address.

Pack had apparently been in Bell's yard many hours when he was found.

Junius Blanding, 49 of 1028 Decatur St. was found on South Guignard Drive at 4:30 a.m., Sunday, and pronounced dead on arrival at The Tuomey Hospital.

Blanding, who was found in the snow, had apparently been there since Friday night.

Haynesworth Anerson, 35, of Dalzell, was found Sunday at 10 a.m. on Highway 521 approximately one mile out of Dalzell.

According to Coroner Parnell, Anderson had apparently been trying to get to his home Saturday night when he fell and died from exposure and freezing.

Coroner Parnell stated that inquests into the three deaths will be scheduled pending the outcome of the investigation.

## DAMAGE EXTENSIVE

Sumter Sen. T. O. Bowen today estimated that damage to poultry houses in Sumter County caused by heavy snow and ice during the past month may total between \$3-4 million.

An estimated 56 poultry houses valued at approximately \$20,000 collapsed under the heavy storms which buried Sumter and surrounding counties over the weekend.

Sen. Bowen noted that 25 of the poultry houses collapsed under heavy ice which accumulated during a sleet and freezing rain storm which struck the area about a month ago.

"I've been in touch with Gov. West and Sen. Thurmond's office all day as well as the State Senate's Agricultural Committee and the Farmers Home Administration," Sen. Bowen declared, "and every effort is being exerted by everyone to get this area declared a disaster area which will make loans available to save many producers from bankruptcy."

According to Sumter County Extension Leader Dick Tillman of the Clemson Cooperative Extension Service, in addition to the damage to poultry houses, dairymen in the county have

reported loss of three milk storage tanks; each containing thousands of gallons of milk.

Beef cattle farmers have reported that they have been unable to get food to their cattle in their pastures due to the heavy snow.

According to Tillman, the extension service has requested the use of helicopters to drop bales of hay to the hungry animals at the earliest possible date.

He noted, however, that the request has not been given a high priority rating and will not be until helicopters are no longer needed for rescuing stranded motorists or other victims of the weather conditions.

It was also pointed out that the Action Committee meetings, for poultry, swine, beef and dairy farmers scheduled for tonight has been cancelled until further notice.

## THE TUOMEY HOSPITAL

Operating at full tilt in spite of a shortage of help in most departments, The Tuomey Hospital is carrying out its vital functions "strictly on an emergency basis" according to Administrator Ralph M. Abercrombie Jr.

Patients and employees have been traveling to and from the hospital with the help of the Sumter County Sheriff's Dept., the County Road Maintenance Crew, Shaw AFB, the National Guard, city policemen and the highway patrol, plus a host of volunteers," Abercrombie said.

"We've brought patients in from as far as 20 miles out by using tractors to pull our ambulances when they couldn't maneuver under their own power," he said.

A heart patient, W. E. DuBoise of Turberville, was picked up at his home by a helicopter owned by Sharpe Construction Co. and brought to Sumter where an ambulance was waiting to take him to the Tuomey Hospital for emergency treatment.

"Most of our employees have been working double shifts and spending the night here. Several members of the medical staff have also stayed overnight," Abercrombie said.

"In spite of everything, we've had at least one operation performed at Tuomey and two babies have been delivered as of this morning," he said Monday.

"Crews of people have been working around the clock to help coordinate transportation, food and sleeping accommodations for the employees who didn't get to go home and the relatives of patients, who have been helping out with routine hospital duties," Abercrombie said.

"We are offering all of our services and, so far, we have been able to handle as many people as get the job done," he noted. "We have had adequate food and we have made arrangements to get an emergency supply."

"Some volunteers have helped in cooking and delivering the food around," he added.

Abercrombie said that several hospitals have offered to provide assistance in any form should the need arise during the period of crisis which currently exists in Sumter County.

On Tuesday morning, Abercrombie stated that, "We at The Tuomey Hospital want to express our appreciation to those individuals who have assisted us by providing transportation, including us with our transportation problems as we are still operating on strictly an emergency basis."

"We greatly appreciate those persons responsible for getting needed medications to us from the Veterans Administration Hospital in Columbia via helicopter."

Abercrombie affirmed that, "We are restricting all patient visiting except to the immediate family (of patients in the hospital). We ask those individuals who are coming to the hospital not to bring their cars but catch a ride and be dropped off."

Abercrombie cited an unusual weather-related incident which occurred last night.

"One of the things that we had to do through our emergency medical service was that we were required to go into the Mayesville area for the delivery of a baby at someone's home," Abercrombie said.

