

# Winter storm paralyzes US South

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A massive winter storm moving through the Southern and Mid-Atlantic United States on Tuesday and Wednesday has resulted in hundreds of thousands of power outages and dangerous road conditions. Emergency shelters are filled to capacity.

As of Wednesday, 300,000 individual properties throughout the South were without power, as sleet and freezing rain mixed with snow caused tree limbs to fall on power lines.

The storm has resulted in the deaths of at least 6 people, including an ambulance driver and two passengers who skidded off the road under hazardous driving conditions in Carlsbad, Texas. In Dallas, William Tanksley, a fireman, fell to his death from an overpass after an out-of-control vehicle careened into him while at the scene of an accident. Two others were reported dead in Mississippi due to conditions created by the storm.

According to National Weather Service meteorologist Michael Musher, the dimensions of the storm would be “mind-boggling if not historical. A memo released by the agency on Wednesday declared the winter event to be “catastrophic...crippling...paralyzing...choose your adjective.”

As of Wednesday, over 3,300 flights had been canceled around the region, including over 1,000 from Hartsfield-Jackson Airport in Atlanta, Georgia, the nations’ busiest. Amtrak has suspended trains going from New York to the Washington, DC area. Trains traveling from the Northern Virginia DC suburbs to Orlando, Florida were similarly halted.

In all, 22 states from Texas to Maine will be affected by the storm. Mississippi expects to see a total snowfall of 3 inches, while Georgia was expecting 3-5 inches. Regions west and north of these areas, including Appalachia, can expect to see as much as a foot of snow, according to news outlets.

South Carolina is expected to see nearly three-

quarters of an inch of ice alone, creating potentially deadly driving conditions in the state. Commenting on the conditions created by the storm, Kurt Van Speybroeck of the National Weather Service told *Fox News*, “If you get even a tenth of inch of ice on a road, it’s like a skating rink.”

The Red Cross, which organizes emergency responses to such incidents, has been forced to suspend over 1,000 blood drives across the Southern US due to the storm.

Hardest hit has been the state of Georgia, hit two weeks ago by a massive storm system that paralyzed the city of Atlanta and its suburbs, leaving commuters stranded for days on icy roads. (See, “Winter storm paralyzes Atlanta, Georgia, stranding thousands”)

As a result of this storm, more than 100,000 homes and businesses in Georgia have been left without power. Partially as a response to the public backlash garnered by authorities’ subdued response to the previous storm, President Barack Obama has declared a state of emergency in the state. Governor Nathan Deal has declared a state of emergency in 91 of the state’s 159 counties.

As weather patterns increasingly reflect the harsh realities of climate change, the ability of emergency services to deal with catastrophes has been limited by the capitalist profit system and claims that there is “no money” for essential infrastructure.

A study conducted in North Carolina by state utility regulators in 2002, after a storm knocked out the power for over 2 million residents, declared that the costs of burying the three largest power companies’ electrical wires was “prohibitively expensive.”

The report stated that such actions “would cost approximately \$41 billion, nearly six times the net book value of the utilities’ current distribution assets, and would require approximately 25 years to complete.”



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