

Remarkable run

SEC Championship win boosts Bulldogs to a 14 seed in NCAA Tournament. **1D**

Our tips for filling out your NCAA brackets. **4D**



TIGER'S SEASON STAYS PERFECT

SPORTS, 1D

Savannah Morning News.

50¢

MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2008

SAVANNAHNOW.COM



LIGHT OF THE COASTAL EMPIRE

Storm culprit in power losses

Tornado tore down transmission lines

BY PAMELA E. WALCK
912-652-0363
pamela.walck@savannahnow.com

A severe weather system that made its way across the South brought a confirmed tornado to Effingham County and knocked power out to some 170,000 residential customers Saturday night.

By 10:30 p.m. Sunday, Georgia Power officials said all but about 38 customers in Rincon had their electricity restored.

Meanwhile, National Weather Service storm crews were trying to determine if more than one tornado had touched down in the region.

"Springtime seems to be severe weather time in this part of the country because a lot more different air masses are coming into the U.S.," said Wendy Moen, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service

SEE CULPRIT, PAGE 4A

INSIDE

- Confusion reigned late Saturday night when the blackout hit River Street and City Market. **3A**
- While others tried to recover their possessions after the storms, a Springfield man was charged with looting copper. **3A**
- A tornado killed one person in northwest Georgia, less than 24 hours after another tornado struck downtown Atlanta. **4A**
- A strong line of storms passed through South Carolina, leaving thousands without power. **4A**
- Scientists say it's getting tougher for Georgia's aquatic life to rebound from the drought. **3A**

TELL YOUR STORY

Where were you when the storm hit? Go to savannahnow.com to share your story and read others'.

ON THE WEB

To hear audio from one of the tornado victims and view a photo slideshow, go to savannahnow.com.



Photos by Hunter McRae/Savannah Morning News

Volunteering to help clean up debris on Sunday, Shela Langley stands where the home of her husband's aunt used to be before a tornado ripped through Ebenezer Road in Effingham County late Saturday.

Tornado destroys homes, leaves people unharmed

Effingham County twister levels three mobile homes, damages several others but causes only minor injuries Saturday night

BY EMILY GOLDMAN
912-826-1290
emily.goldman@savannahnow.com

Huddled in their bathtub, clutching their dogs, Lisa and Eugene Lancaster weren't sure they were going to survive.

"The house shook with a horrible roar," Lisa Lancaster said, tears welling in her eyes. "It was just horrible, then it was really, really quiet."

The tornado that ripped through Ebenezer Road in Rincon late Saturday is blamed for the destruction of three mobile homes and damage to several other houses.

"But we're here," Lisa said while looking around at the 30 or so people who came to help the Lancasters clean up.

Some of the volunteers were friends, family members and work associates, but some of the volunteers the Lancasters had never met before.

The couple credited two of their dogs, Chewy and Phoebe, for warning them of the tornado.

The normally calm outdoor dogs

SEE TORNADO, PAGE 3A



Bob Langley tries to find meaningful items among the rubble of his sister Wanda Rogers' and Buddy Kennedy's double-wide mobile home on Sunday. The couple decided on a whim to go to a livestock auction in Metter on Saturday night and returned home to a pile of rubble after a tornado ripped through Ebenezer Road in Effingham County.

HOW TO HELP

The Savannah chapter of the American Red Cross is accepting donations to help victims of the Effingham County tornado. Call 651-5300 or visit savannahredcross.org.

INSIDE

BUY OLD, SAVE NOW

With today's trying stock market times, investing in an older automobile — like a Ford Thunderbird or a Mercedes Benz — could be safer than a trip to Wall Street. **1B**

ONE 'CRAFTY' LADY | 1B

Jessica Forbes, event coordinator at craft retailer Michaels, has found a knack to helping children get creative with craft projects. "I can make gumball machines out of glass pots, clay saucers and a glass icy bowl," Forbes said.



HOLY WEEK BEGINS | 1C

Several churches throughout the Coastal Empire celebrated Palm Sunday, marking the last Sunday of Lent and the beginning of Holy Week.

FIND THE CRIME NEAR YOU | 5A

The Crime Map offers you a look at the most recent reports of crime from the Savannah-Chatham police department, including drug arrests, as well as a look at this week's radar hot spots.

CONTACT US

CORRECTIONS: If you spot an error of fact, call Susan M. Catron, executive editor, at 912-652-0327.

FOR DELIVERY OR BILLING PROBLEMS: 912-236-0271

TODAY

H 73 L 53

It's high pressure after the storms.



Drawing by Gisell Rodriguez, 8 West Chatham Elementary

INDEX

Business	1B
Classifieds	1-4E
Comics	3-5F
Crossword	1E, 5F
Help Wanted	1E
Horoscope	4F
Lotteries	1C
Movies	6F
Obituaries	2-3C
Opinion	4-5C
Sports	1D
Vox Populi	2F
Weather	2A

159TH YEAR, ISSUE 63



6 73225 00050 8

Confused, sparse crowds for St. Pat's

Early parade, other changes provoke criticisms from some downtown workers

BY MICHAEL ATKINS
912-652-0360
michael.atkins@savannahnow.com

On several occasions Saturday, bartender Chuck McKendrick was asked the question: "So, what time is the parade on Monday?"

Each time, McKendrick would sigh and remind customers — usually ones from out of town — that

the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade had taken place Friday and not on its traditional date of March 17.

His explanation, McKendrick said Sunday, was often met with confused looks and disappointment. "A lot of people really didn't know what was happening, because there wasn't a big announcement about the parade," said McKendrick, who works at the Oyster Bar

on River Street.

"It's been the fewest people I've seen and the least amount of money we've made. It's the worst St. Patty's Day out of the nine I've been a part of."

His gripes were not out of the ordinary Sunday, the last — and calmest — day of the festival.

Whether it was the parade date switch, the limited entranceways or

the untimely Saturday-night power outage, numbers on River Street were down this year, according to restaurant and bar employees.

"It hasn't been as good as last year — last year we were just packed," said Philip Schroeder, kitchen manager at the Olympia Cafe. "A lot of it is because they shut down the ramp that our customers came down."

SEE ST. PAT'S, PAGE 4A

ON THE WEB

Go to savannahnow.com/stpats for more coverage, photos and video.

Check out savannahnow.com/spotted

to view images by you and our photographers.

Go to savannahnow.com/stpats for more coverage, photos and video.

Check out savannahnow.com/spotted to view images by you and our photographers.