

# Heat Wave Scorches East Coast

From Staff, AP Reports

Temperatures from the mountains to the coast of South Carolina soared to near or above 100 degrees Tuesday, causing record power consumption and complaints from people working outdoors. The high for the Spartanburg-Greenville area was 101, recorded at the National Weather Service station at Greer.

Spartanburg General Hospital reported treating three persons with heat-related illness. A spokesman from Mary Black Memorial said a construction worker was treated for heat cramps. No one was admitted.

## Upstate Hits 101 Degrees

Donnie Caldwell, shift supervisor for Spartanburg Central Communications, said emergency services answered several calls for persons with heat-related illness Tuesday.

The hot, dry weather will not change through Thursday, according to the National Weather Service, and could continue throughout July for South Carolina, said state Climatologist John Purvis.

The 101 degrees at Greer broke the old record of 100 degrees set in 1977. The reading of 99 degrees in Beaufort also topped the 1977 record in the coastal town by a degree. Columbia may have been the hotspot at 104 degrees.

By late afternoon, it was above 100 degrees in Columbia, Florence, Sumter, Greer and Charleston, according to the National Weather Service.

In Anderson it was 99 degrees, and the mercury

was just three degrees lower in Myrtle Beach.

For the eastern half of South Carolina there probably won't be much relief from the drought and heat wave until August or even September, Purvis said.

Long-range forecasts show the heat wave and drought will continue because an unusual shift in the upper atmosphere is keeping normal weather systems from penetrating, he said.

The high pressure system has been more or less stationary since late winter, accounting for the low rainfall this spring and summer, he said.

Some farm experts say this year may be the dri-

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est this century and many areas around the state report a strain on water supplies.

An unofficial all-time record for power usage were set Tuesday at South Carolina Electric & Gas and a summer usage record was set at Duke Power Co., officials said.

SCE&G was churning out 2,819 megawatts of power between 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., the most since a reading of 2,813 megawatts last winter, said spokeswoman Becky McSwain.

"We do, however, have plenty of electricity to meet demands," she said.

Power supplies at Duke Power were "tight," said spokeswoman Mary Boyd.

The utility asked some industrial customers to switch to their own generators. Duke also had to buy power from another utility in Virginia to meet electricity demands, she said.

Paul Briggs Jr., Duke Power District Manager, said he would not be surprised if an even higher summer peak record were set today.

In spite of the increased power usage, the company had no problem providing power to the Spartanburg area.

"It was a relatively trouble-free day in the local area," Briggs said.

Possibly the only people not complaining about the heat are merchants who have the job of making summer more tolerable.

Many customers are braving the heat to purchase items traditionally associated with summer in an attempt to survive hot afternoons.

"Anything associated with swimming is

selling fantastic," said Cameron Black, manager of a K mart in Sumter, who mentioned innertubes, rafts and coolers.

He said pool supplies have been selling well. "We're out of small pools." And "we've been selling a lot of hoses."

The extreme heat also has spurred car trouble, which means busy days for wrecker services and body shops.

Many of Charleston's outdoor workers said they were holding up well early Tuesday as they watched the temperature head toward the 100-degree mark.

"The hottest job in the street is selling hot dogs over propane burners," says Tripp Compton, a partner in Lunda's Hot Dogs, which operates seven carts on Charleston streets.

A mounted patrolman in Charleston said the helmet and clothing officers wear makes them feel hotter.

"The helmet bakes your brain," said Ptl. Daniel Darrell. The helmet is required wear for mounted officers, to protect the head in falls, and most mounted officers wear bullet-proof vests because, Darrell said, "we are bigger and slower-moving targets."

Longshoreman Ben Grant, working on the State Ports Authority's Columbus Street Terminal, called the docks "the hottest places in the summer and the coldest in the winter."

The heat wave also is steaming much of the East.

Record highs Tuesday, in addition to South Carolina readings, included 97 at Baltimore, 100 at Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport, and 99 at Cape Hatteras, N.C.

"You can hardly breathe out there, but the letter carriers are pretty well

acclimated," Paula Emerson of the U.S. Postal Service office in Charlotte, said Tuesday. "Bless their hearts, they sweat a lot."

The National Weather Service warned that in western Tennessee temperatures in the mid 90s and 45 percent humidity would make it feel more like 120 degrees. Forecasters warned of similar heat index readings in North Carolina.

The weather service advised people to check frequently on friends and relatives living alone and said the elderly and people working outside should avoid exertion.

The heat comes at a time of drought across parts of the Southeast.

Rainfall in parts of Tennessee is more than 15 inches below normal for the year and officials cautioned against misuse of water.

"The drier it gets, the more people feel like they have to water their lawns," said Jim Hammond, a spokesman for Nashville Water and Sewerage Services.

Drought conditions have been classified extreme in 15 Maryland subdivisions, including Baltimore, Carroll and Harford counties, meaning 9 to 11 inches of rain must fall soon if crops are to be saved, said state Agriculture Secretary Wayne A. Cawley Jr.

He reported Monday that at least 30 percent of Maryland's corn crop already has been lost to heat and drought this year.

In Delaware, Dover-area potato farmer Jack Tarburton, president of the Delaware Farm Bureau, said 80 percent of that state's potatoes weren't irrigated this year because of lack of water.