

Title: **Palmetto Breeze returns into shuttle to safety**
 Author: BY REBECCA LURYE rlurye@islandpacket.com
 Size: 80.91 column inches
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



Palmetto Breeze turns into shuttle to safety

BY REBECCA LURYE
rlurye@islandpacket.com

Helen Masters took a lot of phone calls on Wednesday.

From the Bluffton headquarters of Palmetto Breeze Transit, she answered an ever-ringing phone to tell Beaufort County's residents where they could go to be evacuated ahead of Hurricane Matthew, what shelters

dog or cat, and what would happen if they missed the bus.

The answers were a variation of the same theme: "Bless your heart," Masters would say. "Don't panic. It's going to be OK, baby."

Hour after hour, callers with no ride or no place to go learned

they'd be heading to, who they could call to hang on to their

FROM PAGE 1A

SEE BUS RIDE, 8A

BUS RIDE

there were dozens of pick-up locations from Lady's Island to Hilton Head; there was room for thousands of people in shelters from Ridgeland to Hampton; kind-hearted animal control employees were taking in animals for the duration of the storm; and if you miss the bus, it'll come around again.

Masters, a longtime dispatcher, even talked to one man who was very, very upset with Gov. Nikki Haley, who ordered the mandatory evacuation of all coastal counties on Tuesday afternoon ahead of the storm, which has devastated Haiti and is expected to remain a Category 2 by the time it strikes the Lowcountry on Saturday.

"Oh," she said after hanging up, "he is not happy that there is not a Beaufort County shelter. But if I only have one person turning me in, that's pretty good."

For Masters, and most Palmetto Breeze employees, Wednesday was a first-time experience as-

sisting an evacuation. Still, by the end of the day, the fleet of eight buses and 10 vans managed to evacuate about 100 people in need. Most were taken to Ridgeland-Hardeeville High School, which has been converted to an American Red Cross shelter.

One driver, Tyrone Drayton, said it was humbling to help people from all walks of life.

On his rounds of Hilton Head on Wednesday, he evacuated Spanish-speaking families from Cordillo Courts, international workers for the island's tourist spots, locals trying to make their way to family in Hampton and a homeless man who'd spent the past month in the hospital with pneumonia and a broken leg.

The international contingent — a group of Filipino interns evacuating from Hilton Head Resort — were even more surprised by the experience.

"Where there's a hurricane in the Philippines, we don't do like this," said

20-year-old John Aureus, who works at Salty Dog Cafe and arrived on the island two months ago.

"We stay in the house."

The group's advice to South Carolinians, so unused to the Category 2 conditions barreling toward us?

"Stay safe," Aureus said. "And pray! I have my rosary in my pocket."

Someone at Holy Family Catholic Church must have had something similar in mind. Each child who boarded a Palmetto Breeze evacuation van at the Pope Avenue pick-up spot had been given a small card with a picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

One little girl dressed in a mermaid T-shirt absently flipped the cardboard around as they drove to Hilton Head Island Airport, the staging area for assisted evacuations in southern Beaufort County.

In the next seat over, her older brother and sister draped their plush blanket over their laps and

held tight to the bags that contained their snacks: Halloween candy, Goldfish and PopTarts.

And for entertainment, "We brought my mom's phone, so that has games in it," 10-year-old Katie Morales said.

Like several families evacuating from the south end of the island, the Morales family doesn't have a car. So that morning, they'd hoisted their belongings off the floor in case of flooding, packed bags for at least three days in a shelter and went outside to wait for the bus.

Lurye: 843-706-8155,
[@IPBG_Rebecca](https://twitter.com/IPBG_Rebecca)

Finding shelter

The following four shelters have a combined capacity of more than 4,000 people. Contact the American Red Cross for more information.

Colleton County

- Colleton County Middle

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School, 1739 Mighty Cougar Drive, Walterboro
Campus, 250 Jaguar Trail, Ridgeland

Hampton County

- Estill High and Middle School, 1450 Columbia Highway North, Estill
- Hampton Elementary School, 505 S. Hoover St., Hampton

Jasper County

- Ridgeland North

“

OH, HE IS NOT HAPPY THAT THERE IS NOT A BEAUFORT COUNTY SHELTER. BUT IF I ONLY HAVE ONE PERSON TURNING ME IN, THAT'S PRETTY GOOD.

Helen Masters, a longtime dispatcher



REBECCA LURYE rlurye@islandpacket.com

Katie Morales, right, takes a Palmetto Breeze bus to evacuate from Hilton Head Island.

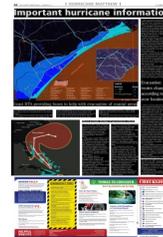
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Palmetto Breeze Transit employees, right to left, Jessica Johnson, Yazmin Winston-Black and Laura Atkinson work to answer calls Wednesday and plan evacuation assistance from the system's Bluffton headquarters ahead of Hurricane Matthew.

Title: **Important hurricane information**
 Author:
 Size: 139.81 column inches
 Conway, SC Circulation: 6250



Important hurricane information

Coast RTA providing buses to help with evacuation of coastal areas

In the event of a mandatory evacuation, Coast RTA will provide free transportation to evacuation shelters.

Pick-up locations include Inlet Square Mall; Wal-Mart Highway 544; Coastal Grand Mall; Myrtle

Beach Helping Hand 1411 Mr. Joe White Avenue, Myrtle Beach; Myrtle Beach Street Reach 1005 Osceola Street, Myrtle Beach; Myrtle Beach Transfer Center 10th Avenue North & Oak Street, Myrtle Beach; Food Lion 79th Avenue North & Kings

Highway; Myrtle Beach Mall 10177 North Kings Highway; and Wal-Mart Gator Hole Plaza North Myrtle Beach.