## ARMORY BECAME 'HOME'

Hot food, a live band for entertainment and unbuyable Southern hospitality were freely given to motorists stranded on U.S. 15 by the Sumter National Guard who housed between 150 and 200 persons in the National Guard Armory from Friday night through

Tuesday morning.

"We, through the help of American Legion manager Jearl Wheat who served as head chef and allowed us to use the Legion's kitchen facilities along with specific merchants, were able to make the very best of a difficult situation," explained F. R. Geddings, Sumter National Guard Battery Commander.

"The key to our effectiveness in helping the community was the roles of the devoted guardsmen who gave of their time and energy in meeting the needs that arose in this time of emergency," Geddings affirmed.

"Merchants who donated food to us were Bi-Lo's, Winn-Dixie, James P. Nettles, the Shrimp Boat and Perfection Bakery," Geddings said. He noted that the American Legion graciously consented to cook every needed meal from Friday night till Monday night when District 17 cafeteria personnel served the evening meal (in relief of Legion personnel).

"Jack Glover, manger of Edwards 5 and 10 cent store, also furnished us some food supplies, and he helped us in entertaining the people that were stranded here," Geddings explained. "We had a local band called Chapter Two that voluntarily played for the people, and they (the stranded motorists) really seemed to enjoy it."

Geddings said that the only remaining people at the Armory today were "a couple of truck drivers and a couple of motorists who are experiencing car difficulties."

Of the 150 to 200 persons who spent Monday night in the Armory, Geddings said that, "We were able to serve them heated sweet rolls, ham biscuits, milk, juice and hot coffee before we put them on the road this morning. These people have been moved to their cars, and they are presently trying to get out of town now."

Geddings noted that, "We have a number of people that are still trying to recover from local homes that we placed them in. At present we are trying to go out and get them so that we can deliver them to their cars and they can be on their way."

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

Several fires and (innumerable) emergency calls, many resulting from the heavy snow blanketing Sumter County, were answered by the Sumter Fire Department during the weekend and Monday.

None of the fires were answered after noon, Monday or early today, firemen continue to provide emergency transportation and to deliver prescription drugs to the sick and aged.

Firemen went to Mings Jewelers, 103 N. Main St. at 2:15 p.m. Saturday when it was reported that the walls were cracking due to the heavy weight of snow on the roof.

No fire resulted, but firemen turned off the electricity and evacuated the building.

Between 10:30 and 10:50 p.m., Saturday, the roofs of two metal buildings collapsed; one at Town and Country Manufacturing Co. on South Guignard Drive and the other at Georgia-Pacific Corp. on Houston Street.

In both cases, the roofs collapsed under the snow which had accumulated and the sprinkler systems in the two buildings were activated, resulting in a loss of water pressure in town for a period of several hours.

Firemen's attempts to get a burning house on the Wedgfield Road were frustrated by the deep snow drifts which blocked their way at approximately 1:25 a.m., Sunday.

All efforts to reach the house proved futile and firemen were forced to turn back. No further information as to who the house belonged to were available.

A fire which started at 401 S. Main St. at 4:48 a.m., Monday, spread to the house next door at 403 S. Main. Both houses were badly damaged by fire before firemen were able to get the blaze under control.

The owner of the house at 401 S. Main has not yet been identified. Buster Wilson was the occupant of the house at 403 S. Main. Cause of the fire has not been determined.

According to Fire Chief T. A. "Gus" Green, the two houses were lost because firemen were not alerted soon enough. He also noted that the sub-freezing temperatures had frozen one of the water lines on a truck answering the call.

Firemen aided in taking numerous injured and sick persons to The Tuomey Hospital for treatment during the crisis created by the heavy snowfall.

According to Fire Chief Green, the Sumter Area TEC Center at the corner of Guignard Drive and Miller Road is being used as an emergency sub-station, with five firemen assigned to answer calls in that area.

"We have ample manpower to do what needs to be done," Chief Green, "but it is the transportation which is a problem."

"Our men are using a tractor loaned to us by Kneecr Tractor Company and another large farm machine loaned to us by the FCX to get through to places that normal vehicles cannot reach."

"Besides these two vehicles, we have a truck and driver loaned to us by Shaw AFB and a jeep and driver loaned to us by the National Guard Armory," Green pointed out. "One of our firemen is letting us use his personal four-wheel drive vehicle just like it was city property."

"These vehicles are being used not only in fire situations, but also for delivery of prescription drugs, transportation for nurses and medical staff and from the hospital and for rescue of sick or injured persons."

"Our only concern at the moment," Chief Green said "is the fatigue that so many of our men are suffering. Many of them have been working for 72 hours straight through."

