

# Heat wave keeps strong grip on East

By Wayne Woolley  
Associated Press

A man in upstate New York was charged with stealing 292 packets of Kool-Aid — of assorted flavors. Highways buckled in the Philadelphia area. Scores of grass fires blotted South Carolina.

The mercury nestled in the 90s across the eastern United States, scorching crops in Georgia and causing a run on bottled water in Morrisville, Pa., and it was expected to stay that way through the weekend.

Relief from the heat by Sunday is only a possibility, said Jim Wagner, a meteorologist in the prediction branch of the National Weather Service's Climate Analysis Center in Camp Springs, Md.

The weather pattern causing floods in the Midwest was helping to keep the heat from moving out of the East, he said.

As others tried to beat the heat and high humidity by swimming or staying in the shade, Frank P. James, 27, was accused by police in Syracuse, N.Y., of trying to steal \$73 worth of Kool-Aid packets from a grocery store.

## Heat a health hazard

Although few temperature records had fallen — Rochester, N.Y., hit a record 97 on Tuesday — officials said the heat and humidity were strong enough to be a health hazard.

In the Philadelphia area Tuesday, the weather service issued an advisory about the danger of temperatures in the mid-90s coupled with humidity in the mid-40s.

On weather service reference tables, that com-



Two topless women stroll arm-in-arm past patrolling police officers in Washington Square Park Tuesday. The women identified themselves as Wrath, right, and Cat Frost, and said they are trying to beat the heat. New York state law permits women to go topless in public.

bination means a "heat index" of 105. That means the body feels as if it were 105 degrees, has a harder time cooling itself and is more susceptible to sunstroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion, the weather service said.

Authorities attributed no deaths directly to the heat wave. In the summer of 1991, 24 people, mostly elderly, died in their Philadelphia homes because of heat, said Jeff Moran of the city Health Department.

Highway officials in Pennsylvania and New York watched Tuesday for any further problems after

high temperatures caused concrete roads to buckle on Monday. Outside Philadelphia, Interstate 476 concrete slabs expanded enough to jut about 4 inches above the roadway, with similar problems on two roads in upstate New York.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation spokesman Rick Schoen said officials also were concerned about tar melting on blacktop-surfaced roads. "If it got really slippery, it could be dangerous," he said.

## Heat causing forest fires

In South Carolina, where temperatures were close to 100 across much of the state, forest rangers worried about potential fires.

A blaze that would burn five acres in normal conditions might burn 20 in a drought, said Russel Hubright, a forester based in Kingtree.

South Carolina firefighters battled 13 fires Monday and 34 on Sunday. Similar conditions in Georgia have damaged crops.

Soybean planting has all but halted, said Ed Poenicke, an agricultural extension agent in southeast Georgia. "If the weather doesn't change, it will be a tough year."

Not everyone complained about the weather.

In Atlantic City, N.J., officials hoped for as many as 50,000 people looking to cool off at the shore Tuesday after a record turnout of 150,000 on Sunday, said Rod Aluise, area chief for the city beach patrol.

Frank Lippert, a bottled water dealer in Morrisville, Pa., said his shop was busier Tuesday than other day than he's been in two summers. "Whenever anybody says it's hot, I say it's not hot enough," he said.