To find the evacuation location closest to you contact Coast RTA Customer Service at 843-488-0865.

Storm prompts closings of government, schools

By executive order of South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, all Horry County Government's offices, and all circuit/family and magistrates courts are closed Wednesday, October 5, through Friday, October 7, 2016.

Although county offices were mandated to close, almost 60 to 70 percent of Horry County's workforce are deemed "essential" employees and will be working to support the Horry County Emergency Operations Center, the potential evacuation of Horry County and the needs of our citizens and local businesses.

The Myrtle Beach International Airport will remain open. People are encouraged to check with their airlines on flight status throughout the rest of the week and this weekend.

The Horry County Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 6, has been rescheduled for Oct. 13, at 5:30 p.m.

Horry County Schools will be closed Wednesday through Friday, in anticipation of severe weather conditions with the arrival of Hurricane Matthew. The three-day clo-

sure applies to students and employees and all school-related events. Please refer to www.scedm.org for storm updates, emergency preparedness, and resources for evacuation.

As a reminder, Monday, October 10 is noted as a holiday for students and a workday for teachers. Oct. 10 will not be a make-up day for students. HCS will monitor the development and impact of the storm and provide more information as it becomes available.

Coastal Carolina University and Horry-Georgetown Technical college have also canceled classes for the remainder of the week.

Several banks in Horry County have also announced they will be closed through next Monday.

Horry County administration wants citizens to know whether they are in an evacuation zone before an evacuation is called..

According to the information issued by the county, Zone A includes all areas east of US 17 Business (Kings Hwy) up to the intersection of US 17 Bypass, and all areas east of US 17 to the northern county line.

Zone B includes all areas south of SC 707 and Longwood Drive including all areas in Longwood Plantation to the Waccamaw River and all areas east of US 17 Bypass (Mark Garner Hwy) to US 17 (North Kings Hwy) and all areas east of US 17 to the northern county line.

Zone C includes all areas between US 701 South and SC 544 south of Brown's Chapel Avenue and SC 814, plus all areas east of SC 31 (Carolina Bays Parkway) to SC 90 and all areas east of SC 90 to US 17 north to the county line.

Horry County evacuates for storm surge, not for wind, mean-

ing that locations prone to flooding due to storm surge would be included in an evacuation. The county asks that those in mobile homes, campers, or flood prone areas also evacuate for storms.

Evacuation routes change according to your location

Horry County asks that those evacuating be familiar with their evacuation routes before any evacuation orders are issued.

For residents north of Briarcliffe Acres, the evacuation route is to take SC 9 north to Interstate 95 and beyond.

Residents in Briarcliffe Acres and those south to 10th Avenue North in Myrtle Beach should take SC 22 (Conway Bypass) to US 501 to Marion, after which they will take US 76 to Florence to access Interstate 95 southbound or stay on US 501 to SC 38 to access Interstate 95 northbound.

Myrtle Beach residents between 10th Avenue North and Myrtle Beach International Airport should take US 501 to Conway, then take either US 378 to Columbia or continue on US 501 to Marion.

Those south of Myrtle Beach International Airport south to Surfside Beach should take SC 544 to US 501 in Conway, then proceed to either Columbia or Florence using the aforementioned routes.

Those living south of Surfside Beach should take US 17 South

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Author:

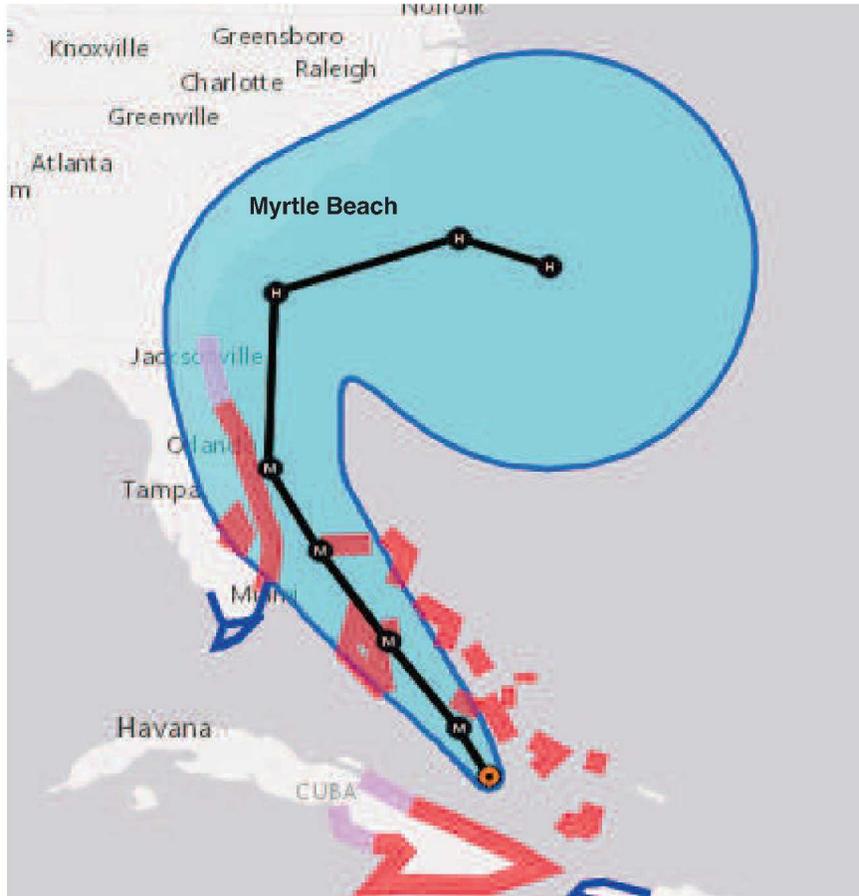
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Conway, SC Circulation: 6250

through Georgetown, then take US 521 to SC 261. From SC 261 they should take US 378 to Columbia. Alternately, they may take US 17 south to US 701 in

Georgetown to SC 51, then to US 378 in Kingsburg.

