

Hurricane Delta rips through battered southwestern Louisiana

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Hurricane Delta brought heavy rains and strong winds to the Gulf region of the United States this weekend in towns across Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi. Power outages were reported across the region with as many as 600,000 losing power and only half regaining power by Sunday afternoon.

Delta was the tenth named hurricane or tropical storm to make landfall in the United States this season, breaking a more than century-long record set in 1916.

The storm made landfall in southwest Louisiana as a Category 2 hurricane on Friday night with winds reported up to 100mph and dropping as much as 15 inches of rain in the town of Lake Charles, hit less than 2 months ago by Category 4 Hurricane Laura.

Now downgraded to a Tropical Cyclone, Delta is bringing heavy rains and flooding to towns in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia as it moves further north. Tornadoes in the Atlanta, Georgia area this weekend damaged a homeless shelter, displacing at least 30 people and injuring one.

Lake Charles, Louisiana Mayor Nic Hunter told the Associated Press (AP) on Saturday of the devastation caused by the one-two punch of hurricanes Laura and Delta so close together, “Add Laura and Delta together and it’s just absolutely unprecedented and catastrophic,” Hunter said. “We are very concerned that with everything going in the country right now that this incident may not be on the radar nationally like it should be.”

Many residents of the area were already experienced storm fatigue by the time Delta hit. Indeed, in Lake Charles and surrounding communities there was still damage and debris strewn about from the previous hurricane during which winds were reported up to 150 mph, causing further disruption to infrastructure across the already battered area.

Highways were jammed as residents attempted to escape the storm over the weekend. Roads and neighborhoods were left swamped by flood waters creating driving hazards for many trying to get back home after the storm passed.

Many residents had only just returned home a week or two earlier after evacuating from Hurricane Laura. “I’m taxed out. And I think that’s most people in town,” Lake Charles resident Katie Prejean McGrady told the AP. “There’s a mental exhaustion that sets in and then there’s a fear of ‘Does anybody outside this region care?’”

In the town of Iowa, Louisiana, the National Weather Service rain gauges reported 17 inches of rain, some residents who experienced flood damage six weeks earlier from Laura had their homes flooded yet again by Delta, in many cases exacerbating damage from the previous flooding events.

Government employee Thomas Hoefer of Calcasieu Parish, where Iowa is located, told the *New Orleans Advocate* of the smaller towns surrounding Lake Charles that were hit worse than the more populated towns. “We took tremendous rainfall,” Hoefer said. “There was quite a bit of home flooding.” Residents must completely start over their repairs from the previous storm.

In the town of Jennings, just a few miles east, residents were grateful Delta was weaker than Laura but still wearied by the back to back storms, “We’re numb, we’re really numb,” Jennings resident Ralph LeBlanc told the *Advocate*. “This town was all cleaned up, we just got it cleaned up last week. Of course, we’re without electricity, but we’re just about used to that.”

AccuWeather senior meteorologist Mike Doll told *USA Today* about this particularly eventful storm

season, “The one word to describe this season is historic. You just don’t see storms roll in like this.”

According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, one or two hurricanes making landfall in one season in the US is considered normal. This year Delta was the fifth hurricane to make landfall, the most since 2005.

Implicitly admitting his own administration’s inability or unwillingness to address the compounded damage from these storms, Louisiana governor John Bel Edwards, Democrat, is appealing to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to consider both storms together for additional federal aid.

For the vast majority of those hit by both storms, federal government aid will be paltry to nonexistent, and very few will ever be made whole. Many could not even afford to get themselves out of harm’s way. “I thought about it but it just didn’t make sense financially,” Tavita Carrier told the *Advocate* about her decision not to evacuate. “I’m on disability, my mom’s on disability. I had her up in Mississippi for about five weeks after Laura, so I’d just gotten her home about a week.”



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