

Coldest day ever brings havoc

By Scott Williams

Sunday was the coldest day in the history of DeKalb, as record low temperatures and high winds combined to bring the city to a frozen standstill.

An all-time low temperature for DeKalb of 25 degrees below zero was recorded by the NIU Weather Service at about 8 a.m. Sunday, and average winds of 35 mph made the wind chill factor 70 degrees below zero.

The old record for DeKalb,

set in 1929, was 23 degrees below zero.

The frigid weather caused at least 10 cases of frostbite, a major electrical power outage, at least 10 car accidents, the cancellation of all Monday classes at NIU, hundreds of

stranded people and hundreds of stalled cars.

The NIU Health Service reported five cases of frostbite and Kishwaukee Hospital reported another five cases.

The health service also received several phone calls from people inquiring about frostbite, University Health Service Director James Erickson said.

The weather left about 500 people without electrical power Saturday night when a power line was knocked down on Annie Glidden Road just west of DeKalb. The blackout, which covered one square half-mile, lasted for about three hours, Commonwealth Edison spokesman Carl Brown said.

The biggest problem the electric company faced was fighting the frigid weather to make repairs, Brown said.

"I think last night (Sunday) was the worst I have ever seen," he said.

DeKalb Police reported 10 car accidents, but no injuries. The police department's biggest problem was a large number of stalled cars, a police official said.

By Monday afternoon the city engineering department had snowplowed all the city streets, and the only problem was congestion on Annie Glidden Road leading to the East-West Tollway, police reported.

All NIU classes were cancel-

ed Monday in DeKalb and at the NIU Law School in Glen Ellyn, but classes are scheduled to be held today, except those in Graham Hall. Graham Hall is closed today because of frozen and broken water pipes, NIU Office of Information Director Robert Woggon said.

The weather also stranded hundreds of people in DeKalb, primarily parents who had brought their children back to school on Saturday or Sunday.

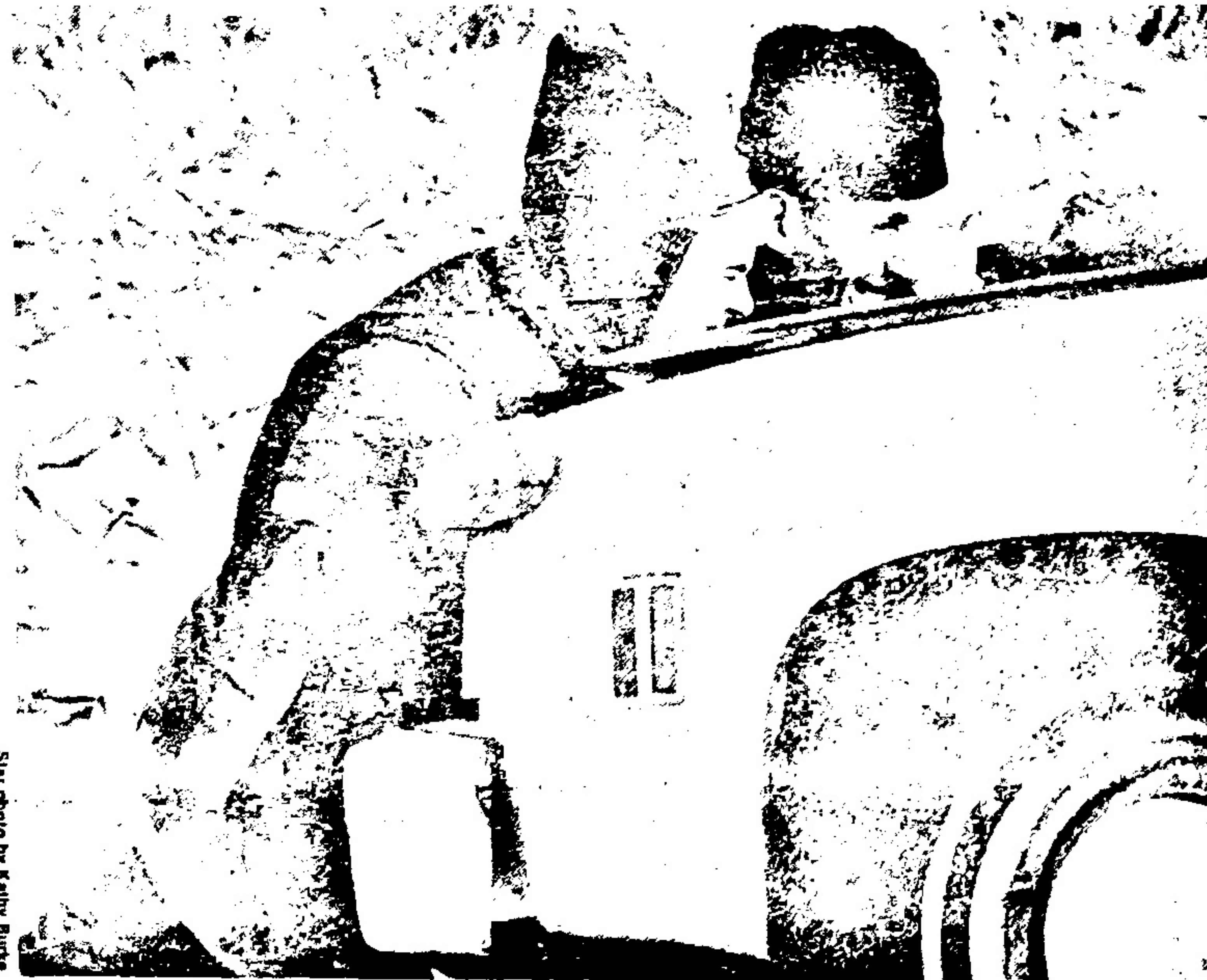
The Holmes Student Center filled all of its 92 hotel rooms by 9 p.m. Sunday, about 60 percent of which were occupied by stranded parents, Hotel Manager Donna Domina said. The hotel turned away about 50 families, she said.

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The Holiday Inn, 1212 W. Lincoln Hwy., filled all of its 114 hotel rooms by 6 p.m. Sunday, desk clerk Kim Steffen said.

"In the last two days, almost everybody who stayed here were people who got stranded because of the weather," Steffen said.

Jim's Standard Service Station, 920 W. Lincoln Hwy., has serviced about 300 stalled cars in the last three days, an employee said. The station has had both its tow trucks running non-stop, and Monday was "one of our busiest days ever," he said.



When "horsepower" falls . . . While some NIU students spent the extra day of break cozy and warm indoors, some

DeKalb residents had to cope with the aftermath of the coldest day in the city's history.