Residents in Evacuation Zone C should use the closest available evacuation route.

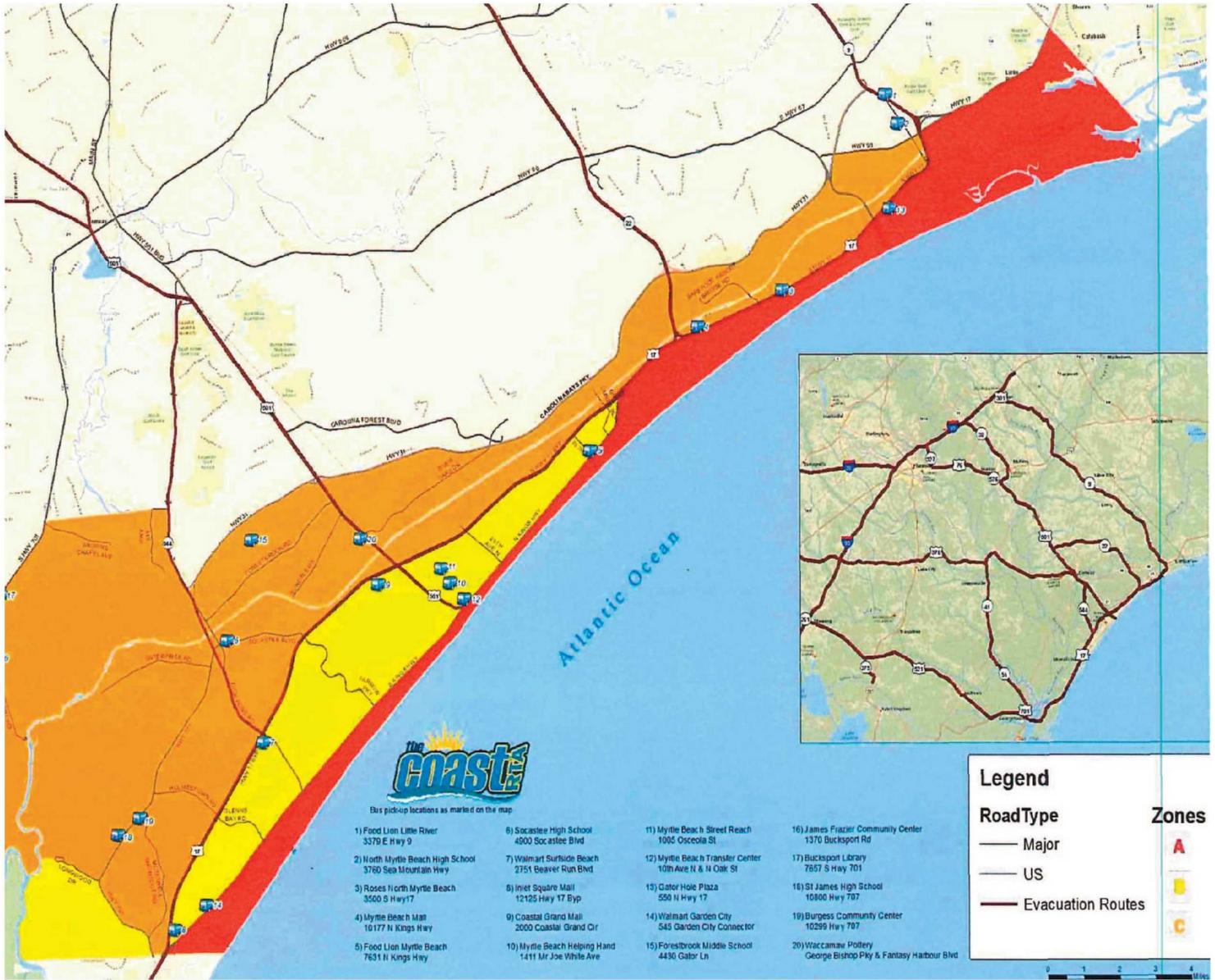


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Title: **Hurricane Matthew may not impact Horry County as hard as once predicted**
 Author: BY STEVE ROBERTSON STEVE.ROBERTSON@MYHORRYNEWS.COM
 Size: 102.14 column inches
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Hurricane Matthew may not impact Horry County as hard as once predicted

BY STEVE ROBERTSON

STEVE.ROBERTSON@MYHORRYNEWS.COM

Horry County and the Grand Strand may have dodged a bullet.

After devastating parts of Haiti and Cuba as a category 4 storm, Hurricane Matthew began tracking eastward Wednesday and apparently will not strike this area as was once feared.

According to WMBF's weather team, Matthew will make its closest approach to the Grand Strand as a category 2 hurricane, staying roughly 100 miles offshore.

As it approaches South

Carolina, the storm is expected to make a dramatic turn eastward.

The primary impact to the area, if the hurricane follows the predicted path, could be heavy rains Friday and Saturday. According to WMBF, winds as high as 60 mph could be experienced along coastal areas of Horry County.

Horry County officials said Wednesday lane reversals on U.S. 501 and S.C. 544 will not be necessary.

Tuesday, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley ordered the evacua-

tion of Charleston and Beaufort counties beginning at 3 p.m. Wednesday.

A day after declaring a state of emergency, Gov. Nikki Haley said Horry and Georgetown county residents should be prepared to evacuate Thursday morning.

