

Third storm hits Oregon Coast, leaves thousands with no power

The third severe storm to hit Oregon since Saturday night swept in from the Pacific on Tuesday, knocking down trees, triggering mudslides and leaving thousands without electricity.

The latest storm did most of its damage in the northwestern corner of the state.

A spokesman for Pacific Power & Light Co. said sustained winds of 80 mph and gusts exceeding 100 mph were reported at the utility's service center at Warrenton on the northern Oregon coast. The entire town was without electricity.

A motorist was seriously injured in a mudslide on U.S. Highway 30 near Westport, about 20 miles east of Astoria.

Jack L. Mason, 43, of Rainier, suffered head injuries when the slide struck his El Camino at 7:45 a.m., state police said. He was in serious condition at St. John's Medical Center in Longview, Wash.

A tractor-trailer rig drove into the mudslide, but the driver was not injured.

The slide blocked the highway for 2½ hours. U.S. Highway 101 was closed just south of Seaside throughout the day because of flooding in the Necanicum River. Oregon 131 at Netarts also was closed because of debris on the roadway.

U.S. 26 east of Cannon Beach and Oregon 202 between Astoria and Jewell were closed for a time because of trees down on the highway, but both had reopened by late afternoon.

Gary Donnelly, a spokesman for Pacific Power, said about 3,700 customers on the north coast were without electricity. Hundreds of others also were without power in the Albany-Corvallis, Dallas and Mill City areas. Some had not had electricity since Monday and some weren't expected to have power restored until at least Wednesday.

"These guys are just dead on their feet," Donnelly said of the utility repair workers. "This is really a bad situation. The ground is so wet. Our guys are working as long of hours as they can possibly work."

In the Portland area, wind gusts of 54 mph were reported.

Portland General Electric Co. reported about 10,000 customers still without power and service likely would not be returned to all of them until sometime Wednesday.

"We started the day at about 15,000. That increased to approximately 25,000 when we started getting high winds mid-morning today. Then things started to settle down," said PGE spokesman Steve Sautter.

Winds subsided in the late afternoon and the National Weather Service canceled the high wind warning it had issued for the Portland area and the Willamette Valley.

Unseasonably warm temperatures accompanied the storm, with Portland reporting a record high of 61.

Heavy rain persisted in the northwestern portion of the state and was expected to move to the south and east during the night.

For the 24-hour period ending at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Astoria recorded 4.85 inches of rainfall, according to the National Weather Service. Accumulation in Tillamook was 4.14 inches.

The weather service said there were no more storms headed toward the state, however.

The weather service continued flood warnings for the Nehalem, Wilson, Yamhill, Tualatin and Luckiamute rivers.

Meanwhile, residents were cleaning up the mess left from the storm that pounded much of the state late Sunday and early Monday.

In the tiny community of Tollgate in northeastern Oregon, Jerry and Carol Kuykendall narrowly escaped with their lives Monday when a tree fell on their mobile home.

"We heard some cracking and I told Carol to hit the floor," Jerry Kuykendall said. "Tell you what, that's just as near as I want to come."

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