

Third day of storms expected in California

(AXcess News) Reno - A third day of severe storms is expected in California after Gov. Schwarzenegger declared three counties emergencies. While the Sierra Nevada mountain range has seen as much as five feet of snow, forecasters say another four feet could fall Sunday.

Yesterday, wind speeds of up to 165 mph were blowing westwardly out of the Sierra Nevada mountains near Lake Tahoe and with all of the heavy snowfall in Northern California's mountain range, avalanche warnings are in play.

Friday, the winter storm dropped nearly two inches of rain in Reno, a record amount, the National Weather Service says.

Sunday morning, interstate 80 from Sacramento to the Nevada border was shut down due to blizzard conditions.

The massive winter storm is credited with taking the lives of at least three people so far and thousands of homes have been left without power in California, Oregon and Washington.

In the desert town of Fernley, Nev., a levee broke; flooding hundreds of homes after heavy rains caused the cave in of a 150-foot section.

Lyon County Fire Chief Scott Huntley described the flood as a wall of water two-feet high and fifty feet wide crashing down Farm District Road.

Huntley was one of the first on the scene at 4am after the levee broke.

Nevada Gov. Jim Gibbons toured the area by helicopter on Saturday before declaring the county an emergency area.

Heavy rains filling the Truckee river caused the overflow, which by Saturday afternoon had been diverted, but not before some homes were covered by as much as eight feet of water, Huntley said.

Many of the residents had been placed a temporary shelter set up at the local high school, which at its peak, housed 150 people. Fernley's Mayor said between 300 to 400 homes were affected by the floodwaters.