Local schools, county government offices and magistrate and family courts were closed Wednesday and will be again Thursday and Friday. Schools will also be closed Monday in obser-

vance of Columbus Day.

"This is something that we want to take very seriously as we go forward," Haley said.

The mandatory evacuation will affect a section of the county called Zone A, which includes all areas east of U.S. 17 Business (Kings Highway) up to the intersection with U.S. 17 and then all areas east of U.S. 17 to the northern county line.

Storm trackers caution that Hurricane Matthew could make an unexpected

MATTHEW, A3

Matthew:

Remains a category 3 storm

FROM A1

change in direction. See pages A8 and A9 in today's Horry Independent for more information about the approaching storm.

Matthew remains a Category 3 storm, down from a Category 4 hurricane hours earlier, though some slight strengthening is expected in coming days. Forecasters say it will be moving across the Bahamas through Thursday and is expected to be very near Florida's east coast by Thursday evening.

At one time, forecasters believed Matthew could make landfall near the Little River area.

the River area.

Staples like bread, milk and canned goods were in high demand at supermarkets. Some shortages were reported.

Also, many gas stations had sold out of fuel by 8 p.m. Tuesday.

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JIMMY LEE / THE HORRY INDEPENDENT

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley mobilized the National Guard and ordered schools along the coast to close ahead of Hurricane Matthew's approach.



ROBERT ANDERSON / THE HORRY INDEPENDENT

Traffic, including a large number of campers left the Grand Strand early yesterday as Hurricane Matthew made its way closer to the United States.

Title: **Strand bracing for Hurricane Matthew**
 Author: FROM STAFF REPORTS INFO@MYHORRYNEWS.COM
 Size: 60.60 column inches
 Conway, SC Circulation: 16000



Strand bracing for Hurricane Matthew

FROM STAFF REPORTS

INFO@MYHORRYNEWS.COM

Horry County residents are being urged to prepare for Hurricane Matthew.

Gov. Nikki Haley on Tuesday declared a state of emergency and issued an evacuation order for South Carolina's coastal counties, including Horry. Schools will be closed Thursday and Friday as well as county government offices.

"This is something that we want to take very seriously as we go forward," Haley said.

Matthew was a category 4 storm on Tuesday, but local meteorologists project it will be a category 2 or 3 hurricane by the time it reaches the Grand Strand

around 8 a.m. Saturday.

WMBF, the Chronicle's news partner, reported the storm would make landfall between Little River and Carolina Beach, though rain and wind from Matthew would affect the entire Grand Strand.

"With a track closer to the coast, locally heavy rain may be a threat from late Friday through Saturday," WMBF reported. "With the closer track, flooding is now a concern. Rain amounts along the immediate coast of 8-10 inches with 5-7 inches inland. This rainfall forecast is conservative based on what we know right now, and will most likely change."

In a news release, county officials said Matthew poses "a significant threat" to the area and they have been in discussions with state emergency management authorities monitoring the storm's progress.

County officials are insisting that residents pay attention to the area's evacuation zones.

Zone A: All areas east of U.S. 17 Business (Kings Highway), up to the intersection with U.S. 17 and then all areas east of U.S. 17 to the northern county line.

Zone B: All areas south of S.C. 707 and Longwood Drive,

HURRICANE, A3

HURRICANE, FROM A1

including all areas in Longwood Plantation (Blackmoor) to the Waccamaw River and all areas east of U.S. 17 Bypass (Mark Garner Highway) to U.S. 17

Zone C: All areas between U.S. 701 and S.C. 544, south of Brown's Chapel Avenue and Highway 814, plus all areas east of S.C. 31 (Carolina Bays Parkway) to S.C. 90 and all areas east of S.C. 90 to U.S. 17 to the northern county line.

Officials are also asking mobile home residents and people living in flood-prone areas to evacuate.

Those evacuating can follow several routes:

- Evacuees north of Briarcliffe Acres can take S.C. 9 north to I-95.
- Those living between Briarcliffe Acres

and 10th Avenue North in Myrtle Beach can take S.C. 22 to U.S. 501 to S.C. 38 to I-95.

- Evacuees between 10th Avenue North and Myrtle Beach International Airport can take U.S. 501 to Conway. They may then take U.S. 378 to Columbia or stay on U.S. 501 and continue to S.C. 38 and I-95.

- Evacuees between Myrtle Beach International Airport and Surfside Beach can take S.C. 544 to Conway or U.S. 501.

- South Strand evacuees can take Garden City Beach U.S.

17 south through Georgetown. They can then take U.S. 521 to S.C. 261 to U.S. 378 to Columbia. They may also take U.S. 17 south to U.S. 701 in Georgetown to S.C. 51 and U.S. 378 at Kingsburg.

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Joe Hill, Horry County's newest police chief, was sworn in last week.

AUGUST DITTBENNER | THE CHRONICLE

Title: **Nearly 2M along coast urged to evacuate**
 Author: BY MIKE SCHNEIDER AND KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press
 Size: 131.59 column inches
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HURRICANE MATTHEW

Nearly 2M along coast urged to evacuate

BY MIKE SCHNEIDER
 AND KELLI KENNEDY

Associated Press

MELBOURNE BEACH, FLA.

Hurricane Matthew marched toward Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas and nearly 2 million people along the coast were urged to evacuate their homes Wednesday, a mass exodus ahead of a major storm packing power the U.S. hasn't seen in more than a decade.

Matthew was a dangerous and life-threatening Category 3 storm with sustained winds of 120 mph as it passed through the Bahamas, and it was expected to be very near Florida's Atlantic coast by Thursday evening. At least 16 deaths in the Caribbean have been blamed on the storm, with heavy damage reported in Haiti.

