

Farmington area bears brunt of storm

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Farmington bore the brunt of Saturday afternoon's storm, which packed 70 mile per hour winds and lightning.

Farmington Hills and Farmington along with neighboring Redford Township were hardest hit in terms of power outages, Detroit Edison said. At least 9,000 electrical customers were affected in the area.

Crews worked well into Tuesday to restore electricity to about

80 homes in the Farmington area. Detroit Edison brought in 124 line crews from out of state to help.

"The focus of our restoration activity remains with Farmington and Farmington Hills where the storm seemed to hit the hardest," said Lew Layton, Edison spokesman.

On Saturday afternoon, calls for help poured into Farmington Hills and Farmington emergency dispatch centers shortly after the storm ran its course. Residents reported downed wires and trees and, in one case, a transformer

fire at Middlebelt and 14 Mile.

Firefighters from Station No. 4 put out a small fire in the attic of the home on Sudbury Court, which the homeowner said was hit by lightning.

A large portion of calls stemmed from fallen wires and trees.

Hills police and fire responded to reports of downed wires on Fernhill, St. Francis, 10 Mile and I-275, Ontaga, LaMura, Foxgrove, Rocky Crest, Shrewsbury, Tuck, Halsted and Howard. In many cases, fire-

fighters cordoned off the area with yellow caution tape until Edison crews arrived.

Farmington Hills Public Works Department used a similar prescription for toppled trees that blocked roads.

"Normally, we get called in to make the situation safe. That's the goal," said Dan Rooney, Hills public works director. "We do the clean up later."

Trees and limbs fell onto Inkster Road near 14 Mile and at Grand River. Fallen trees also had to be cleared from Montclair

and Whittington streets. Another tree toppled over near Farmington and Nine Mile roads.

Part of a tree fell on a Miron Street home, police reports said. Police also responded to numerous security alarms set off by the summer electrical storm, which provided needed relief to a week of sweltering heat and humidity.

Otherwise, crews ranked the thunderstorm as typical for this time of year.

"I've seen much worse," the DFW's Rooney said.

Death

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Sayre's co-worker Carson Copeland said the victim had gone into the trees to retrieve a downed wire, which was not believed to be live.

Hills firefighters marked the area with yellow caution tape the previous night after the storm hit Saturday afternoon.

After the victim picked up the wire, Copeland told police it became "juiced" and he saw Sayre go down. Copeland used a piece of wood to knock the live wire off Sayre and pulled him into the grass.

"He wasn't breathing and there was no pulse," Hibner said. "There was no sign of life at all."

Botsford Hospital pronounced Sayre dead at 4:22 p.m. Cause of death was listed as cardiopulmonary arrest as a result of electrocution, police reports said.

Officers noticed a severe burn on the victim's right hand and a second burn wound above his left knee.

Sayre was working for Gilbert Companies, which is one of several firms contracted by Detroit Edison to help with line work. An Edison spokesman said the incident remains under investigation.

"Certainly it is tragic," said Detroit Edison's Lew Layton.

The accident was unsettling for Viji's father, who also works for Detroit Edison. Nirmal Singh, who called 911 after seeing the man down, is an engineer with the utility company.

Nirmal's son, Viji, also described Sayre's co-worker as visibly shaken.

"You always hope a person could come out of a situation like that," Viji said. "It's disheartening ... You can try to do everything, but sometimes it's not enough after someone has suffered injuries from an electrocution."

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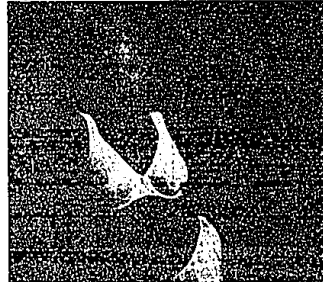
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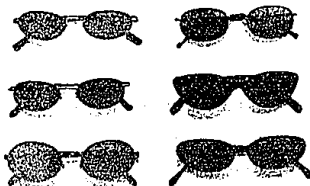
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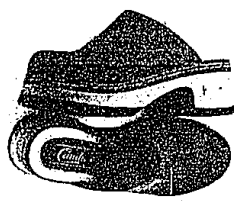
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