

# POWER

From 1A

Kings Mountain, which buys power wholesale from Duke Power Co., lost power to its Gaston Street and York Road substations at approximately 2 a.m. Thursday. Duke got power restored to the substations around 10:30 p.m. Thursday.

In the meantime, city personnel worked around the clock to replace what they could on their own lines and remove trees and limbs from lines. City codes officials went around town checking lines going into residences and advised them on getting private electricians to repair their lines.

When the city first received its electrical load from Duke Power, Murphrey said it was "cold" and had to be turned off and fed back in slowly. Different section of town were turned on one-by-one. All 4,000 Kings Mountain customers were back on line Sunday afternoon.

About the only people with power during the outage were those businesses and residences that had generators. No problems were reported from generator use in Kings Mountain, but a Shelby man died from carbon monoxide poisoning from a generator that was being used on a built-in porch and carbon monoxide leaked into his home.

One of the hardest areas to get back on line in the city was the Linwood section.

"There was so much damage over there from limbs and trees, and there were so many lines down it was very difficult," Murphrey said. "We got most of them

on by Sunday, but most of that area did not come on when we first cut the power back on Thursday night.

"We also had a tremendous problem over in the Crescent Hill area. We had a utility pole that was one of the main utility poles with a large transformer on it that supplied a lot of residents that was cut in half by a tree. We kept working with that and got it back on Friday night."

City employees worked around the clock on a rotating basis throughout the ordeal, and some contractors from as far away as Georgia were called in to assist.

"But the majority of it was done by our city utility crews," Murphrey said.

A local tree-clearing contractor was called in to cut trees out of the streets so city electrical crews could get to the houses where lines needed to be replaced. City employees not trained to work on lines helped in other areas - from staffing phones to helping clear trees.

"We have right at 200 employees, and most of them were out there working," Murphrey said.

"Anybody that could use a chain saw was assisting with anything they could do, even before the storm actually came.

"Before the storm we made sure we had sand and salt spread on the streets, and during the storm they were spreading on all the streets and bridges. As the roads became clear they switched over to assist in removing limbs and trimming trees.

"It was a total team effort. The codes department would go out and look for

areas that needed assistance, and assisted citizens in what to do as far as calling electricians in for service and bringing things back up to codes.

"The fire department answered about 30 calls during that period of time, but nothing serious. Most of it was to check smoke. A lot of times when utilities pull away from the house there's some smoke coming back from some appliance in the house. They checked it out and made sure everything was okay, and the utility department would come out and make sure the power was corrected so they wouldn't have a fire in the house."

