

# Storm gave chief rude introduction to parks job

By Kathy Parrish  
staff writer

There was no easing into the job for Oakland County's new parks manager, who found six of the nine parks without power.

Taking over the day after the New Year's ice storm, Ralph Richard walked into an administration building which had no heat or electricity.

While there was no major damage to buildings, repairs at the parks due to storm damage are expected to cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

The Nature Center at Independence Oaks relied on a fireplace for five days until heat was restored there Sunday.

"WE'RE LUCKY not to have leaky roofs," said Richard, whose extensive experience as director of Southfield's park system included only one major storm hitting just a "couple places."

"Our main challenge was to keep electricity where we had it. Our staff worked round the clock to keep heat in so pipes wouldn't freeze." Touting the park system last week, Richard and his deputy, Jon Kipke,

found the power out at six. Without power were Addison Oaks near Orford, Groveland Oaks in Holly, Independence Oaks in Clarkston, Springfield Oaks in Davidsburg, Waterford Oaks in Pontiac, and White Lake Oaks in Pontiac.

The park without power for the longest period of time was Independence Oaks, where trees were also forced down onto the fences.

ICE DID major damage at Addison Oaks, weighting down the willow trees along the park entrance. Two full grown trees — a Russian olive and ornamental flowering tree — were ruined by the storm.

Also at Addison Oaks, a wedding went on Saturday even though power was out. Using candles, heaters and generators to create electricity, the couple said their vows in the Tudor-style conference center instead of moving to another facility owned by the caterer.

"They wanted to have the wedding there," explained Richard. "At White Lake Oaks, a sump pump went out and had to be replaced."



Ice did major damage at Addison Oaks County Park, weighting down willow trees along the park entrance. Two full grown trees — a Russian olive and ornamental flowering tree — were ruined by the storm.

## Life challenges are talk topics

How to handle life's more predictable challenges will be discussed during a free seven-part lecture series sponsored by Sinai Hospital of Detroit. "What Makes Relationships Meaningful" will be the lecture topic at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15, in Sinai's Zuckerman Auditorium, 6767 W. Outer Drive. To register, call 493-5895. Free parking is available in the Shapiro School of Nursing parking lot adjacent to the auditorium.

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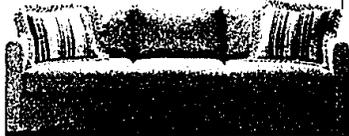
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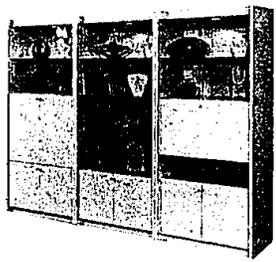
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