

Ice storm snaps Riverview's stately trees

Under weight of ice, bowed, split stands keep much of Town of Riverview in dark most of this week

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This week, Riverview discovered that its blessing is also its curse.

Metro Moncton's lush riverfront community takes so much pride in its canopy of trees that an image of a proud maple appears on the town's official logo.

But those naked stands are now bowed and split, tamping power lines and keeping much of Moncton's sister community in the dark.

Darren Murphy, NB Power's manager for the eastern region, reported yesterday that about 50 per cent of all Metro Moncton customers without power were based on the southern side of the Petitcodiac.

Between 12 and 15 crews were dedicated to restoring Riverview's main trunk feeder, which sends power to a network of side lines that then connect individual homes. At the same time, all other feeders in Metro Moncton had been successfully established.

Murphy said there was no obvious difference between the plights of Riverview's trunk lines and the



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The Chateau Moncton is visible from Rivercrest Avenue in Riverview yesterday, a sight not normally possible. The ice storm has laid flat or damaged a majority of trees in the Town of Riverview.

others, even though Riverview's was taking longer to restore.

"It wasn't that one was more dif-

ficult than the other," he said.

"It was just a matter of time." Historically, Riverview sees more power outages than the rest of Metro Moncton because of its country-in-the-city setting, said Riverview Mayor Bruce Fitch.

"When you look at all the mature trees around town, that's what's been the cause of other problems in the past," Fitch said yesterday during a tri-community media conference at Moncton City Hall.

Fitch said even when all residents' homes are bright and warm again, the town won't be quite the same.

"It certainly has changed the skyline, when you see the number of stately trees down around fallen power lines and phone lines."

Fitch's home has been without power since 12:35 p.m. Sunday afternoon. With 17 mature maples on his property, he spent the first portion of the storm listening to the thunder of collapsing branches in his backyard.

"When I say limbs, I mean thick, one-foot-diameter limbs," he said.

Like many Riverview residents, Fitch has spent this week bunking up at a family member's home — in his case, his mother's home in Moncton. The mayor said he's impressed with the support residents

have shown each other by taking in neighbours and friends without electricity.

"We're seeing the effects of that, because it's not overcrowded at the Comfort Centre," he said.

Yesterday afternoon, 118 residents were registered at the Coverdale Recreation Centre on Runnymede Road. Of the five shelters located around the area, it has also seen the most bodies settled into mattresses on the gymnasium floor. On Monday, 20 people slept there; Red Cross volunteers anticipated even more last night.

Shawnee Dollemont, an administrative officer with the municipality who was slicing sandwiches at the Rec Centre kitchen yesterday, said visitors to the facility were grateful for the help, and most people she knew without power were taking it well.

"We've had a few call town hall who've been very upset," said Dollemont, who is also without electricity at her home, "but I think most people know NB Power is doing all it can."

Fellow volunteer Nancy Burke, an employee with the town's Parks and Recreation department, said discovering that your neighbour's windows are lit can actually make you feel better.

"As it's restored, you see it getting closer and closer," Burke said.



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Riverview Mayor Bruce Fitch addresses a media conference about the ice storm yesterday at Moncton's City Hall. Moncton's emergency planning director John Allain is at his left.