**COM356/ENG310**

More story editing practice.

CHICAGO – Hundreds of thousands of people were still without power in the Midwest Wednesday as the region slowly recovered from a devastating winter storm that left twelve inches of snow on the ground while in Alabama, flood victims were still waiting to return to their homes.

In Western Illinois and neighboring Indiana, officials of the Commonwealth Edison power utility said 200,000 people were still being effected by massive power outtages caused by Monday's heavy snow storm that caused one death in a northern Chicago suburb. They said they hoped to restore service by Thursday.

"It was a fairly typical storm for this time of the year," Bruce Terry, of the National Weather Service in Washington, told the Associated Press.

He said the storm was now over the Atlantic but sub-zero temperatures were reported across the upper Midwest, which had been enjoying an unusually mild Winter.

"The next two days will be very cold in the northeast as well, Terry said.

In the Chicago area, some schools were closed because of the power outtages but for the most part it was business as usual as emergency crews cleared roads from snapped power lines and downed trees and streetlights.

Traffic was reported almost back to normal at the citys 2 airports.

In Cleveland, Ohio, a Delta Air Lines jetliner with 140 people aboard skidded off the runway but no one was injured, airport officials said .

In Elba, Alabama, where five people were killed when a levee gave way Sunday, floodwaters from the Pea river began to recede and 2000 residents who were evacuated were expected to return to their homes by Thursday, officials said.

Meanwhile the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration said this Winter has been the 2nd warmest on record. It said the national average temperature for January and February was 37.5 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) compared with a normal average of 32.1 degrees Fahrenheit (0 degree Celsius). The previous record of 37 degrees Fahrenheit was set in 1990.