

**St. Louis** *Thursday*  
 Thurs., July 17, 1986



Robert LaRouche/Post-Dispatch

**Tall pines near the Science Center in Forest Park provided the right amount of shade for this couple Wednesday as the temperature reached 96. Continued hot weather prompted health officials to issue the fourth heat warning of the summer.**

## Demand For Cooling Units Heats Up

**By Peter Hernon and Victor Volland**  
 Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

With the temperature hitting 96 degrees Wednesday and the fourth heat warning of the summer in effect, Bernice Kite decided she needed more than fans and walks in the park to cope with the weather.

Kite, 73, of south St. Louis, said that 100-degree readings in her two-room, third-floor apartment had forced her to do something she had never done before — ask for a free air conditioner.

"A police officer told me I ought to call and get some help," she said as volunteers from Missouri Energycare Inc. installed a small window unit in her bedroom. "I used to be able to stand the heat pretty good. . . . This is terrible."

The heat warning was called at noon Wednesday — the 23rd day this summer that the temperature reached or topped the 90-degree mark. The high — 96 — was recorded shortly after 4 p.m.; the record high for the date was 103, in 1936.

This summer's temperatures are somewhat hotter than the temperatures of 1983, when 54 people in the metropolitan area died from the heat. So far this summer, six people have died from heat-related causes.

Union Electric braced Wednesday to deliver its highest output of the season to meet the demand for power, officials said. The peak so far this summer was the 6,540 megawatts used July 9; the record was 6,810 megawatts, on Aug. 29, 1984.

"We see a possibility we could come very close," said UE spokesman Dick McAleenan.

About 370 units in the Blumeyer housing complex west of downtown were without electricity Wednesday evening. About 270 of those were in two buildings for senior citizens, but power there was restored in three hours. The other 100 units were in town houses at the complex.

Michael W. Jones, executive director of the St. Louis Housing Authority, blamed water that had leaked into underground conduits for the outage.

Jones said he hoped to have power restored to all of the units by this morning. He said a new primary electrical system that will be built this fall would prevent future outages.

St. Louis was not the only area baking in the heat. The temperatures rose into the 90s again Wednesday in the Southeast in spite of thunderstorms that brought brief, scattered relief. The heat wave has killed 13 people and withered crops.

At the Walnut Park Senior Citizens Center in north St. Louis, director Florence Pietrowski remembered well the killing heat of years past — especially 1980, when 113 people died.

That summer, she said, three people in her neighborhood died. "I think the heat is starting to run about the same as it did then," she said.

At least 11 people, all over the age of 60, took refuge in the air-conditioned shelter Wednesday to sip orange juice and play cards — the most so far this summer, Pietrowski said.

Sister Patricia Ann Kelley, executive director of Missouri Energycare, said requests for air conditioners are coming faster than they can be met. Her agency and the Human Development Corp. have 160 to lend.

A meteorologist for the National Weather Service, John Feldt, said no relief was in sight.

"We're looking at a likely heat index of about 110 for the next two to three days," he said.

The first heat alert of the season was called July 10 after five days of temperatures in the upper 80s and 90s. But it was canceled Saturday.

St. Louis Health Commissioner William B. Hope Jr. said young people, especially those working or playing outdoors, need to take precautions against heat stress.

Nationally, much of the Southeast returned to the upper 80s and 90s — 99 in Macon, Ga., 98 in Valdosta, Ga., and 97 in Atlanta.

# Heat Wave 7-17-1986

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 Mon, Jul 3, 2017