After moving past Haiti, Matthew rolled across a corner of Cuba and then began pounding the southern Bahamas with winds of 120 mph and heavy rain on a course expected to take it near the capital city of Nassau.

The storm was forecast to scrape much of the Florida coast and any slight deviation could mean landfall or it heading farther out to sea. Either way, it was going to be close enough to wreak havoc along the lower part of the East Coast, and many people weren't taking any chances.

In Melbourne Beach, near the Kennedy Space Center, Carlos and April Medina moved their paddle board and kayak inside the garage and took pictures off

the walls of their home about 500 feet from the coast. They moved the pool furniture inside, turned off the water, disconnected all electrical appliances and emptied their refrigerator.

They then hopped in a truck filled with legal documents, jewelry and a decorative carved shell that had once belonged to April Medina's great-grandfather and headed west to Orlando, where they planned to ride out the storm with their daughter's family.

"The way we see it, if it maintains its current path, we get tropical storm-strength winds. If it makes a little shift to the left, it could be a Category 2 or 3 and I don't want to be anywhere near it," Carlos Medina said. "We are just being a little safe, a little bit more cautious."

About 20 miles away in the town of Cape Canaveral, John Long said Hurricane Matthew is just hype as his neighbors in his RV park packed up and evacuated inland. Even though his 32-foot RV is just feet from the Banana River and a half mile from the beach, he had no plans to leave.

Long, who owns a bike shop and has lived along the Space Coast for 30 years, said he has a generator and enough food and water for himself and his cats to last a week.

"There's always tremendous buildup, and then it's no stronger than an afternoon thunder-

storm," he said. "I'm not anticipating that much damage."

The last Category 3 storm or higher to hit the United States was Wilma in October 2005. It made landfall with 120 mph winds in southwest Florida, killing five people as it pushed through the Everglades and into the Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach area. It caused an estimated \$21 billion in damage and left thousands of residents without power for more than a week. It concluded a two-year span when a record eight hurricanes hit the state.

As of 5 p.m. Wednesday, Matthew was centered about 400 miles southeast of West Palm Beach and moving northwest, according to the National Hurricane Center. Hurricane-force winds extended 45 miles from the center.

"When a hurricane is forecast to take a track roughly parallel to a coastline, as Matthew is forecast to do from Florida through South Carolina, it becomes very difficult to specify impacts at any one location," said National Hurricane Center forecaster Lixion Avila.

Florida can expect as much as 10 inches of rain in some areas.

In South Carolina, Gov. Nikki Haley reversed the lanes of Interstate 26 so that all lanes of traffic were headed west and out of Charleston. It was the first time the lanes had been reversed. Plans to reverse the lanes were put in place after



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hours-long traffic jams during Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

The governor planned to call for more evacuations on Thursday, which would bring the total to about 500,000 people in the state. Florida urged or ordered about 1.5 million to leave the coast, said Jackie Schutz, spokeswoman for Gov. Rick Scott. Georgia had around 50,000 people told to go.

At Folly Beach, S.C., southwest of Charleston, Gaby Trompeter loaded her car to evacuate to Augusta, Ga. A year ago when a flood inundated the state there was so much water on the road near her house she couldn't get out for three days.

"If it brings a lot of rain, more than the storm last year, why would I want to stay?" she said.

President Barack Obama

visited the Federal Emergency Management Agency's headquarters Wednesday to be briefed on preparations. FEMA has deployed personnel to emergency operation centers in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. It's also positioning commodities and other supplies at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and in Albany, Ga.



CRAIG LENIHAN AP

Landscapers ride along a stretch of road that's partially flooded from rain triggered by the arrival of Hurricane Matthew in Nassau, Bahamas, on Wednesday.

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BRUCE LIPSKY AP

Rob Emahiser, top, and Kenneth Bonn of Jacksonville Beach Ocean Rescue shutter the lifeguard station on Wednesday.

Title: **Meet Gov. Haley's interpreter for the deaf**
 Author: BY JAMIESELF jself@thestate.com
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'GREATEST SIGN LANGUAGE GUY EVER'

Meet Gov. Haley's interpreter for the deaf

BY JAMIE SELF

jself@thestate.com

COLUMBIA

You may have seen him on television or the internet – standing next to Gov. Nikki Haley and other S.C. officials this week as they discuss Hurricane Matthew – his hands and arms moving in rapid, calculated motions.

Jason Hurdich, a nationally certified deaf interpreter, has been sharing with deaf S.C. residents what they need to know about the approaching storm and the state's plans.

The Charleston-based counselor for the State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation – who once interpreted for President Barack Obama – has created some buzz on Twitter from people watching Haley's news conference.

"Nikki Haley has the

GREATEST SIGN LANGUAGE GUY EVER!" one tweeter wrote.

Another tweet said Hurdich upstaged Haley: "The sign language interpreter is the best part of Nikki Haley's press conference," and adding his facial expressions were hot – expressed by three flame emojis.

Hurdich is a newcomer to the Palmetto State.

The New York City native moved to Charleston only two months ago.

"I'm a newbie to the state. I love it. It's a beautiful state. People are so friendly," Hurdich, who was born deaf, told The State through interpreter Shonna Magee, with whom he works at Vocational Rehabilitation.

Hurdich said he did not

expect to become part of the story this week, adding he is a humble guy who is happy just to help get information to the people who need it.

"My job is not about me," he said. "It's about the state and what they need and the governor

needs. I'm just giving that information and interpreting it to the deaf citizens of South Carolina."

In his everyday low-profile state gig, Hurdich counsels the deaf and hard of hearing.

