

Squirrel causes Saturday power outage

By Laura Militana, May 23, 2016, USA

A number of residents in north Cookeville were affected by a power outage Saturday evening thanks to a squirrel.

According to Cookeville Electric Department Director Tony Peek, the incident occurred on Chocolate Drive near 10th Street at the North Cookeville Substation.

“The squirrel climbed the pole and caused the pole to catch fire,” Peek said. “That substation serves around 1,000 to 1,500 people.”

Those people were without power for an hour after the circuit was shut down.

“We try to squirrel-and bird-proof all of our equipment, but they do find a way to cause problems,” Peek said.

The pole did not need to be replaced, but additional repair work may be needed in the near future. In that case, those who will be affected will be notified by the electric department of when an outage would take place.

In another area of town, residents of the East Lake area were without water for a number of hours Sunday afternoon.

A leak was found in the area of Bridgeway and Eastlake Drive, an area that was taken over by the City of Cookeville from a utility district some years back.

“We didn’t know about the problem until residents started complaining of low water pressure,” Carey Vaughn, engineer and construction superintendent with the water department, said.

“We found a small leak and got crews in place around 3 p.m. yesterday to start repairing it.”

But as crews dug to get to the leak, the pipe blew, creating an even bigger problem.

“The construction standards did not meet Cookeville’s and there were a lot of issues with it,” she said.

“It took about five and a half hours to repair it.”

Crews were still out there this morning, cleaning up the area and patching up asphalt.