

Severe storms pummel South after 7 hurt in Arkansas tornado

No deaths had been reported from the storms as of early Thursday

BY EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS AND JILL BLEED
The Associated Press

A line of severe storms packing isolated tornadoes and heavy winds ripped across the Deep South overnight, toppling trees and power lines and leaving homes and businesses damaged as the vast weather front raced across several states.

At least two confirmed tornadoes injured several people Wednesday, damaged homes and businesses and downed power lines in Mississippi and Tennessee after earlier storm damage in Arkansas, Missouri and Texas.

No deaths had been reported from the storms as of early Thursday, authorities said. But widespread damage was reported in the Jackson, Tennessee, area as a tornado warning was in effect. "Significant damage" occurred to a nursing home near Jackson-Madison County General Hospital and the Madison County Sheriff's Office in Jackson, said Madison County Emergency Management Director Jason Moore.

In Nashville, Tennessee, paneling fell five stories from the side of a downtown hotel Wednesday evening and onto a roof of a building below. The fire department warned the

debris could become airborne as high winds continued, and some hotel guests were moved to other parts of the building due to concerns that the roof would become unstable. No injuries were immediately associated with the collapse.

Elsewhere, a warehouse roof collapsed as the storms moved through Southaven, Mississippi, near Memphis, police said. The building had been evacuated and no injuries were reported.

The Mississippi Senate suspended its work Wednesday as weather sirens blared during a tornado watch in downtown Jackson. Some employees took

shelter in the Capitol basement.

Rander P. Adams said he and his wife, Janice Delores Adams, were in their home near downtown Jackson when severe weather blew through during a tornado warning Wednesday afternoon. He said their lights flashed and a large window exploded just feet from his wife as she tried to open their front door.

"The glass broke just as if someone threw a brick through it," he said. "I advised her then, 'Let's go to the back of the house.'"

Adams said the storm toppled trees in a nearby park, and a large tree across the street from their house split in half. "We were blessed," he said.

"Instead of falling toward the house, it fell the other way."

Earlier Wednesday, a tornado that struck Springdale, Arkansas, and the adjoining town of Johnson, about 145 miles (235 kilometers) northwest of Little Rock, about 4 a.m. injured seven people, two critically, said Washington County, Arkansas, Emergency Management Director John Luther.

The National Weather Service said that tornado would be rated "at least EF-2," which would mean wind speeds reached 111-135 mph.

"Search and rescue teams have been deployed, as there are significant damages and injuries," Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson said.

INVOCATION AT CAPITOL



Columbus' Stan McCrary, center, led the Mississippi House of Representatives in prayer on March 29. In the picture is Speaker of the House Philip Gunn, left, and Rep. Kabir Karriem (D-Columbus), right.

Mississippi legislators extend their time to finish work

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACKSON — Mississippi legislators are giving themselves more time to finish their work.

The three-month session was scheduled to end April 3, but negotiators missed deadlines to file final versions of tax and budget bills.

The state constitution prohibits legislators from passing money bills in the final five days of a session.

Under a resolution adopted Tuesday, legislators are extending the session by 30 days, the minimum allowed by the state constitution. But, the resolution says they intend to leave by April 6. That puts them on track to wrap up work on taxes and budgets by Friday.



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School leader fired for reading 'New Butt' book awaits fate

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BYRAM — A Mississippi educator will have to wait to see if he will be rehired after he was fired for reading a children's book called "I Need a New Butt!" to a group of second graders.

Toby Price is trying to regain his job as assistant principal at Gary Road Elementary in the Jackson suburb of Byram in Hinds County. His employment appeal hearing started last week and resumed Monday, lasting about five hours, WJTV-TV reported.

The Hinds County School Board's decision on Price's employment is expected in about two months.

Price was initially suspended with pay but later fired after reading the book to young students over Zoom. The book, by Dawn McMillan, chronicles a child's journey to find a new backside. It is illustrated with cartoons that show the character considering an armor-plated butt, a rocket butt and a robot butt.

