

Record heat wave blamed for death in North Carolina

By The Associated Press

Thunderstorms drenched the Midwest and southern Plains states today, after a heat wave singed the South with record temperatures blamed for one death in North Carolina and a damaging propane explosion in Virginia.

A violent hailstorm broke auto windshields in Utah, and showers and thunderstorms today were headed from the mid-Mississippi Valley across the Ohio and Tennessee valleys and the lower Great Lakes to the north and mid-Atlantic Coast states.

A 104-degree reading Saturday in Lynchburg, Va., was the highest ever recorded in that city. All-time heat records also tumbled in Augusta, Ga., where it reached 108 degrees Sunday, and in Roanoke, Va., where the mercury hit 105 degrees Sunday.

The extreme heat in Lynchburg caused an explosion in a propane tank on a second-floor balcony at Walden Pond subdivision Sunday, said deputy Fire Marshal G. Wayne Saunders.

He said the propane gas, which is heavier than air, apparently leaked out of the tank, floated toward the ground and was ignited by an exhaust fan from a first-floor laundry room. No injuries were reported in the fire but 12 apartments were damaged.

An elderly man in North Carolina died Sunday after he collapsed from the heat while riding his motorcycle, state police reported today. The man fell from his vehicle and rolled into a ditch.

In Utah, massive hailstones driven by winds up to 59 mph shattered at least 15 car windshields, and the National Weather Service reported sheets of ice stripped fruit trees

in the Oquirrh Mountain area southwest of Salt Lake City.

Today's forecast called for thunderstorms for the Gulf Coast, with showers and thunderstorms over the Great Basin and the Rockies and fair skies elsewhere.

High temperatures of 100 or above headed for the Carolinas and across Georgia and northern Alabama, from Oklahoma into north central Texas and over the desert Southwest.

Highs in the 90s were forecast from Florida through Virginia, from the Ohio Valley across the Gulf Coast, over the lower and mid-Mississippi Valley, through the southern half of the Plains, New Mexico and Arizona.

Highs in the 70s were predicted for New England, the upper Great Lakes and along the Pacific Coast.

Temperatures around the nation at 3 a.m. EDT ranged from 47 degrees at Concord, N.H., to 87 degrees at St. Louis, Mo.

Elsewhere:

— East: Atlanta 82 hazy; Boston 68 fair; Buffalo 67 windy; Charleston, S.C. 79 foggy; Cincinnati 76 hazy; Cleveland 79 partly cloudy; Miami 78 partly cloudy; New York 68 fair; Philadelphia 66 fair; Pittsburgh 68 fair.

— Central: Bismarck 57 partly cloudy; Chicago 83 fair; Denver 63 thunderstorm; Des Moines 74 partly cloudy; Indianapolis 82 fair; Kansas City 80 fair; Minneapolis-St. Paul 72 cloudy; Nashville 82 hazy; St. Louis 88 fair.

— West: Albuquerque 78 cloudy; Anchorage 54 cloudy; Las Vegas 76 fair; Los Angeles 67 fair; Phoenix 85 fair; Salt Lake City 61 fair; San Francisco 62 fair; Seattle 64 fair.

— Canada: Montreal 61 cloudy; Toronto 64 showers.