

Wind culprit in city power outages

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Weather wreaked havoc with electrical lines the past couple of weeks that took time to repair.

During the evening of June 21, gusts caused power loss in several areas of town when lines made contact with each other and knocked out breakers.

City administrator Bruce Clymer said the breakers re-set automatically and most people were without power for only 15 seconds.

During a storm in the early morning hours of June 24, Clymer said a tree fell in the alley between Avenues C and D, bringing down a power line and kicking out a breaker at the Ninth Street substation.

The breaker, he said, carries the 17th Street feeder which supplies power to homes generally in an area north and south of a line that travels east on 17th Street.

“Once the line was repaired, city crews couldn’t get the breaker to reconnect,” Clymer said. “So the 17th Street line was then re-routed to feed from a different breaker at the hospital substation.”

Finally, during the afternoon of June 26, an extra load added from the 17th Street feeder line caused a breaker at Gothenburg Memorial Hospital to go out, he said.

Electricity was cut along the 17th Street area and also in the northeast part of town.

Clymer said crews removed the load from the hospital substation breaker and re-set the 20th Street breaker.

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While shifting the 17th Street load to a different breaker at the city shop, he said the added load caused fuses to blow on that circuit.

Eventually crews repaired the original breaker at the Ninth Street substation.

“We don’t expect any further issues but certainly storms and heat will put stress on the system,” Clymer said.

City energy usage typically peaks between 11 a.m. and 8 p.m., he said.

“Doing anything to use less power during that time helps to control Gothenburg’s wholesale cost of power,” Clymer said.

The city buys energy from Nebraska Public Power District.

A couple of ways to lighten the power load, he suggested, is to use less hot water while doing laundry and operating the dishwasher.

Temperatures will begin climbing on the Fourth of July (Thursday) and are predicted hover in the 90s throughout the weekend.

Air conditioners contribute to the power load so city officials ask that residents be mindful of operating appliances like washers and dryers and dishwashers during peak times.

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