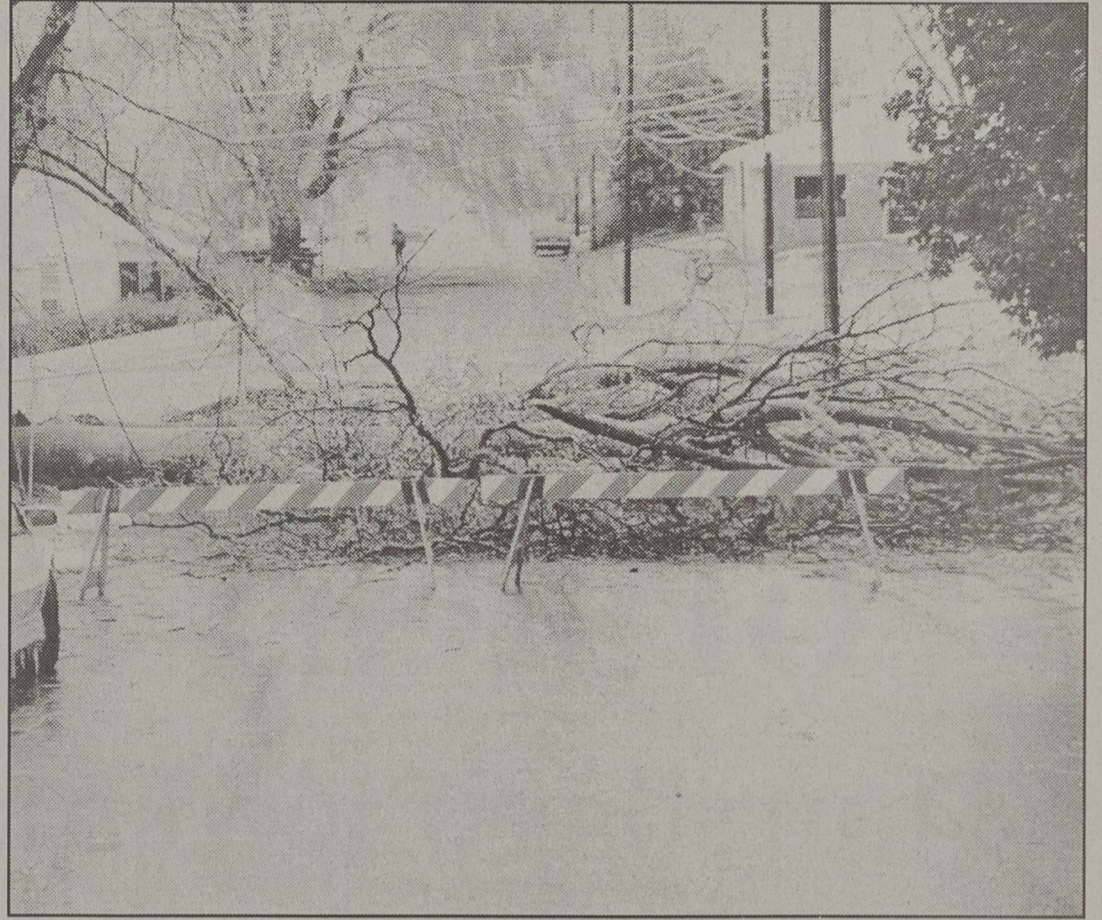
Murphrey said he felt the storm was worse than Hugo because of a combination of a total blackout, and property and financial damage.

"When you combine everything, this is the worst storm in our history, and certainly the most costly in the history of Kings Mountain," he said.

But Murphrey praised city employees for their teamwork and dedication to quickly get Kings Mountain back to normal.

"We don't have everything done yet," he said. "but we hope to get everything cleaned up by Christmas," he said. "We want all of this off the streets by Christmas."

"I'm real proud of all of our employees and citizens," he said. "Every neighborhood I went to all over town, people were helping each other out. We also want to thank the citizens so very much for their patience and understanding throughout this crisis."



GARY STEWART / HERALD

This was a common site around Kings Mountain following Wednesday and Thursday's ice storm. Many side streets were closed after trees, limbs and power lines came crashing down during the night. All power was restored to the city by Monday.

# CLAIMS

From 1A

are also covered for any food they may have lost while they were without electricity.

"There are thousands of folks out there who have lost refrigerated food and don't know it's covered," he said.

McClure said that he has also had several calls about peoples' trees falling on their neighbors' houses. Most of them want to know whose insurance should cover the damage, he said.

"One is not held responsible if one's tree is healthy and it falls on someone's house," he said. "If one's tree is a hazard, then there could be negligence on the part of the tree owner."

John Caveny, of the John Caveny Agency, said that his agency covers any damage to an actual structure, like a house, automobile, out building, or fence, caused by a falling tree or limb.

However, he said that his agency does not cover trees that break and fall in the yard without hitting a structure. The owner would be responsible for having the

tree cut up and taken away, he said.

With all of the damage to homes and yard clutter now being assessed, some people are beginning to make comparisons between the ice storm and past storms. Was the ice storm as bad as Hurricane Hugo? Will it cost as much to repair the damages of the ice storm as it did those of Hugo?

"This is the largest storm other than Hugo in recent years. Claims are running just about what Hugo was," said Maner.

Most of Maner's largest claims run from approximately \$7-10,000, although he has one claim that could be as much as \$25,000, he said.

"It's significantly more severe than the Palm Sunday tornado in the early 90s. It will rival Hugo," said McClure.

Caveny said that he didn't think the damage was nearly as bad as the damage he saw during Hugo.

