



A crowd at the Alabama Power Company showroom watches televised images of the results of the terrorist attacks on New York City.

J.C. Lexow/Anniston Star

## State's officials seek shelter in D.C.

By Amy Sieckmann

Star Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON

Sirens filled the background, Alabama senators Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions took refuge a few blocks from the Capitol after Capitol Hill and every federal building was evacuated following an attack a few miles away at the Pentagon and a car bomb explosion at the U.S. State Department.

As the streets filled with fleeing motorists and pedestrians, Shelby left his office and gathered his staff in the 116 Restaurant a few blocks from the Capitol. The senator had waited until the last minute to leave his office before moving to the restaurant.

Because of the emergency situation at the Capitol, the senator could only take a few minutes to issue a brief statement saying that he and the intelligence committee will do everything in their power to find the people responsible for these tragedies.

Gov. Don Siegelman was traveling to Washington, D.C., to attend a meeting to voice his concerns about incineration of chemical weapons in Anniston. The governor's plane was forced to land in South Carolina, but he has been in continual contact with his agency heads and staff, his press office said.

Siegelman has put the Alabama National Guard on alert and has fully activated the state Emergency Management Association operating center in Clanton. Security at the Capitol Building and at the Alabama Statehouse also was tightened as news of the attacks spread.

"There has never been a more horrible attack on the American people," Siegelman said in a press release. "I ask the people of Alabama to say a special prayer for the victims of this cowardly act."

Sessions, however, has a house close to the Capitol and was able to take shelter there with most of his

staff.

"I just have to say that this is a monumental catastrophe. We've known, all of us, that these kinds of threats were possible, but, frankly, the size of this catastrophe exceeds what I imagined could happen," Sessions said. "This is a terrible tragedy."

Sessions said he hoped that he would be able to return to work sometime today, but was awaiting word from the police and other security officials.

"It is important that this nation not allow this kind of activity to disrupt our normal activities any more than is necessary," he said.

"We cannot allow fear to rule. We've got to redouble our efforts to identify who is responsible for this and enact the fullest retribution. Our first responsibility is to defend the United States and to destroy those who seek to destroy us. And my heart goes out to the families that are suffering."

Sessions was in the Supreme Court when the initial attack on the World Trade Center was reported. When he returned to his office in the Capitol, he was told to evacuate the building. The atmosphere was pretty calm, and most people were trying to work with the security officials, he said. Although an explosion was reported on CNN at the Supreme Court, Sessions said he was inside the building and did not hear any booming sounds.

The next step, Sessions said, is to make sure the nation responds to this attack as soon as possible. "We need to martial all our intelligence assets and to strike back at those who caused this. In the long run we have also got to train people better, as we are already doing in Anniston," he said. "We've got to make sure that if our defensive measure don't work, that our responders know how to respond."

Capital Correspondent Matthew Korade contributed to this report.



J.C. Lexow/Anniston Star

Jean Smith and Tom Price appear stunned as they watch television reports of the terrorist attacks.

## Experts speculate on what comes next

By L.E. Forster

Star Staff Writer

The magnitude of the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington this morning has left area experts shocked.

"Very clearly it's a well planned attack," said Dave Neal, a Jacksonville State University professor of emergency management.

"The thing about terrorism is are they going to continue this or is this something they were playing to the media?" Neal said.

While watching the television news his first thought was the method of the terrorist attacks.

"We have focused so much on ABC - atomic, biologic and chemical - that we have forgotten that there are other means to accomplish a terrorist attack," Neal said.

Neal and several other JSU experts on disasters and emergencies are now thinking about the path to recovery, namely the massive search and rescue mission that will go on in New York.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recently put out a plan for urban rescues. FEMA deploys the three closest task forces to the disaster area each consisting of 31 people to find and rescue trapped victims, according to FEMA's website.

JSU professors did not know whether any local task forces would be called to New York.

Estimates of victims have not yet been determined, and Brenda Phillips, a JSU professor of disaster recovery, said that wouldn't come for several weeks.

"The most difficult challenge right now is establishing the perimeters," she said. "Due to the collapse of World Trade Center towers, rescue crews have found it increasingly difficult to establish the size of the area in which they are working."

"They've already had to pull the perimeter back several times," Dr. Phillips said.

As search and rescue becomes the primary focus, it is unclear what retribution the United States will seek against the perpetrators.

Neal and the other JSU professors spoke to the press briefly before rushing to a meeting with JSU President Bill Meehan to share their thoughts on the situation at hand.

## Area residents express horror

From staff reports

Minutes after a three-pronged terrorist attack on both World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, local residents gathered around television sets and radios trying to make sense of the events.

Most were in a state of disbelief. Christeena Waldrop fought back tears as she watched the events unfold on TVs at Alabama Power's main office.