He noted that two snow plows arrived in Sumter from Greenville Monday afternoon. The fire department is responsible for housing and feeding their drivers.

"I hope that these snow plows will be able to completely clear our streets of this ice and snow within a couple of days," Green said. "Of course, stalled automobiles are a bigger problem than the snow in keeping the firemen from getting through to their destinations."

"The fire department urges everyone to be extra careful in their homes with heaters, fires and stoves because the delay in our getting to them caused by the snow and the abandoned automobiles could mean disaster for them."

"I would like to emphasize," Green added, "that unless people absolutely have to travel, please stay off the streets!"

## POLICE LENDING ASSISTANCE

Severely handicapped by the snow which has all but buried the City of Sumter and surrounding area, the city police department was operating as well as it could, Monday and today, to bring relief to anyone needing assistance.

"We have one police car available which is being used in addition to some farm tractors and a truck," Police Chief L. W. Griffin said Monday morning.

"There are literally hundreds of cars stranded throughout the city, some of them blocking the streets," Griffin said. "This requires that we move them out of the way and clear emergency vehicles from time to time."

"A number of out-of-state families are staying in the police building. They were stranded while attempting to travel through this area."

"Some of these people were told while they were in Virginia and North Carolina that Highway 15 was open, but I guess they just weren't aware of the situation down here."

"The main problem now is the ice on the streets," Griffin noted. "They are literally impassable to regular passenger cars."

"We are hoping that there will be some melting of the ice, today, Monday which would ease the situation."

"The citizens of Sumter and the City and County law enforcement departments are deeply indebted to Shaw AFB and to the local National Guard for the assistance they have rendered."

"Shaw AFB has made available heavy vehicles and personnel which, I'm sure, will see us through this crisis."

"NCOs and officers alike have been on duty with us around the clock since Friday night, providing transportation and rescue service to persons having to go to and from the hospital and to those stranded in their vehicles throughout the city and the county."

"Both Shaw AFB and Fort Jackson have provided several helicopters to aid in rescuing stranded motorists and in transporting people to the hospital."

"Food has been made available to the stranded families through the kitchen at the Sumter County Jail and through the efforts of the local Office of Civil Defense."

Chief Griffin said that there has been some crime in the city during the snow crisis, most of which have been routine break-ins.

"Rabon's Repair Shop, 901 N. Main St. was broken into Friday afternoon and seven lawnmowers and two motors, valued at a total of \$500, were stolen."

Rabon's Liquor Store on South Main Street was entered Friday night. Intruders made off with approximately \$120 in whiskey.

No serious traffic accidents were reported Monday or today and no further break-ins or other unlawful incidents were investigated.

ROADS 'EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS' The road conditions in Sumter County were described as being "extremely hazardous" by Sgt. Billy Poulos of the Sumter County Sheriff's Dept. Monday morning.

"The severity of the situation is increased with the addition of the packed snow turning to ice overnight," he declared.

"It is, at this time, almost impossible for any kind of motor vehicular travel anywhere."

"The only things that are moving with any success at all are the four-wheel drive military vehicles that have been loaned to us by Shaw AFB," he added.

"We hope that sometime after noon today, that we may have some small amount of thawing to occur, but we would encourage motorists not to attempt to get on the highway in a vehicle unless it is a matter of life and death."

"A great number of the streets in the eastern section of the City of Sumter and the eastern section of Sumter County are congested with motor vehicles at this time due to the influx of hundreds of vehicles from the area around Interstate 95."

The ITEM contacted the Sumter County Sheriff's Dept. early Tuesday morning and was informed that Sheriff I. Byrd Parnell and most of his staff worked all night in an attempt to alleviate the emergency situations which had continued to occur due to weather conditions.

## CLARENDON COUNTY

Ho less hard-hit than Sumter by the weekend's unprecedented heavy snowfall, Clarendon County is struggling today to restore its streets to navigable shape and send the huge influx of out-of-state motorists, which had been stranded on Highway I-95 and Highway 378, on their way again.

## The Sumter Daily Item

Established 1894 Published every afternoon except Sunday by Osteen Publishing Company, Inc. 20 N. Magnolia St. Sumter, S.C. Second Class postage paid at Sumter, S.C.

## SUBSCRIPTION RATE

One Year in Advance \$26.00  
Six Months 13.00  
Three Months 6.50  
One Month 2.15  
Mail Subscriptions same as Home Delivery Rates.

All carriers, dealers and distributors of The Sumter Daily Item are independent contractors. Advance payments for subscriptions may be made directly to Osteen Publishing Co. as agent. No responsibility for advance payments is assumed by the company until the money is received at this office.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulations.