DEADLY WEATHER SYSTEM

Power outages continue: another icy storm looms
‘No letup to some of the misery’ in hard-hit Texas

By Paul J. Weber and Jill Bleed

Texas — Millions of Americans endured another frigid day without electricity or heat in the aftermath of a deadly winter storm as utility crews raced to restore power before another blast of snow and ice covered much of the state, leaving residents to deal with the cold.

Nearly 3.4 million customers around the U.S. were still without power, and some areas lost electricity for a fourth day. Millions more have lost power in recent weeks based on lowered case numbers in South Africa, the United Kingdom and other areas spread in California.

Meanwhile, only 3.3% of all tests are coming back positive for COVID-19, after California’s positivity rate had climbed above 14% last month.

The steady downward trend could be reversed if new strains of the coronavirus from South Africa, the United Kingdom and other areas spread in California.

PANDEMIC MODIFIES ASH WEDNESDAY

Coronavirus cases have fallen 90% as Bay Area counties move closer to reopening

By Evan Webeck and Paul Rogers

California continued to show a dramatic decline in the number of COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, and in the Bay Area, several counties were moving closer to making their first progress in months in the state’s reopening tiers — back to a world where indoor dining, movie theaters and other activities are once again allowed.

“There’s a light at the end of the tunnel,” Gov. Gavin Newsom said at a news conference Wednesday in Riverside County.

The data has been dramatic in recent weeks as the state and local officials in the nation’s most populous state attempt to safely reopen businesses and schools. Cali- fornia’s statewide number of new COVID-19 cases has fallen 90% — from 45,052 a month ago on Jan. 14 to 4,690 on Wednes- day, Newsom noted. The number of people hos- pitalized has been reduced 28% over the past two weeks, and the number of intensive care unit patients has dropped 33%.

“We are in a very different place than we have been because of all of your hard work — each and every one of you doing your part,” Newsom said, speaking at a vaccine clinic for farmworkers at Sea View packing company in Coachella.

The optimism came on a day state officials announced a new deal to provide relief pay- ments and grants for millions of Californians in the [redacted] who have been hard hit by the pandemic.

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