"It's unbelievable," she said. "It's indescribable what kind of feelings you have."

Ms. Waldrop was concerned about her uncle who is in the Alabama National Guard.

"It's just scary what could happen next. It could happen anywhere," she said. "It makes you just want to go home."

Pearl Williams, director of career development at Jacksonville State University, has a son who's worked at the Pentagon since July.

She said Tuesday she hasn't been able to reach him. Her son, Army Maj. Dwayne Williams has a wife and two children, according to Mrs. Williams.

"I have a good support system here," she said. "I'm in prayer for my son and for the other families. I'm in shock. I can't believe this could happen in our country."

Along South Quintard Avenue, many workers kept a watchful eye to the western hills where Anniston Army Depot and the chemical weapons stockpile lies.

Florence Whittaker, an employee at the Great American Car Wash, kept craning her eyes out the western windows of the shop.

"You worry about Bynum," said Gloria Nobles, an employee at Sunny King Honda, pointing to the hills. "You know how dangerous that is."

The mood among Sunny King employees was prayerful.

"It's a time for prayer in the country," said Kevin Higgins, a car salesman. "It's a time to hug your neighbor."

"I think that's what everybody's been doing this morning. Telling their neighbor that they love them," Ms. Nobles added.

"We've been expecting a terrorist attack for a long time, and now our luck ran out," said Shane Gay, who works in Sunny King's service division. "So far, we

were blessed."

"I feel for the families of the people employed in those buildings, and I feel for the family and the nation."

Speculation about a terrorist attack on the depot caused one woman at the Great American Car Wash to order employees to relinquish her half-washed car. "She drove off in a hurry with her family," said Ms. Whittaker, an Anniston resident.

"This is a very terrorizing experience," commented Ms. Whittaker.

She and others registered horror that the terrorists could so easily slip by security.

"I was really surprised something like this can happen. How can they sneak in upon us like this, with computers monitoring everything?" Ms. Whittaker said.

"How could they get so many planes?" asked one woman, sitting in a waiting room at Sunny King. "Where was the security?"

Tom Price, also watching at Alabama Power, called the events "Incredible."

"I just think it's a painful reminder that there is evil out there that co-exists with the good in this world," Price said.

Louis L. Higgins, superintendent of Oxford City Schools said the school system is on alert with its emergency plan.

"We've had some check out at all the schools," he said. "We certainly let them go."

Kim Beckett with Church of St. Michael and All Angels said some church members know people in New York and Washington.

"We've had quite a few prayer requests," she said. "We have certainly been remembering those folks."

Anniston firefighters, police officers and emergency rescue personnel train for events such as these, but even they were stunned.

"We're all watching TV trying to figure out what's going on," said acting fire Chief Elbert Finley.

Finley activated a firefighter to man the phones at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Calhoun County Emergency Management Agency office in Jacksonville.

"We prepare and train for events like this, but we never think it's going to happen to us," Finley said. "That's why we do so much training because there is so much going on in the world."

## Local airports, agencies close in wake of attacks

By Matthew Creamer

Star Staff Writer

In response to this morning's attacks that wracked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and downed an airliner near Pittsburgh, the FAA has halted air travel nationwide.

Alabama airports, including the Anniston Metropolitan Airport, cancelled departures and military bases across the state went on alert today in response to the apparent terrorist attacks.

A briefer at Anniston Flight Service

would offer no information other than to confirm that all flights from the airport were cancelled.

Local travel agents interviewed Tuesday morning said fallout from the attacks still was undetermined, but most agents expected that business would be harmed to some degree.

"What I'm expecting is for some people not to want to fly," said Janet Tompkins, an owner of J&J travel in Jacksonville.

Birmingham International Airport, with about 80 departures daily, halted all out-

bound flights on an order from the Federal Aviation Administration.

"We're only taking inbound flights," said airport spokeswoman Carol Windham. "We're like everyone else, in shock."

Al Schwartz, a spokesman for Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, said access was being restricted and identification was being checked on all entering the Army base.

"We have not received any threat, but we're taking measures to ensure the safety of our residents and employees," he said.

Redstone Arsenal is the site of the Army's missile command, with NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center nearby.

Montgomery Airport Authority Executive Director Phil Perry said security also had been increased, with the parking lot being swept for explosives.

He said one inbound plane had been held up in Memphis, and one small plane had been diverted to Montgomery Regional Airport.

Fitz Fitzpatrick, an engineer with a security services company in Montgomery, was

planning to fly to Washington on business Tuesday.

"When I got down here, they said the flight had been delayed. Now they're saying it won't leave until at least 6," Fitzpatrick said. He said everything was quiet and calm at the airport.

"I was disappointed the plane didn't take off," Fitzpatrick said. "That would probably be the safest time to be in the air."