

HAS VICIOUS WINDS

Hurricane Debra Belts Into Texas

HOUSTON, Tex. (AP) — Hurricane Debra started belting inland from the Gulf of Mexico Friday night, clawing the middle Texas coast with winds exceeding 90 m.p.h.

A slender 75-foot steel tower used to fly storm warnings snap-

ped in the storm's first thrusts at Freeport, an industrial center and fishing port 50 miles south of Houston.

Accompanied by blinding rain, the vicious winds shattered windows and peeled shingles off the roofs of Freeport homes by 6:30 p.m.

A Weather Bureau advisory at 7 p.m. placed the hurricane's center 20 miles south of Freeport in the Gulf of Mexico.

Forecasters looked for the storm to drift northward across the coastline between Freeport and Galveston, 40 miles up the coast, within a few hours.

Debra's course pointed directly toward Houston, the South's largest city with a metropolitan area population of 1,200,000. The latest estimate of its speed was six miles per hour.

At least one shrimp boat, carrying three men, was reported aground on a sandbar 35 miles southwest of Freeport, and another evacuating beach residents was long overdue back at Freeport.

Rescue craft searched in vain for the stranded boat, the 65-foot "Hope" from Freeport.

The red hurricane flag atop the storm warning tower in Freeport whisked away as the structure toppled.

First reports of other Freeport
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damage included part of a construction project blown down and a truck overturned at one of two big Dow Chemical Corp. plants nearby.

"This storm is much worse than any of us expected, said Bascom Simpson, Freeport newsman and veteran of at least half a dozen hurricanes.

There was an unconfirmed report the storm caught a woman and a boy at Quintana, a village three miles east of Freeport, and they were unable to get out. Coast Guardsmen tried to reach them.

About 1,000 residents fled summer cottages along Surfside Beach, an exposed 14-mile stretch just northeast of Freeport. Sheriff's deputies said some refused to leave.

An unidentified Dow Chemical plant worker reported wind gusts up to 93 m.p.h. shortly after 6 p.m.

Debra Brings Heavy Rains Along Path

GALVESTON, Tex. (AP)—Devastating Hurricane Debra became a widespread low-pressure area that touched off heavy rains in northeast Texas and Oklahoma as it drifted slowly northward Sunday.

Skies cleared along the Texas coast where Debra did damage estimated in millions of dollars by smashing business houses and homes and leveling crops Saturday.

One person who was reported as still missing made his way back Sunday to the campsite from which he had disappeared. He was Arthur Gilliam, 47, of Houston who disappeared from a fishing shack as 100-mile-an-hour winds turned a prairie on Chocolate Bay, near Alvin, Tex., into a howling 15-foot sea.

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W. W. Gilliam, 57, also of Houston, saved his son, Paul Thomas, 7, and himself by clinging for 11 hours to the door of a fishing shack until it drifted to high ground.

"We took shelter in the shack and then the storm hit it and it just busted up," Gilliam said. His brother, Arthur, jumped out a window.

The older man continued: "I yelled at my brother and he said he was all right. I saw my brother once but when I looked again I couldn't see him."

A family from Sweeney, Tex., was found unhurt in their grounded cabin cruiser. A Coast Guard search began after they were reported missing on Chocolate Bay.

The tropical storm broke up after raging into the Texas coast between Galveston and Freeport with winds up to 105 m.p.h.

Travel into Galveston, isolated for hours, returned to normal.

Rains ranged up to 3.28 inches Saturday night in Luxkin as the low-pressure area moved across that area of east Texas.

A farm gauge measured 15 inches of rain in Brazoria County, west of Galveston, Saturday. Orange, an industrial center in the southeast corner of Texas, got more than 10 inches of rain.