Rains bring flood watch

'Heavy to torrential' downpours possible

By David Dykes and E. Richard Walton
Staff Writers

A flash-flood watch was posted for the Upstate through this afternoon as Tropical Storm Andrea began its march along the East Coast, with torrential downpours expected across a wide area, including South Carolina.

Rainfall rates exceeding two to three inches in a three-hour period were possible in the Upstate, forecasters said, adding that flooding along streams and creeks could occur as recent rains have left the ground saturated.

The state Department of Health and Environmental Control urged owners and operators of reservoirs throughout South Carolina to check their dams during the next several days for possible problems caused by heavy rainfall.

"Owners who have the ability to lower their reservoir's water level should safely do so to provide additional storage for the anticipated rainfall," said John Poole with DHEC's dam safety program.

The first named storm of the 2013 hurricane season had maximum sustained winds near 65 mph as it prepared to make landfall in the Florida Big Bend region Thursday, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Some weakening was anticipated as the center of Andrea moved over land, NHC officials said.

The storm was expected to hug the coastline, bringing rain as far as southern New England through the weekend. It was expected to lose its tropical characteristics by Saturday.

Officials at the Federal Emergency Management

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Agency urged residents to be prepared.

"With the increased risk of storm surge and flash flooding, remember to stay out of the water," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "Turn around, don't drown."

On Thursday, due to earlier rain, Neely Ferry Road in Simpsonville was closed to through traffic between East Standing Springs Road and West Georgia Road, Greenville County officials said.

The road was open to residents, but they were urged to use caution near Blakely Road because debris and deep water could be covering the roadway.

Staff writer Paul Alongi contributed.