Having worked with the deaf for more than 20 years, Hurdich said he finds the counseling rewarding. He appreciates "really seeing deaf people succeed and know that they can do anything except hear," he said.

Because Hurdich cannot hear what Haley and other state officials are saying about the state's hurricane plans, Magee sits in front

of him, listening to Haley and others speak, and then signing that information to Hurdich. He then reinterprets the information for a deaf audience.

"Interpreting work is not easy," he said. "It's hard work."

But sometimes it also is exciting, like when he interpreted for Obama, who was campaigning in Florida, he said. "When you get to interpret for the president, it's an honor. It's an honor because you're also serving your country."

Jamie Self: 803-771-8658, @jamiemself

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JEFFREY COLLINS AP

Jason Hurdich, a nationally certified deaf interpreter, conveys the information as Gov. Nikki Haley announces evacuation plans Tuesday ahead of Hurricane Matthew.

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 Author: BY JEFF WILKINSON jwilkinson@thestate.com
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HURRICANE MATTHEW

Columbia plays host to evacuees from coast

■ **The Capital City is a main destination for thousands of evacuees from South Carolina's coast. Restaurants, bars and attractions expect to see a big spike in business as the S.C. Lowcountry moves to the Midlands.**

BY JEFF WILKINSON
 jwilkinson@thestate.com

COLUMBIA SC

Alex and Stefany Marks and their three children left Beaufort at 9 a.m. Wednesday and arrived at the Chapin home of Stefany's parents at about 1 p.m., taking back roads all the way.

The Marks expect to be in the area until at least Saturday, when Alex, a pastor at First Scots Presbyterian Church, has to decide whether to have Sunday services. While they are here they plan to attend the Orangeburg County Fair, if possible, go to a movie and visit Riverbanks Zoo.

They are not alone. About a half-million people across the entire coast are expected to evacuate the South Carolina coast in advance of Hurricane Matthew. And many will be guests of friends, family, hotels and shelters in the Capital City.

"All your crazy cousins are coming to town," Marks said. "If you have to be stuck somewhere, Columbia isn't a bad place to be."

Gov. Nikki Haley on Wednesday ordered the evacuation first of Beaufort and Charleston counties. That started in earnest mid-afternoon. And Horry County will evac-

uate Thursday. Haley called for everyone to move 100 miles inland.

That's Columbia. And the Capital City, now expected to be minimally impacted by the storm, is preparing to host a hurricane party.

"Basically we have the reverse of the entire summer packed into three days," said attorney Kyle Michel, a board member of First Thursdays, a monthly open house and festival held up and down Main Street. "Instead of the whole state going to the beach sometime in June, July or August, we have the whole coast coming (here) for the weekend."

Michel said the Main Street merchants contemplated canceling the event but decided to go ahead anyway, as rough weather is not supposed to arrive before Friday.

"We haven't projected whether we will have a crush of people down here, but we might," he said.

Restaurants and bars are expecting big business this weekend, especially if University of South Carolina officials decide to go forward with the USC-Georgia football game, which now looks likely.

"A lot of people will be

coming to town and staying with friends and relatives," said Ryan Dukes, who owns the Columbia landmark restaurant Blue Marlin with his father, Bill.

Gail Hawkins, Woody Jones and his service dog Chinadoll arrived in Columbia from Charleston around 1 a.m., Wednesday, after spending about six hours in stop-and-go traffic on Interstate 26.

Hawkins, a nurse, said her employer Vibra Hospital of Charleston, sent her to accompany patients that have been transferred to Continued Care at Palmetto Health Baptist Hospital in Columbia.

Hawkins said she struggled to find a hotel through the weekend because too many rooms are already booked for the USC-Georgia football game.

Joe and Kayla Penta met their friends Derek King and Callie Campbell when they adopted puppies from the same litter. On Wednesday, the Pentas are hosting the couple, who are leaving their North Charleston home in anticipation of Hurricane Matthew.

They plan to stay in for a quiet dinner before Derek and Callie drive on to Asheville. But Joe Penta, area manager for Marco's

Pizza, said he expects a lot of business for Columbia's bars and restaurants.

"We're already busier than we would be," he said at about 2 p.m. Wednesday at the chain's Rosewood Drive store. "There are going to be a lot of people out doing things, trying to put their worries aside."

Columbia's movie houses are almost a natural draw for locals and their out-of-town guests.

The Nickelodeon Theatre, weather permitting, will open two popular films on Friday, according to Kristin Morris, marketing manager: "The Birth of a Nation," depicting the efforts of a literate slave, Nat Turner, to lead a revolt, and the documentary, "Cameraperson," the film memoir of world photographer Kirsten Johnson.

"If there is bad weather, people do want to go to the movies," Morris said. "As long as we are open and we've got power, I would anticipate that we would probably see some crowds."

Some people see the stall from the weather as a prime opportunity to visit the local zoo. By 2:30 Wednesday afternoon, 3,000 guests had gone through the turnstiles at



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Riverbanks Zoo, according to Susan O’Cain, the zoo’s public relations manager.

The normal expected draw for a day in the middle of the week in October is about 1,000 visitors, O’Cain said.

Riverbanks Zoo, widely acclaimed as the most popular tourist attraction in South Carolina, fielded numerous inquiries early Wednesday via Facebook asking if the park would be open, O’Cain said.

Riverbanks Zoo normal operating hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a

week. The park will remain open as long as weather permits, O’Cain said.

Pets also occupy a high place on the list when it comes to new arrivals in town.

At Shandon-Wood Animal Clinic near Melrose Heights, calls were coming in from the coast on Wednesday in search of boarding space. “We’re fully booked for large breed dogs,” said Mary Tresca Hofer, which is an abnormality for a non-holiday week, she said.

