

## ComEd blames weather, damaged trees for outages

(<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/parkridge/news/704535.pr-comed-122007-s1.article>)

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ComEd representatives appeared before the Park Ridge City Council Dec. 17, pinpointing nine areas of the city where multiple power outages were reported this year and presenting steps to address problems that may have caused the outages.

Drew Zmolek, reliability manager for ComEd, reported that miscellaneous equipment malfunctions, fallen trees and branches, and weather -- primarily lightning and wind -- caused 156 of the 268 power interruptions that occurred in 2007.

The circuit that serves Bristol Court Condominiums and the area of Hamlin and Albion experienced nine outages between January and November 2007, according to ComEd's data. Trees and vegetation are said to be the major cause of the outages, and additional trimming is scheduled for February. In addition, ComEd plans to install equipment that will detect an outage on the line and switch the part of the circuit that is undamaged to another source. Two poles are also scheduled for replacement.

A circuit serving the Merrill/Northwest Highway area and Thorndale/Linden area experienced eight outages, and four of these were due to problems on other circuits, ComEd said. Tree trimming is the only measure proposed for this area.

The Imperial/Washington area also experienced eight outages. A cable is scheduled to be replaced, along with inspections of the major line that provides electricity to the circuit.

A cable serving the Seeley/Northwest Highway area will be monitored in 2008 due to two problems with the cable reported in 2007.

Other outages were reported in the area of Lincoln and Oakton, and in the neighborhood of Merrill and Elm, most due to the Aug. 23 storm.

Two major lines which provide electric service to Park Ridge and surrounding areas also experienced several outages which led to outages on multiple circuits that the lines serve. Equipment failure was blamed for five of the 12 outages reported on these two lines and underground cable problems caused two outages. ComEd is planning to test and replace a section of underground cable which caused the two outages on one of the lines, as well as upgrade lightning protection on the second line.

In response to complaints about communication failures between ComEd, municipalities and customers following the Aug. 23 storm, a communications plan has been submitted to members of the Northwest Municipal Conference, said Joe Trost, ComEd spokesperson. The mayors of the member municipalities are currently reviewing the plan, he said.

City Manager Tim Schuenke told the ComEd representatives that one of the biggest problems the city faces during outages is complaints from residents who say they cannot reach a live person at ComEd to report an outage.

Mike Radziewicz of ComEd said the fastest way to take reports during large-scale outages is electronically.

"At times, I think we do a very good job of giving information on restoration times," Radziewicz said, adding, "We hope one day that we'll be the only one customers call, so they don't have to call the city."