

State of Emergency Issued for WNC Counties

Written by Steve Frank
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In anticipation of a severe winter storm coupled with strong winds from Hurricane Sandy in the North Carolina mountains, Gov. Bev Perdue today declared a State of Emergency for 24 western counties.

“People need to continue to take this storm seriously as we face flooding in the east and significant winter weather in the west,” said Gov. Perdue. “I urge North Carolinians in the impacted areas to take the necessary precautions to stay safe in this storm.”

A winter storm warning is in effect in western North Carolina until 6 a.m., Tues., Oct. 30. Strong winds and heavy snow are expected. As much as four to eight inches of snow is expected to accumulate and up to 12 inches on mountain peaks. Snow will fall periodically through the day and become heavier in late afternoon.

Strong winds of 35 miles per hour and gusts up to 65 mph, can knock down trees and slick roads will make traveling treacherous. The National Park Service has closed five sections of North Carolina’s Blue Ridge Parkway.

Counties included in the declaration are: Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey.

Perdue declared the state of emergency which allows utility and other large vehicles to enter the state and relieve impacted areas. It also gives Department of Public Safety Secretary Reuben Young the authority to deploy the State Emergency Response Team to take necessary action to ensure the safety and protection of people in North Carolina. In addition, the declaration prohibits price gouging.

Classes on Appalachian State University's main campus that begin at 6 p.m. or later Monday, Oct. 29, have been cancelled because of storm conditions from Hurricane Sandy. Classes that begin before 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 30, also have been cancelled. University officials will continue to monitor weather conditions and will make an announcement by 7 a.m. Tuesday regarding classes that meet after 11 a.m. Hurricane Sandy is contributing moisture to a snowstorm now hitting the High Country, and the impact is forecast to be felt here for several days.