The same held true at Elam Animal Hospital on

Forest Drive. “Our boarding is very filled up,” said Chelsea Williams. “We’re a full house this weekend.”

State staffers Roddie Burris, Cynthia Roldan and Avery Wilks contributed.

“

IF YOU HAVE TO BE STUCK SOMEWHERE, COLUMBIA ISN’T A BAD PLACE TO BE.

Alex and Stefany Marks and their three children of Beaufort, staying with relatives in Columbia

Title: **Didn't follow the evacuation orders? You're on your own**
 Author: BY STEPHEN FASTENAU sfastenau@beaufortgazette.com
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HURRICANE MATTHEW

Didn't follow the evacuation orders? You're on your own

■ Hurricane Matthew forced a mandatory evacuation of Beaufort County beginning Wednesday afternoon. Emergency officials know some people won't leave. Here's the reality for those who don't.

BY STEPHEN FASTENAU
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Even though Hurricane Matthew forced an evacuation order for greater Beaufort County and parts of Jasper County

Wednesday afternoon, Beaufort County emergency officials said this week they know everyone won't leave.

And while the evacuation is characterized as mandatory, officers aren't going to knock on doors

and force people out, a Beaufort County Sheriff's

Office spokesman said.

But those who choose to stay are on their own, county emergency officials cautioned.

"We're obviously interested in the safety of people here and getting them to evacuate," Beaufort County Sheriff's Office Capt. Bob Bromage said.

During the worst of the storm, first responders might not be able to immediately reach those who choose to stay, Beaufort

County Emergency Management Division commander Lt. Col. Neil Baxley said. Calls to 911 will be answered as long as phone systems are operational, and names and addresses will be placed in a queue.

"A tree comes down across your house, you are trapped there and the major hurricane-force winds are blowing across Beaufort County, we're

SEE IF YOU STAY, 4A

FROM PAGE 3A

IF YOU STAY

not coming until the wind subsides," Baxley said.

"Because it's just as dangerous to us.

"We're not immune to those injuries; we're not immune to trees falling on patrol cars or ambulances."

Gov. Nikki Haley said Wednesday those who defy the evacuation order put at risk the lives of National Guardsman and law enforcement. Those who lack transportation could ride Palmetto Breeze buses beginning at

2 p.m. Wednesday.

After 3 p.m., drivers will no longer have the option of how to leave the area. They must follow law enforcement directions at traffic checkpoints along the way.

People who don't leave should still be able to travel locally, depending on conditions, Bromage said. He reiterated that everyone should evacuate.

Baxley said Beaufort County learned during Hurricane Floyd in 1999 that traffic during an evacuation will be excruciat-

ingly slow.

"We've worked hard to improve (the process), but our population has doubled since 1999, and we haven't added any more roads," he said. "We've widened a couple of them locally, but as they go farther inland, it's the same two-lane road we dealt with in 1999.

"So it's going to be slow."

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Title: **Lane reversals, evacuation routes: Here's what you need to know**
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TRANSPORTATION

Lane reversals, evacuation routes: Here's what you need to know

■ As Hurricane Matthew approaches the Lowcountry, the South Carolina Department of Transportation will reverse some lanes on some highways in an effort to make the evacuation smoother.

BY ERIN HEFFERNAN

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Here's what you need to know about evacuation routes and lane reversals in the Lowcountry for Hurricane Matthew.

Emergency crews reversed lanes on two major Beaufort County highways Wednesday to allow residents to comply with Gov. Nikki Haley's call for all coastal residents to evacuate in preparation for Hurricane Matthew.

Haley called for all the state's coastal residents to evacuate and move 100 miles from the coast, beginning with greater Charleston and Beaufort coun-

ties Wednesday afternoon. Georgetown and Horry county will be called to evacuate Thursday morning, Haley said.

The lane reversals will remain in effect until tropical storm conditions hit the area, said Capt. Bob Bromage of the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office.

● **Hilton Head/ Bluffton** — One lane is reversed to create three lanes traveling west on U.S. 278. The reversal begins at the intersection of Spanish Wells Drive and ends at Moss Creek

Village Drive when the highway expands to three lanes after the bridges to Hilton Head, according to Wendell Mulligan, with the S.C. Department of Transportation Beaufort office.

Emergency officials plan to keep one lane open heading east, which drivers will be able to use to drive back to the island during the evacuation, pending conditions of the storm, Mulligan said

Wednesday.

The reversal lane is approximately two miles in length and does not

continue further into Bluffton. Bluffton Parkway will not be reversed.

After drivers continue on U.S. 278 through Bluffton, the right lane will exit at S.C. 170, where the highway narrows to two lanes, and drivers in that lane will proceed to S.C. 462 and eventually be directed to I-95 North at Exit 28. The center and left lanes will continue on U.S. 278.

The center lane will then become the right lane and will be directed to I-95 North at Exit 8.

SEE ROUTES, 4A

FROM PAGE 3A

ROUTES

The left lane will continue on to U.S. 278 to Hampton County and eventually North Augusta.

Some lane changing may be possible on the evacuation route but could become difficult and drivers may have to be diverted away from their intended destination, Mulligan said.

● **Beaufort** — U.S. 21 is reversed to create three lanes at U.S. 21 Business near the intersection with Parris Island Gateway until U.S. 17. U.S. 21 is the

only road with lane reversals in northern Beaufort County, according to S.C. DOT.

The remaining right lane will be directed to U.S. 17 North to S.C. 303 to Walterboro. The left lane will be directed to U.S. 17 South, then to U.S. 17 Alt/U.S. 21 to Yemassee and ultimately to North Augusta.

