

Snowstorm Causes Accidents, Delays Across State

From the N.C. Outer Banks to Burlington, snowfall caused hundreds of schools and businesses to close.

By COURTNEY HATHAWAY
Senior Writer

Mother Nature showed a rare side to North Carolinians on Tuesday, dumping as much as a foot of snow in parts of the state and leaving behind a trail of car wrecks and closings.

And worries might not be over, as officials feared Tuesday that overnight temperatures would make for a dangerous morning commute.

Meanwhile, forecasters are still tracking the possibility of another snowfall early Thursday morning.

This prompted hundreds of businesses, schools and local governments to close their doors again today.

Tuesday's brush with Old Man Winter was the first significant snowfall since a major storm in 1996 that paralyzed the state under a blanket of snow and sheets of ice.

Phil Badgett, meteorologist at the Raleigh National Weather Service, said Winston-Salem reported 6 inches of

snow, while Stokes County reported 10 inches and Yadkin County and Surry County both reported 7 inches.

Closer to home, he said there were 3 to 4 inches of snow in Burlington and 1 to 3 inches in both Wake and Durham counties.

"The most reported snowfall was in the northwest (part of North Carolina)," Badgett said.

"Even at the coast they were hit. There was less than an inch at Cape Hatteras, which is pretty unbelievable."

The storm resulted in hundreds of closings and delays around the state.

N.C. Central University, UNC-Wilmington and UNC-Greensboro all closed Tuesday.

Although the N.C. DOT urged residents not to drive Tuesday, a large number of accidents were reported in Wake County.

Raleigh police Officer C. D. Smith said there had been too many accidents and collisions to track.

He said there had been at least 150 accidents reported in Wake County by

noon Tuesday.

Although the weather would be clearing, he said the low Tuesday night was expected to be about 20 degrees.

Badgett said warmer conditions today would produce quite a bit of melting.

"There's a 40 percent chance of light rain (tonight)," he said. "But it doesn't look like we'll have a repeat."

Doug Hoehler, meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Wilmington, also said conditions were likely to improve.

"There may still be some light freezing rain," Hoehler said. "But the significant part of the storm is over."

He said Wilmington received 1.1 inches of snow.

Although many people seemed surprised, he said it was less than the average of 2 inches.

"It's not out of the ordinary," he said. "But when it happens, it seems that way."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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PHIL BADGETT
Meteorologist



DTH/LAURA GIOVANELLI

UNC junior Matt Crawley launches a snowball Tuesday morning during one of many campus battles. Although classes remained in session, students across campus found time to play in the snow.

SNOW

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get rather slick, especially overnight," Yeaman said. "We should start seeing some improvements, though, by the afternoon."

Chapel Hill emergency management officials worked around the clock Tuesday in an attempt to improve icy road conditions, but they warned that roads were still unsafe to drive on overnight.

In preparation for the possible refreezing of many road surfaces, Public Works Director Bruce Heflin said crews had been working since the first flakes hit Chapel Hill.

"Everybody is trying to help each other out," he said. "We are spreading sand and salt on the primary streets and then gradually working our way to secondary roads."

Lt. Marsha Gale of the Chapel Hill Police Department said police, fire and public works officials were keeping each

other updated on the status of road surfaces susceptible to ice.

"We have been physically checking bridges and keeping progress of the roads," she said.

"But traffic accidents always rise in these situations."

By Tuesday afternoon in Chapel Hill, Gale said several minor wrecks had occurred, but only one accident involved injury.

"We recommend that no one go out (on the roads)," she said.

Capt. John Butler of the Carrboro Police Department said Carrboro had dealt with few automobile accidents Tuesday.

"A few cars got stuck, but we knew this was coming," he said.

"There were no major accidents during the day because it was mainly snow."

Butler said he was mostly concerned with roads becoming icy at night, but he said he was hopeful that they would become more passable Wednesday afternoon.

Transporting Chapel Hill-Carrboro schoolchildren to classes was not a problem Tuesday, as they already had the day off because of a regularly scheduled teacher workday.

Despite the possibility of improved road conditions this afternoon, school officials decided late Tuesday to cancel classes for students on Wednesday.

Assistant Superintendent

Steve Scroggs said Tuesday's frigid temperatures kept roads unfit for cars and buses to travel to area schools.

"I drove around and checked the roads out myself (on Tuesday after-

"We have been checking bridges and keeping progress of the roads ... accidents always rise in these situations."

LT. MARSHA GALE
Chapel Hill Police Department

noon)," he said.

"There just wasn't enough slush off the roads."

While school buses will not be running today, Chapel Hill Transit employee Scott McClellan said certain city bus routes would be open, although the buses had experienced problems early Tuesday morning and some routes had been closed all day Tuesday.

"Our key concern is being able to operate the buses safely," he said. "We are expecting delays (today), but I think people understand that."

McClellan said problems similar to Tuesday's slushy mess would most likely inhibit bus service.

"We know when it's not safe," he said.

"Hopefully people realize that buses are not going to have an easier time (compared to other vehicles)."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.



DTH/CASEY QUILEN

UNC student Kevin Leder tubes through the snow at Ridgehaven Townhomes on Tuesday. He was unable to get to campus for class.

RAPE

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in Hillsborough in lieu of a \$125,000 secured bond.

Brittian's first appearance in court was scheduled for Tuesday, but weather conditions caused courts to close and the hearing to be delayed, so a trial date has not been set.

Cousins said the rape occurred on the east side of Chapel Hill, but police were

not releasing any information concerning exactly where the rape took place.

Cousins said police charged Brittian with two counts of first-degree kidnapping because although the victim was not taken anywhere, she was still held against her will.

"We are not releasing many details about the victim except that she was not physically injured during the attack."

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POLICY

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occasional student who ended up prostrate on the slick bricks.

At several times during the day, snowball fights erupted outside of the library as students used the rare weather to jokingly pummel passers-by.

But the muddy slush on the streets was too much for some public transit. Public Safety Assistant Director Ray Magyar said some Chapel Hill buses and the U-bus experienced delays Tuesday morning, resuming operation by midday. UNC does not run the buses.

As of Tuesday night, UNC was operating under Condition II of the adverse weather policy. This policy states, "Critical employees should report to work. Other employees should consider campus conditions and law enforcement reports of road conditions before deciding to come to work."

Students can find updates on UNC media.

No matter today's conditions, students appreciated the presence of the seldom-seen powder. Courtney Quinn, a junior from Virginia Beach, used the opportunity for a few extra winks. "I really enjoyed sleeping late," she said. "But I almost fell down on the way to school."

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Kalli
Kamholz

The University of North Carolina and Wachovia would like to congratulate Kalli Kamholz, the Wachovia Woman of the Week.

Kalli is a junior soccer player from Indian Harbor Beach, Florida. Described as a vocal leader in the Carolina defense by her coach, Kalli was named to the Dean's List as a Human and Organizational Development major. She is also a member of the U.S. Under-21 National Team. Kalli uses her leadership skills off the field as well by volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House and serving as an active member of the Athletes in Action group on campus.

Wachovia is committed to supporting achievements by women and is proud to celebrate Kalli Kamholz's accomplishments.

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