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## NWS: County could see more lightning today

By **ROB BURGESS** The Daily Journal

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Responding to the early and extremely active fire season that has already choked the north coast with fire and smoke, a fire weather watch has been issued by the National Weather Service in Eureka.

The watch remains in effect from 11 a.m. Tuesday until 11 a.m. Wednesday for the interior portion of Mendocino County and the western half Mendocino National Forest, among other places in Northern California.

"Monsoon moisture flowing north over the desert southwest will arrive over the area by Tuesday," stated a portion of a release issued by NWS early Monday morning. "The mid- and upper-level moisture combined with south-southeast convectively favorable wind flow has the potential to bring isolated dry thunderstorms by Tuesday afternoon. These thunderstorms will be moving from south to north. The most likely development will occur over ridges, but could move north-ward over valley locations. Deeper moisture is forecast to arrive by Wednesday leading to greater coverage and wetter thunderstorms. A chance of thunderstorms will continue into Thursday morning."

Doug Boushey, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Eureka, said the NWS wasn't surprised by the development of the storm given the season.

"Right now we're looking at (storm) coverage to

increase by Wednesday morning," he said. "What we're seeing is a surge in monsoon moisture into Southern California. This is typical for this time of year. The system appears to be dropping rain."

Boushey said that the system didn't appear to have the same inherent danger of the front that sparked the dry lightning fires of June 20 and 21.

"It won't be another wide-spread lightning outbreak," he said. "That was unusual to get that much lightning activity with that system. The monsoon surge that we're forecasting is more typical for this time of year and this story will likely produce rainfall. There still will be lightning. There is still a potential to see fire starts from the lightning, but it won't be a dry lower atmosphere."

Boushey said that with exception of a few sprinklings, the Ukiah Valley would stay dry for the most part.

"Ukiah could see a few hundredths or a tenth of an inch of rain, but the bulk of precipitation will be north of Willits," he said. "We're seeing some incongruent data from the various models we have. One keeps (the southern portion of the county) dry and the other has it wet. What's actually going to happen it's a little hard to tell at this point. It's probably somewhere in between."

Boushey said the large-scale fires that have swept the state over the weeks and months had a direct effect on the issuance of the warning.

"We understand there has been a lot of fire containment activity," he said. "We've had a lot of fires in Northern California and I think that's what has prompted the watch. We've been in this very dangerous fire station since the start of the summer and it was unfortunate that we had that even so early in the season. We don't typically see that this early

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