In a statement after the hearing, Superintendent Delescia Martin called the book "inappropriate."

"First and foremost, the book contains statements and cartoon pictures regarding bodily anatomy, bodily functions and removing clothing to expose

private areas of the body in various positions," Martin said. "These statements and pictures are inappropriate for an educator to read and display to second graders, especially without advance notice to the teachers of the students."

Teachers have been under increased scrutiny nationwide as advocates have pushed book challenges and bans in an attempt to restrict how students are taught certain subjects, particularly around racism, sexuality and gender.

During the first hearing, Price's attorney listed other books in the school's library that have similar themes or illustrations,

including "Captain Underpants."

Price described the book as "silly" and one that children could enjoy, the Clarion Ledger reported.

"The kids are in on the joke as they read it," Price said.

However, if he were asked beforehand not to read it, Price said he would have followed that request.

Martin said educators must be extremely careful in what they say and do "especially in the presence of our impressionable children."

WCBI 13 YOUR NEWS LEADER
WBI'S FIRST NEWS ALERT
Lance Becker, Jackson Osteen, Dylan Huffer, Isaac Williams

SUMMARY: Much quieter and cooler weather bluffs in after Wednesday's storms. Frost is possible for some Friday morning.

TONIGHT: Patchy Frost, Low 36
FRIDAY: Mostly Sunny, High 67, Low 41
SATURDAY: Clouds Early, High 71, Low 43
SUNDAY: Mostly Sunny, High 70, Low 46
MONDAY: Clouds Late, High 76, Low 61

ALMANAC DATA
Temperature High/Low: Wed 61/61, Thu 66/44, Fri 66/42, Sat 60/34, Sun 46/38, Mon 46/36, Tue 46/36, Wed 76/52, Thu 79/54, Fri 79/53, Sat 68/54, Sun 58/38, Mon 57/37, Tue 82/67, Wed 84/66, Thu 86/59, Fri 87/60, Sat 85/42, Sun 53/42

FORECAST FOR SELECTED CITIES
City H/L Sat H/L Sun
Atlanta 62/42 69/47
Boston 60/34 54/38
Chicago 46/38 45/36
Dallas 76/52 79/54
Los Angeles 70/53 68/54
Nashville 58/38 64/42
New York 57/37 53/42
Orlando 82/67 84/66
Phoenix 86/59 87/60
Seattle 53/42 55/42

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MOON PHASES
New First Full Last
April 1 April 9 April 16 April 23

SUN AND MOON
Sunset 6:42 AM, Sunrise 7:13 PM
Moonrise 6:38 AM, Moonset 6:50 PM

SOLUNAR TABLE
Major 12:56p, Minor 7:37p
Major 12:56p, Minor 7:37p

THE DISPATCH
The Commercial Dispatch (USPS 142-320)
Published daily except Saturday.
Entered at the post office at Columbus, Mississippi.
Periodicals postage paid at Columbus, MS
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
The Commercial Dispatch, P.O. Box 511, Columbus, MS 39703
Published by Commercial Dispatch Publishing Company, Inc.
516 Main St., Columbus, MS 39703

