

State stews in sizzling heat

By Merton Vance
Staff Writer

Sizzling heat sent thermometers rising and people seeking escape from the sun Tuesday as the second week of July shaped up to be a scorcher.

The temperature reached 99 degrees in Wilmington, according to the National Weather Service thermometer at the New Hanover County Airport. That was one degree short of the record of 100 degrees for the date in 1977.

Thermometers elsewhere in town, however, registered 100 degrees and above.

Although a few scattered showers were reported in the area during the afternoon, the weather forecast called for hot, dry conditions to continue until Saturday with little chance of rain.

"You can't push yourself too much," said J.W. Chavis, who was taking a break from renovation work at St. Stephen A.M.E. Church at 501 Red Cross St. Tuesday afternoon.

"I thought about knocking off, but if I do that, the way the weather people talk, I'd be knocking off for

the next three or four days," said Chavis, who works for Southeastern Waterproofing of Charlotte.

Otis Locklear, who also works for the Charlotte company, was taking a break and thinking about his home back in the mountains of Virginia.

"It doesn't get as hot up there," he said.

Some people manage to get accustomed to the hot weather.

"It's not bad," said Bob Stallings, a U.S. Postal Service letter carrier who was walking his route on Chestnut Street in the afternoon heat.

"I'd rather see it this way than cold," said Stallings, who has delivered mail for 15 years. "It'll let up one day, though. The humidity will let up. That's the worst part anyway, the humidity."

The cause of the hot spell is an almost-stationary area of high pressure, known as the Bermuda High, that is centered over the Southeast.

For the second day in a row, Carolina Power & Light Co. set a summer record for peak power demand. At 5 p.m. Tuesday, a demand of

It's not the heat: It's the HUMIDITY

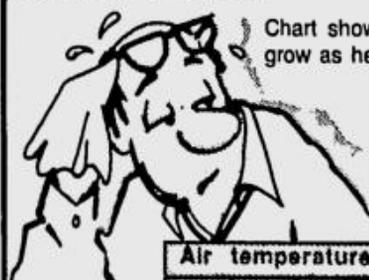


Chart shows how discomfort and health risks grow as heat and humidity increase

Heatstroke imminent
 Heatstroke possible
 Heat exhaustion possible

Relative humidity	Air temperature (degrees Fahrenheit)							
	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	105
Apparent temperature								
0%	64	69	73	78	83	87	91	95
10%	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
20%	66	72	77	82	87	93	99	105
30%	67	73	78	84	90	96	104	113
40%	68	74	79	86	93	101	110	123
50%	69	75	81	88	96	107	120	
60%	70	76	82	90	100	114		
70%	70	77	85	93	106	124		
80%	71	78	86	97	113			
90%	71	79	88	102	122			
100%	72	80	91	108				

Source: National Weather Service

Please see HEAT, 11A

Staff art by Robert Holst

Heat

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7,316 megawatts broke a record set at 6 p.m. Monday of 7,072 megawatts, said CP&L spokesman Wayne Ennis.

The previous record was 6,990 megawatts on June 12, 1985.

The all-time peak is 7,799 megawatts set during a cold snap in January 1985.

The heat index, which measures how humidity combines with high temperature to reduce the body's ability to cool itself, pushed what forecasters call the apparent temperature to a potentially dangerous 110 to 120 degrees. At that level, prolonged exposure to the weather or strenuous activity can lead to heat exhaustion or a heat stroke.

Iris Smith, a spokesman for New Hanover Memorial Hospital, said Tuesday afternoon that there were no reports from the hospital's emergency room of medical problems directly related to the heat.

The state Agricultural Extension Weather Office says this is an especially critical time for crops. A weather advisory issued Monday by the office urged farmers to apply extra water. The office urged live-

stock producers to avoid transporting animals unless precautions are taken to keep them cool.

It was also hot elsewhere.

On Monday, record highs were posted from southern New England into the Carolinas, with Baltimore hitting 102 degrees and Greer, S.C., and Newark, N.J., reaching 100.

On Tuesday, a weak cold front brought barely cooler temperatures and slightly lessened humidity to the northern part of the region.

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.

New York City swimmers got an extra hour of relief again Tuesday, as lifeguards at the city's 15 miles of beaches, 32 outdoor and 6 indoor pools agreed to work late. On Monday, nearly 400,000 people packed city beaches and an additional 100,000 dipped into the pools, he said.

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.

Cape Hatteras reported 92 degrees Tuesday, breaking a record for the second day in a row. Monday's high of 92 degrees broke a

record set in 1977 and Tuesday's mark broke a record of 90 set in 1980, the weather service said. The coolest spot on the coast was Manteo, which reported 90 degrees.

Where possible, people flocked to cool places.

"They come all day, just swarms of them," said Ellen Townsend at Linville Caverns. Temperatures in the mountains Tuesday hit 90, but the thermometer inside the caverns reads a constant 52 degrees.

"They come in gangs and come out and go right back in again," Ms. Townsend said. "We're having a good season."

Les Schobert, general curator of the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro, said most of the animals can handle the heat if humans just leave them alone.

"We just make sure they're comfortable, maybe put in a fan and make sure they have water and shade," he said. "Most of the animals can handle the heat if we don't do anything to stress them out."

"Animals are quite wise to this situation," Schobert said. "You and I forge ahead with day-to-day routine, whether that means putting on a tie or walking to the mall. We don't exercise as much common sense."

This report includes material from The Associated Press.

Calif

e in the Imperial Valley the open-ended Richter scale registering a magnitude 6.5 earthquake that killed 65 people in the Indio Valley in February

felt it, but fortunately I