

The Facts

COVERING BRAZORIA COUNTY ★ WHERE TEXAS BEGAN

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This edition of The Facts published earlier than its usual press time to allow additional time for delivery and for our employees to find a safe place to report the storm.

We will be making every effort to deliver print copies of the newspaper to subscribers and news racks during Tropical Storm Nicholas. However, we are instructing our carriers not to risk their vehicles or well-being.

Any missed print editions will be delivered when conditions allow it to be done safely.

Our news team will continue to provide regular updates on our website to all residents as well as its e-edition to subscribers.

Residents snatch up supplies

By **RAVEN WUEBKER**
raven.wuebker@thefacts.com

As Tropical Storm Nicholas approached, residents prepared for what may come.

Locals have been on the hunt for items that can stand to be out for a period of time to get ready for the upcoming storm, Lake Jackson H-E-B Director Greg Garza said.

The store has seen a consistent flow of customers seeking essentials to

■ See **SUPPLIES**, 1A



RAVEN WUEBKER/The Facts

Galveston resident Rachel Dragony purchases sandbags Monday at Lake Hardware and Lumber in Angleton. Some areas could receive up to 20 inches of rain from Tropical Storm Nicholas, forecasters said.

WATER IS THE WORRY



TERESA DOWLING/The Facts

Two women stand in the waves on Monday morning off the coast of Surfside Beach while a ship heads out into the Gulf of Mexico as Tropical Storm Nicholas heads toward Southeast Texas.

Coast to bear brunt of tropical storm

By **TERESA DOWLING**
teresa.dowling@thefacts.com

SURFSIDE BEACH

John Smith was sent to Surfside from his home in Oyster Creek to see how his parents' properties in the village were weathering the winds and waves riled by Tropical Storm Nicholas.

"They're not worried but wanted to be safe and have someone check on the houses," he said. "Their houses aren't right on the beach so they have a little bit of protection from the wind."

Nicholas is Smith's first tropical system and he took a little time to visit the Surfside jetty and watch the storm roll in after checking on the houses.

Waves continued to grow throughout the day, crashing over the jetty and steadily approaching homes built on the sand along the beach.

Forecasters expected a storm surge of 3 to 5 feet along the Brazoria County coastline. Projections Monday afternoon put the surge's arrival near the same time period as high tide, just after midnight, which could heighten the amount of water pushed ashore.

"As the winds keep getting stronger and we get more rain, I wouldn't be surprised if the water comes up to the dunes," Lake Jackson-based storm chaser Zachary Shoemaker said as he recoded video on the



TERESA DOWLING/The Facts

A man fights for control as he windsurfs midday Monday near the Surfside Beach jetty as Tropical Storm Nicholas makes its trek north toward landfall along the Southeast Texas coast.

beach around noon. "Although this isn't a hurricane, it is a solid little storm with some strong winds in it."

Winds already were in the upper 20s and gusts reaching into the 30s by early Monday afternoon, which combined with the expected surge, prompted the county and village to close off most beach entrances. A few people could be seen walking along the beach and even entering the water late in the morning, but by the evening, anyone who came by the shore remained in the safe and dry confines of their vehicles.

Earlier in the day, people were taking advantage of the storm roiling up the water to get in some surfing.

"There were two guys out there this morning making their second run when the first squall line came through and about blew them off their boards," surfing photographer Tom Hendrickson said. "They were down on threes, holding on with one hand as the waves pushed them all around. There was a third guy walking down the jetty with his longboard and he got blown so hard he

■ See **COAST**, Page 9A

Nicholas expected to be rain, flood event

From Facts staff reports

Southern Brazoria County saw conditions begin to worsen Monday evening as Tropical Storm Nicholas tracked closer to anticipated landfall and to the area, and officials urge that residents not take it lightly.

"You never take these storms lightly," Brazoria County Judge Matt Sebesta said.

"Looking back just in my lifetime, I look back at Tropical Storm Claudette in 1979, Tropical Storm Allison in 2001. The tropical storms are where we get the largest amounts of rainfall."

Even Hurricane Harvey in 2017 was more of a tropical storm when it reached Brazoria County, he said.

"The biggest problems are the slow-moving storms," Sebesta said. "It doesn't appear this one is going to be that, but we just need to be prepared because just two weeks ago our neighbors in Louisiana got a really bad storm in Hurricane Ida, and at some point in time, we're going to get a really bad storm. We don't want to be complacent. We always want to take these tropical events seriously."

Expected to make landfall late Monday in the vicinity of Matagorda Bay, the storm was projected to bring heavier rain bands and the possibility of flash flooding, National Weather Service meteorologist Tim Cady said.

"As the system pushes

■ See **STORM**, Page 6A

STORM FORECAST

RAINFALL
6 to 10 inches along the coast, 4 to 6 inches inland

STORM SURGE
3 to 5 feet all along the county coast

WINDS
100 percent chance of tropical storm force winds (35+ mph) along coast, 80 percent inland

Firefighters climb 110 floors in honor of first responders lost on 9/11

By **TERESA DOWLING**
teresa.dowling@thefacts.com

LAKE JACKSON — Three hundred and forty-three firefighters, 60 law enforcement officers, eight private EMTs and paramedics, three New York State court officers and one New York Fire patrolman. The list of 412 first responders killed in the Sept. 11 attacks powered four local firefighters as they climbed, in full fire-fighting gear, the 110 floors that made up the World Trade Center buildings on the 20th anniversary of the attacks.

"I have never done a climb before," Angleton firefighter Ethan Gambino said. "My brother just joined the fire department with me, and

"Those guys didn't get to train for it. They didn't plan on climbing all those floors, they just got the call, ran in head first without a second thought and saved as many lives as they could."

— Ethan Gambino, Angleton firefighter

he had never done a climb before, so we wanted to do this together."

Planning to train for the climb in the weeks leading up to it, Gambino wasn't in a position to complete his training but decided to push ahead with

the climb anyway. "Those guys didn't get to train for it," he said. "They didn't plan on climbing all those floors, they just got the call, ran in head first without a second thought and saved as many lives as they could."

Starting at 9 a.m. at Family Fitness, Gambino, his brother Ben, Clute firefighter Nick Stidman and Angleton Fire Department recruit Alexia Cerda began their symbolic climb to the top of the towers on exercise equipment.

Focusing on completing one floor at a time, the firefighters' bodies started struggling with the demands of the climb. Around the 40th floor, Ben

■ See **CLIMB**, Page 5A



TERESA DOWLING/The Facts

Angleton firefighter Ethan Gambino breaks down in tears after completing a memorial stair climb in honor of first responders killed on Sept. 11, 2001. Gambino said he lost a distant relative in the collapse of the North Tower, making the climb more personal.



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