Answers to common questions:
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NOTICE OF INTENT AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC SCOPING!
Environmental Impact Statement addressing T-7A Recaptalization at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi
The U.S. Department of the Air Force (DAF) is conducting public scoping for its proposal to recaptitalize the F-35C Talon flight training program at Columbus Air Force Base (AFB) with T-7A Red Hawk aircraft. The proposal supports the Secretary of the Air Force's strategic bearing decisions to recaptitalize existing T-38C pilot training installations, and Columbus AFB would be the second installation to be environmentally analyzed for possible recaptalization. The purpose of this proposal is to continue the T-7A recaptalization program by recaptitalizing Columbus AFB to prepare pilots to operate the more technologically advanced T-7A aircraft. Recaptitalization is needed because the current training practices with the older T-38C aircraft fail to prepare pilots for the technological advancements of fourth and fifth generation aircraft.
Recaptitalization entails introduction of T-7A aircraft and flight operations at Columbus AFB and associated airspace to replace all T-38C aircraft assigned to the installation, introduction of nighttime (between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.) T-7A flight operations, changes to the number of personnel and dependents in the Columbus AFB region, and construction and upgrade of support and maintenance facilities. DAF is considering the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and the No Action Alternative. For the Proposed Action, Columbus AFB would receive 61 T-7A aircraft and perform surface operations for sustaining pilot training while simultaneously phasing out the T-38C aircraft and phasing in the T-7A aircraft. Alternative 1 also would result in 61 T-7A aircraft being delivered to Columbus AFB, however, T-7A operations would be performed at an intensity approximately 25 percent greater than the Proposed Action to cover a potential scenario in which DAF requires a surge or increase in pilot training operations beyond current levels. For Alternative 2, Columbus AFB would receive 72 T-7A aircraft to cover a potential scenario in which another military installation is unable to accept delivery of all the T-7A aircraft and some of those aircraft need to be reassigned to Columbus AFB. T-7A operations for Alternative 2 would be performed at an intensity identical to Alternative 1. The No Action Alternative would not implement T-7A recaptitalization at Columbus AFB.
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS). Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, DAF is preparing an EIS, which will assess the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and alternatives for the T-7A recaptitalization at Columbus AFB. DAF anticipates potential for the following relative environmental impacts from the Proposed Action and action alternatives: 1. Increased air emissions, particularly nitrogen oxides. 2. Increased noise from aircraft operations because the T-7A is inherently louder than the T-38C and the addition of nighttime operations may be bothersome to some residents. Increased noise could have a disproportionate impact on certain populations and impact of installation land use compatibility. 3. Increased potential for bird/diverside aircraft strike hazards. 4. Construction may have a minor impact on downstream water quality. The EIS will model air emissions, noise levels, and the number of sleep and school disturbance events and compare to current conditions. DAF will also consult with appropriate resource agencies and Native American tribes to determine the potential for significant impacts. Consultation will be incorporated into the preparation of the EIS and will include, but not be limited to, consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and consultation under Section 105 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Additional analysis will be provided in the Draft EIS, which is anticipated in late 2022. The Final EIS and a decision on which alternative to implement is expected in mid-2023.
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING. DAF encourages interested local, state, and federal elected officials and agencies, as well as interested members of the public and others, to participate in public scoping for the proposal and assist DAF in identifying issues to evaluate in the EIS. In accordance with DAF guidance, in-person public scoping meetings will not be held. Public scoping is being accomplished remotely, in accordance with the 2020 version of 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1506.6, via the project website at <https://columbus.t7anepadocuments.com/>. The website provides posters, a presentation, an informational brochure, other meeting materials, and a capability for the public to provide public scoping comments. Scoping materials are also available in print at the Columbus-Loveland Public Library (314 7th Street North, Columbus, Mississippi). Requests for printed scoping materials may be made to Mr. Nolan Swick at 219-925-3352 or at the address below. For printed materials, the standard U.S. Postal Service shipping timeline will apply. Please consider the environment before reprinting requested material.
PUBLIC COMMENT. DAF welcomes comments, suggestions, and relevant information on the proposal. Please submit comments in English by visiting <https://columbus.t7anepadocuments.com/>, emailing nolan.swick@us.af.mil, or sending via postal mail to Mr. Nolan Swick, AFCEC/CD/EA, Columbus AFB T-7A Recaptitalization EIS, Headquarters AETD Public Affairs, 100 1st East Street, Suite 4, Randolph AFB, TX 76150.
To ensure DAF has sufficient time to consider public input in the Draft EIS process, please submit comments within 30 days.
<https://columbus.t7anepadocuments.com/>