

WEATHER

Downpour makes November wettest in Santa Cruz' history

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By KEITH MURAOKA

Sentinel Staff Writer

Buoyed by the biggest storm yet in a series of early storms, the all-time wettest November in Santa Cruz history has already registered — and there's still two days left in the month.

According to Santa Cruz weatherman Ron MacDonald, 11.03 inches of rain has fallen so far this month. That is just three-tenths of an inch shy of the all-time record set in November, 1950.

And since MacDonald's reading came as of 8 a.m. — and rain continued to fall throughout the morning — the record most assuredly has been broken by the time you read this.

The biggest storm of the year dropped

more than two inches of rain throughout most of the San Lorenzo Valley. Boulder Creek accumulated 3.35 inches in 24 hours, prompting Sentinel weather watcher Ann Locatelli to say memories of the Storm of '82 surfaced — at least for awhile.

Just over an inch fell in Santa Cruz, Soquel and Rio del Mar. The season total in Santa Cruz is 14.73 inches. Normal for this time of year is just 3.81 inches. Last year, 11.88 inches had fallen as of this date.

The area is expected to get a brief respite from the powerful Pacific storms. Rain will return to the region on Friday, according to the National Weather Service.

Tuesday's heavy rains, gusting winds and blinding snow created power failures

and snarled traffic throughout Northern California. In Santa Cruz County, 15,414 PG&E customers were without power for up to three hours Tuesday, according to spokesman John Fisher.

The biggest outage occurred at 5:13 p.m. and affected 6,278 customers in Soquel, Live Oak and the 41st Avenue area of Capitola. Fisher said it was caused by a tree limb crossing power lines on Thurber Lane. Power was restored at 6:16 p.m.

Numerous other areas had power outages including 5,052 customers in Ben Lomond and Felton, who were without power for about an hour beginning at 11 a.m. As of this morning, all power had been restored to local customers, Fisher

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said, except for two or three isolated areas.

Minor flooding and landslides were reported throughout the mountain areas of the county including Old San Jose and Larkin Valley roads, according to county roads spokesman Larry Peters. A slide partially closed Highway 129 just outside of Watsonville this morning. "Overall, we weathered the storm pretty well," he said.

The storm was blamed for at least one death in Northern California. A two-car fatal accident on state Route 92 near Crystal Springs was attributed to the weather.

Meteorologist Jack Farmer of the National Weather Service said winds topped 70 mph Tuesday over the peaks in the Sierra and reached 60 mph at San Francisco International Airport. Traffic came to a standstill on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge at about 4:30 p.m. when high winds toppled a truck.

A blizzard forced closure of a 60-mile stretch of Interstate 5 near the Oregon border for about nine hours. Chains were required on mountain roads throughout much of Northern California. Snow blew in cold spots as low as 1,500 feet.

In San Francisco, the wind caused sky-

scrapers to sway. In Sacramento, winds sent a 15-foot-long aluminum plate protecting solar panels sailing through the air. No injuries were reported.

Tuesday's storm originated in the Central Pacific. The strong weather front swept across the ocean from the Hawaiian Islands to British Columbia before sweeping southeast through Northern California.

Rainfall reports for 24 hours ending at 8 a.m. today and including the season's totals (since July 1) and those of last year at this time, are as follows:

	24 hr.	Season	Last year to date
Aptos	.95	11.92	9.32
Ben Lomond	2.61	21.78	21.83
Bonny Doon	2.18	22.52	20.86
Boulder Creek	3.35	20.68	22.04
Capitola	1.32	17.11	11.20
Corralitos	2.04	11.63	11.70
Empire Grade	2.65	21.73	24.40
Felton	2.10	18.38	16.45
Graham Hill	1.44	19.45	16.80
Happy Valley	1.55	18.00	16.85
Lompico	2.60	20.55	19.85
Natural Bridges	.93	12.25	9.66
Pine Flat	2.05	21.68	27.23
Rio Del Mar	1.12	11.09	10.01
Santa Cruz	1.17	14.73	11.88
Scotts Valley	1.98	2.31	2.28
Soquel	1.15	14.18	10.95
Swanton	.90	12.88	12.00
Watsonville	1.65	9.73	24.40

The Associated Press also contributed to this report.