Celebrate the holiday,

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — These history-making temperatures are causing concern for local officials and emergency personnel as residents prepare to celebrate the Fourth of July.

The Upstate set an all-time record for hot temperatures Sunday, clocking in with a high of 107 degrees, according to the National Weather Service.

On the same day in 1970, the record stood at 99 degrees and before that, the all-time state record was 106, set back in 1887.

The temperature is slated to be about seven degrees higher than normal on the holiday, which will top out at 96 degrees.

Parvin Lewis, director of health promotion at Clemson University's Red Fern Clinic, said even a change of 10 or so degrees can make a world of difference for those planning to get out to see fireworks or participate in any of the special events.

"We are used to it being 90 or 92," she said. "We aren't used to it being in the 100s. A lot of the prevention is common sense, but you'd be surprised at how many people can continue with their normal outdoor actiyity with this heat. The problem is, when we sweat, we lose sodium and potassium. When our electrolytes are depleted, it is terrible for our heart and muscles. It can be really dangerous. When you lose that balance, it's imperative that you replace them with lots of water."

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beat the heat



A family enjoys the music and other activities at Seneca's 4th of July festival at Gignilliant Park last year. While the heat is a normal part of the Upstate's summer, the higher-than-normal temperatures are prompting health officials to urge residents to be extra careful while enjoying the holiday.

JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL

HEAT: 'Leave the beer, the soda ... at home'

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Hydration is key, but Lewis suggests taking a break, even in the midst of important yard work or unnecessary travel.

"Just stay inside," she added. "If any of that can wait, please, just let it. It's not worth the risk. Heat stroke can have a fast onset and if someone is alone, it could end badly."

Which is what officials believed happened to a 71-year old Anderson resident who was found dead in his home Sunday.

"That's why it's important to not leave children or elderly alone, especially with this heat and these storms," she said. "The power goes out, leaving no options for cooling down. The coroner thinks his death was heat-related following the power outage."

To help contend the heat, cooling centers have been set up across the state. In Walhalla, according to Oconee County Emergency Management Director Scott Krein, the Walhalla Depot operated a center until 6 p.m. Monday. There was no official word on how many visitors used the center throughout the day by press time.

BEAT THE HEAT

Drink water to rehydrate and replenish
Stay in the shade as long as possible
Wear a hat
Use nothing lower than 30 SPF sunscreen
Don't eat spicy food
No alcohol or energy drinks
Save outdoor activity and yard work for another day
Even a five or 10 degree jump can make a dangerous difference

SOURCE: Parvin Lewis

"For the most part, people are listening to advice and are being smart about staying safe in the heat," Krein said. "We are planning on covering these Fourth of July events in our normal capacity, but most of all, it's important to have plenty of fluids."

That doesn't mean an ice-cold beer, either.

"Alcohol makes us take more trips to the bathroom," Lewis said. "It quickly dehydrates us. Drink water. Leave the beer, the soda and the energy drinks at home."

HOLIDAY EVENTS

TODAY

CLEMSONFEST at 5:30 p.m. Y Beach
Independence Eve in downtown Walhalla at 4 p.m.

July 4

Salem Fourth of July Celebration 5 p.m.
Seneca 4th of July Celebration at Gignilliat Park in Seneca at 4 p.m.
Keowee Marina fireworks at 9:30 p.m.

Closed Wednesday

Oconee and Pickens County offices closed.
All municipal offices closed.
TriCounty Technical Community College, Clemson and Southern Wesleyan University closed, no activities.
Banks closed.
Westminster pool will remain open.
Seneca Light and Water Plant is closed but the night deposit will remain open 24 hours.

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