

# Temperature Has Hit 100 6 Straight Days In Sumter

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Sumter's official temperature has reached at least 100 degrees for six straight days.

The hot spell has caused record power demand, but Carolina Power and Light Co. and area water service officials say they are confident they can handle the record demand for electrical power and water usage.

According to A.O. Smith, district accounting manager for CP&L, the utility company's customers set a record power usage peak last Friday, when the temperature reached 105 degrees, with 5,994 megawatts of power used between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Normally, most power usage occurs between 3 and 6 p.m. The company also recorded 5,954 megawatts of power used the day before.

SMITH ADDED that he expects the demand on the CP&L system to remain about the same this week.

Officials, however, have been warning consumers to expect much higher power bills, because of the unusually hot weather.

Last Thursday, Sumter reached 102 degrees; Friday, 105; Saturday and Sunday, 101, Monday, 100 and Tuesday, 103. Rainfall has been almost non-existent, more than 10 inches below what it was at this time last year.

While CP&L is expecting to meet demand, Smith is asking customers to exercise caution and conserve energy.

He offered these tips:

✓ Keep your house closed and window shades pulled down during the daytime to keep the heat out.

✓ Operate the cooling system at its highest comfortable level.

✓ At night, use window fans to help circulate air throughout the house.

✓ If possible do the laundry and dishwashing after 6 p.m., because it lessens the amount of power used at any one time.

TOM EVANS, Sumter city manager, said there have been approximately 2½ million to 3 million extra gallons of water pumped per day since the temperatures began hovering around the 100-degree mark last Thursday. The normal usage rate is about 11 million.

Evans said most of the increased usage has been by city residents who are watering their grass.

He added that the water system is "in good shape" and can meet the customers' demands. "We can go up to 19 to 20 million gallons per day. We have made some improvements in the system and elevated some of the tanks. I feel confident that we can handle the demand put on the system," he said.

The Memorial Park Center is still open for senior citizens who need to seek relief from the sweltering temperatures. The center, which is operated by the Sumter County Council on Aging, opens at 11 a.m. daily. Recreational activities are provided.

IN LEE COUNTY, David Rhame, disaster preparedness coordinator, said the Colclough Building has been opened for use by elderly residents, but so far his office has not received any requests by persons wishing to use the building. The requests have been primarily for window fans.

Rhame is asking anyone who is willing to donate a fan to help the senior citizens, bring it to the Disaster Preparedness office, located in the courthouse. The fans will be returned after the dry spell, he said.

The National Weather Service is offering little hope for a break in the weather. Tomorrow is supposed to be dry with highs in the upper 90s and the long-range forecast calls for highs in the middle to upper 90s through Sunday.