● **Charleston to Columbia** — A full, four-lane reversal on I-26 in Charleston begins at the interchange of I-26 and

I-526. The full reversal continues west until the I-26 crossover to I-77 just outside Columbia in Lexington County.

● **Horry County** — Horry County has two four-lane reversals: S.C. 544 to U.S. 378 and S.C. 22 (Conway Bypass) to S.C. 576 near Marion County.

All other roads not listed above should have normal lane directions, according to S.C. DOT officials Wednesday.

Lowcountry residents were discouraged by the

governor and first responders from staying in the area after Wednesday afternoon. Those who do stay, however, should be able to travel freely in the area during the evacuation. If weather conditions deteriorate, that is subject to change in the coming days, said Bromage of the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office.

Comfort stations are set up along the evacuation routes including water and bathrooms for evacuees, Haley said in a Wednes-



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day morning press conference.

Most hotel rooms in the Midlands were booked by Wednesday morning, but there were still openings in the Upstate, Haley said.

In Georgia, Gov. Nathan Deal issued a state of emergency for 13 coastal counties, and residents of the state's coastal islands were urged to evacuate.

Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall

urges drivers to use extreme caution during hurricane conditions, particularly those using reversed lanes to evacuate the coastal areas.

"The usual rules of the road are changed in reversed lanes. The reversals are designed to keep traffic flowing; however, traveling speeds will be slower than normal. Drivers need to pay extra attention while in reversed traffic," said Hall.

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THE REVERSALS ARE DESIGNED TO KEEP TRAFFIC FLOWING; HOWEVER, TRAVELING SPEEDS WILL BE SLOWER THAN NORMAL.

Christy Hall, S.C. Secretary of Transportation



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Traffic was light Wednesday evening as lanes along U.S. 278 were readied for the evacuation ahead of Hurricane Matthew in Beaufort County.

Title: **Evacuation begins, but where is the traffic?**
 Author: BY LUCASHIGH AND TERESA MOSS lhigh@islandpacket.com tmoss@islandpacket.com
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Evacuation begins, but where is the traffic?

■ Thousands of Beaufort County residents were expected to begin evacuating Wednesday in advance of Hurricane Matthew, but many people appeared to be waiting. Meteorologists say the storm is likely to reach coastal South Carolina late Friday or early Saturday, bringing with it the potential for torrential rains, flooding and high winds.

BY LUCAS HIGH AND TERESA MOSS
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U.S. 278 on Hilton Head Island and through Bluffton was largely vacant on Wednesday evening, even though the highway's traffic was set to be reversed for evacuations related to Hurricane Matthew.

Gov. Nikki Haley earlier this week ordered a 3 p.m. evacuation of the county — and as that deadline approached, military and law enforcement personnel were positioned at most major intersections along U.S. 278 and S.C. 170.

Joy Riley, Lowcountry program manager for South Carolina Department of Transportation, said she witnessed first-hand the difference between the Charleston and Beaufort County evacuations while driving from Columbia earlier in the day.

"It was apparent people were leaving Charleston and heading

FROM PAGE 1A

HURRICANE

and seeing that it won't hit until the weekend.

The worry is that everyone could leave at once right before the storm hits, he said.

While drivers may have put a bit of wear and tear on their brakes during

toward Columbia," Riley said. "... I don't know what is happening here in Beaufort. I don't know if they left already or if they are still working on their houses."

Capt. Bob Bromage, spokesman for the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office, said thousands of people left prior to the official start of the evacuation. He said it is possible many people are watching the track of the storm

SEE HURRICANE, 8A

Here's what you need to know

- Stores and businesses across Beaufort County were closed on Wednesday as traffic flow reversals were put into place to handle thousands of evacuees ahead of Hurricane Matthew.

- Meteorologists say the Lowcountry can expect to see the worst wind and storm surge impacts on Saturday and through Saturday night.

- Beaufort County could see anywhere from 4 to 15 inches of rain starting Thursday evening and going through Saturday.

- The storm battered Haiti and Cuba, killing at least 11 people and washing out roads and bridges. The death toll was expected to rise.

➔ MORE INSIDE

- What you need to know about lane reversals, **3A**
- Will the water and power be shut off? **5A**
- Meet the governor's sign language interpreter, **6A**

➔ ONLINE

Visit islandpacket.com and beaufortgazette.com for videos, photos and the latest Beaufort County storm news.

major (transportation) problems," he said.

Leading up to the evacuation, area gas stations sold out of fuel and bottled water flew off grocery store shelves as locals either prepared to hightail it out of town or hunker down at home.

Many stores and businesses shut down

Wednesday afternoon, but some owners vowed to keep their establishments open as long as possible.

David Martin, owner of the Piggly Wiggly store in Coligny Plaza on Hilton

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Head Island, said he “will stay open as long (he) has the staff to do it.”

“It’s really not about making more sales,” he said. “We are trying to provide a service.”

While the forecast remains uncertain, Beaufort County could see four to

10 inches of rain starting Thursday evening and through Saturday, National Weather Service meteorologist James Carpenter said Wednesday.

Meteorologists at the Weather Channel are predicting 10 to 15 inches of rain in coastal parts of

the county.

Carpenter said the area could see 100 mph winds, life-threatening rip currents, isolated tornadoes, torrential rains and flash flooding between Friday and Saturday.

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DREW MARTIN Staff photo

S.C. DOT workers place pylons in an eastbound lane of U.S. 278 as the recently completed Bluffton Flyover looms over the barren highway. The pylons were placed as part of the state’s plan to reverse an eastbound lane to ease congestion for those evacuating Hilton Head Island. Crews started an hour later than planned, but the traffic never materialized.