



TILLAMOOK
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Wind takes high toll

By John Sollman

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The old city show was demolished by high winds in Bay City. John Sollman/For the Headlight-Herald

Reynolds tells his firefighters to see to the welfare and security of their own families before reporting for duty.

BAY CITY — "Last night was an interesting night," said Fire Chief Don Reynolds. "Today we took some engines and did a survey of the city," Reynolds added. Some 76 homes sustained substantial damaged in the storm, he said, some of them severely. This, he added, does not include sheds, garages and outbuildings. Reynolds estimated that there are about three miles of telephone and electric wires on the ground throughout town, noting that "the PUD guys have their work cut out for them."

Reynolds had the highest praise for Sheriff Todd Anderson, for putting together a command center and organizing a countywide plan to deal with the emergency. Anderson called together key emergency responders from throughout the county for a planning session at the 9-1-1 center at 9 Sunday morning.

"My night began at 6 Sunday evening," Reynolds said. A crew of seven firefighters, including Reynolds, staffed the fire station all night. Another six firefighters took over in the morning.

Countywide, he said, there were some rescues, and in Bay City, "we checked on some folks to be sure they were OK."

Peak gust during the night was 94 mph at 1:11 a.m., Reynolds said. He had just previously released an erroneous figure to a local radio station, saying it was 129 mph., then realized that his anemometer was registering in kilometers, not miles per hour.

That gust shook the fire hall and broke some roof seams, Reynolds said.

But Bay City's greatest casualty was the United Methodist Church, with its landmark steeple, built in 1897. The south wind tore the steeple from the building.

According to Pastor David Hurd, the steeple was not a part of the church structure, but rather attached through a cabling system which would allow the steeple to move in a high wind. He said he was saddened by the loss of the landmark steeple, and that the church would rebuild, though he was unsure whether the new steeple would be of the same design.

Also, he said, until he is sure that the rest of the church is structurally sound, he would look into a temporary meeting place for his congregation.

"I'm just thankful that none of our people were hurt," he said. Hurd was upbeat about rebuilding and moving on. "That's what insurance is for," he quipped.

Other significant damage included the old city shop building, which was virtually leveled. Habitat for Humanity had been storing construction materials at the building located on property just west of City Hall. Another major casualty was the Bay Ocean Boys mini-storage center. A large storage building under construction was severely damaged, with some sheet metal panels lying several hundred feet away along U.S. 101.

Reynolds noted that falling trees crushed at least two homes, one on E Street and the other on High Street. However, there may yet be others as well, he noted.

Reynolds had praise for his firefighters, who staffed fire station throughout the night and would continue to do so until at least Tuesday morning.

Also, Reynolds said, the Public Works crew was out at 3 a.m. working to clear downed trees. Reynolds also had high praise for the people from Tillamook PUD, who cleared downed electric cables so the Public Works crew could remove the trees.

Some of the trees which came up by the roots, Reynolds said, uprooted and broke water pipes as well, adding yet another challenge for Public Works. There was also a landslide across one lane of Portland Avenue. The slide was about 30 feet west of another slide which the property owner, Carol Dickey, had stabilized with boulders. The embankment just slid downhill, shrubs, blackberries and all.

Charlie Wooldridge of the Bay City Arts Center reported that the Arts Center had sustained minor damage, but that with the power out, he had to run a generator to operate a sump pump in the basement. But, Wooldridge said, since he had to spend the night at the Arts Center to keep the generator running, he and Helen Hill would be serving hot meals for anyone wanting one.

Other citizens were volunteering to help as well. John Hunter and Bob Briley cranked up their chain saws and cleared away a large alder which had blown down across Portland Avenue, saving the beleaguered Public Works crew one task from among the many challenges remaining on their plate.

It was a storm which just kept on blowing. As Hurd observed, "I've never seen anything like this!"

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