

Clouds still block St. Helens' peak

United Press International
VANCOUVER, Wash. — Rain temporarily cleared the air of volcanic ash from Mount St. Helens Tuesday, but thick clouds are thwarting search-and-rescue missions and scientific observations of the simmering peak for the third straight day.

Despite the wet weather, visibility in eastern Washington was normal for the first time since the mountain's May 18 eruption had turned the region into an "ash bowl." Circular winds were still blowing traces of ash around in southwestern Washington, the target of the volcano's latest eruption.

The National Weather Service warned, however, the fine, porous ash would dry out quickly once the rain stopped and its blinding, choking dust would be stirred up every time the wind blows for the next several months.

Federal Emergency Management officials said they had exhausted their supply of face masks from the military with the arrival of 265,000 Monday and an anticipated 35,000 more today.

Five people missing since they were cited Saturday for being within a 20-mile "Red Zone" around the mountain were found and airlifted to safety Monday.

The men included 42-year-old Otto Sieber, a Seattle film maker who was one of three men who climbed to the top of the mountain April 13, not long after it first began spewing ash and steam. The three filmed potential beer commercials at the crater's edge, later appearing on television to discuss the adventure.

Publicity of the stunt, however, prompted authorities to issue warnings of prosecution for anyone contemplating a similar climb. Seiber himself said he wouldn't return to the summit even for \$100,000 because it was too "dangerous."

The five were removed from the official list of missing and feared dead, which stands at 76. Because of the weather, no new casualty sites were located by the Army helicopter rescue mission being staged out of Toutle.

The volcano has quieted down but still rumbles with aftershocks and sends periodic plumes of steam thousands of feet into the air, confusing geologists who conceded Monday they are "woefully lacking" in the ability to predict whether the majestic peak is on the verge of another mighty eruption.

"What we were looking for was a gradual increase in eruptive activity, but we were getting a real gradual decline — then bam," said Tim Hait of the U.S. Geological Service regarding the May 18 eruption.

Jim Unterwegner, a U.S. Forest Service spokesman, said the estimated 1 million board feet of timber blown down in the upper Toutle Valley "could be lost if the mountain continues to act up."

Traffic crawled at a snail's pace through drifting ash on Interstate 5 between Kelso and Chehalis Monday. Motorists had their parking lights turned on and were moving about 10 mph, while residents used snow shovels to remove ash from their yards and sidewalks.

In Oregon, State Police Capt. L.W. Brockway said the highways were not significantly affected despite the reports of ash fallout far to the south.

But port officials in Portland and Vancouver said they were losing \$5 million a day because of volcanic debris clogging the Columbia River, the main shipping channel for ports in northern Oregon and southwest Washington relying on trade to and from the Pacific.

80 seconds to live, but only one to die

United Press International
TOLEDO, Wash. — Jolene Edwards was standing atop 3,800-foot Elk Rock peak, taking pictures of ice blue Spirit Lake, when majestic Mount St. Helens suddenly exploded in a mighty eruption.

At that point, the experts say, Jolene, 19, and her mother, Arlene, 37, had an estimated 80 seconds to live.

The two women from Portland, Ore., must have stood in startled awe as they watched the roaring mountain blow its top May 18, spewing a giant black cloud of death with the force of an atomic bomb.

The force roared across Spirit Lake, down the Toutle River and up the mountainside toward them, ripping out trees by the roots and strewn

ing them on the ground like so many match sticks.

There was nowhere to hide on Elk Rock.

The force of the volcanic explosion picked up the Edwards' four-wheel drive vehicle and hurled it onto its back, melting the parking lights and scorching the paint down to the primer.

Both women were killed that instant. Lewis County Coroner George H. Blomdahl said Monday. "It was a really hot blast of air. It must have sucked all of the oxygen out."

Jolene's body was found on the peak Friday. She had been blown several yards backward and lay, with her camera beside her, near a

twisted tangle of scorched trees that had been blown down.

Her dog, a golden retriever, was found dead about 10 yards away, fur burned black along the ridge of its back.

Edwards' body was not located. Blomdahl surmises it was blown under the gray, sulfur-smelling ash and debris.

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