

## First day of winter to be mild in Upstate

By Jennifer Crossley Howard

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ANDERSON — Tuesday is the first day of winter, and in contrast to below-freezing days last week, the forecast falls in line with typical seasonal weather.

Tuesday's low of 37 and high of 50 are appropriate for December, said Blair Holloway, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Greer. Temperatures that dipped into the teens the last two weeks are more common in January.

For the Christmas weekend, the outlook for Upstate residents includes sun, rain and below-freezing temperatures and highs in the upper 40s. There's even the possibility of a white Christmas if lows drop a few more degrees than predicted, said Neil Dixon, meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Greer.

"It's certainly something to keep your attention on," he said.

Wednesday will be sunny with a low of 31 degrees and a high of 50. Thursday's low is the same and the high climbs to 53. Clouds will move in at night.

"It looks like a pretty sizable low-pressure system is going to be crossing the Deep South Christmas Eve and Christmas Day," Dixon said.

Friday, on Christmas Eve, there's a 30 percent chance of rain that increases to 50 percent that night. The high will reach 53 and the low will be 37. Saturday will bring sun, a low of 27 and a high of 48. The evening will likely turn breezy.

"That gusty wind would linger into Christmas night and Sunday morning," Dixon said.

Those who want snow on Christmas Day could travel to the western North Carolina mountains, which are expected to get a light dusting.

Early Tuesday morning, stargazers get their only chance until 2094 to see a lunar eclipse fall on the winter solstice.

"It may be worth getting up for in the middle of the night," Dixon said.

The eclipse peaks at 3 a.m., but shadows start to fall across the moon at 1:30 a.m. and continue until 5 a.m. The next lunar eclipse isn't expected until April 15, 2014. It is the first lunar eclipse visible from the U.S. since 2008.

Recent rain raised the levels of all three major lakes in the Upstate. Hartwell Lake rose from 654 feet to 655. Lake Jocassee rose three feet to 87, but is still 10 feet shy of its target level. Lake Keowee is right on target at 96.5 feet.