

# **Southeast suffers in heat, drought**

**By The Associated Press**

The Southeast continued to swelter, with temperatures soaring above 100 in parts of the Carolinas and Georgia, and a drought emergency was expected to be declared in South Carolina.

It was 104 degrees in Columbia, S.C., Sunday, breaking a 1980 record of 103. It marked the seventh consecutive day above 100 degrees in the city, breaking the old record of six days of triple-digit temperatures.

It was much the same story Sunday in Charleston, S.C., where the 101 was a record high and extended the streak of 100-plus days to six. The previous record had been three consecutive days in the 100s, set in 1934 and 1942.

Records were also set in three North Carolina cities: Charlotte, where the temperature reached 100; Wilmington, where it was 99; and Cape Hatteras, where the temperature was 92.

The forecast for the region was for similar temperatures today, and the only rain predicted in most of the area was widely scattered thunderstorms.

John Purvis, a climatologist for the state of South Carolina, said today's expected drought emergency declaration would allow regional committees around the state to impose restrictions on non-essential water use.

Rainfall in South Carolina has been 15 to 20 inches below normal for the year. In Georgia, Atlanta is 15 inches short, and parts of the state's northern mountains are more than 20 inches below normal. North Carolina's Piedmont region was more than 16 inches below normal.

"You've heard of the straw that broke the camel's back," said Bobby Vause, a farm equipment dealer in Fayetteville, N.C. "This will be it for a lot of farmers. This is the very last thing they needed."

In North Carolina, some areas would need an entire year's normal rainfall over the next three months "just to get things back on center," said Grant W. Goodge, climatologist at the weather service's Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C.

Without substantial rain in the next two weeks, agricultural experts in North Carolina predict as much as 75 percent of the corn crop, valued at \$340 million last year, will be lost. The drought has also heavily damaged the state's Christmas tree crop.