Of course it is too early to tell how much damage has actually been done by the storm and how much it will cost to fix it. However, Maner estimated that his firm will have over \$100,000 in claims, while McClure said that his firm hasn't even had time to count the claims let alone the cost.

# PEOPLE

From 1A

another storm-related accident until Friday.

"We covered all the major intersections non-stop," Proctor said. The department used all 31 of its full-time employees and 46 employees in all.

Proctor credited the public for staying inside.

"Some of the guys noticed some of the same people riding up and down the roads," he said, "but for the most part people just stayed in. Traffic was not that bad at all."

Proctor said the most positive thing he saw during the storm was people helping people.

Although power was out all over town, many businesses stayed open so people could purchase necessary items. Kings Mountain Hospital operated on generators and everything went smoothly, according to employee Alex Bell.

"I think, again, this storm shows what kind of community we have," Proctor said. "When something bad happens everybody's going to pull together. I think the citizens need a pat on their back, along with the city personnel. It says a lot about what this community is like."

"Look at our surrounding municipalities in comparison to us," he added. "Look who has their services up and running the fastest."

A longtime law enforcement officer who has worked numerous storms, including Hurricane Hugo, Proctor predicted this won't be the last.

"I don't remember having a storm this early," he said. "We're likely to have several more. We used to beg just to see snow fall before Christmas. In my lifetime I don't remember over one or two flakes coming before Christmas. With a major storm coming this early, I'd say we're going to be lucky to get by."

"My suggestion is to go ahead and get prepared in case we do have one or two more."

Preparation may have been the key for Kings Mountain getting power restored quicker than most neighboring municipalities. For years the city has had an aggressive tree-trimming policy on power rights-of-way, and except for that the outage could have been more devastating.

Mayor Rick Murphrey also commended the public works department for having additional transformers, poles, and other materials in stock. Even before the city's electrical supply from Duke Power was restored city crews were out clearing debris and replacing lines, poles and transformers so they would be ready to begin hooking up power when it was restored to their substations.

"We have a very good tree-trimming policy," Murphrey said. "We contract with a company that continually cuts limbs away from our power lines. That really helped us during this crisis."

In addition, Carolina Tree Service of Kings Mountain was called in during the storm to clear fallen trees and limbs from the streets so city crews could get to fallen lines on private property.

The city purchased an additional chipper truck to assist in the clean-up, and Murphrey encourages citizens to cut their tree limbs and pull them to curbside as soon as possible so all limbs can be removed before Christmas.

"We will continue to work overtime to get all of this picked up," he said. "We had begun leaf collection and we haven't forgotten the leaves but we've had to pull them back to assist during this storm."

While most of the city's 4,000 electric customers were back on line Sunday, Murphrey said city crews will continue to work to repair and replace damaged equipment, especially main transformers.

"I want to thank all of our

city employees for their hard work, and all of our citizens and electrical customers for their patience and understanding," Murphrey said. "They were calling us and giving us reports on conditions of different areas and were very understanding as we worked throughout the nights."

"Teams worked around the clock with very little sleep, and they're still out there working at some of the major intersections to repair some of the big regulators and get them in working condition."

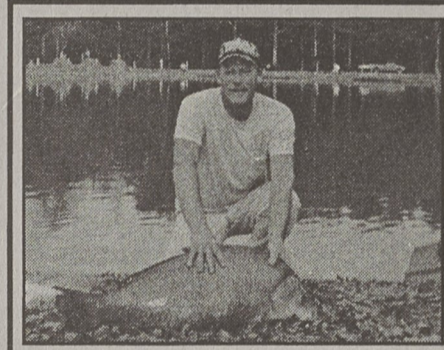
"I want to compliment the police and fire departments that assisted the public works and utility departments at all times. The fire department had a number of calls during that time and went out and assisted residents, and also set up an area where we fed all of the associates who were working throughout the storm."

"The police department was out there when the town was completely black, directing traffic and assisting in every way they could. "It was a great team effort."

Murphrey said he saw a need during the crisis to use the H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Center for a shelter in future emergencies.

"We need to contact the Red Cross and work with them to set up a shelter," he said. "I'm going to work with Monty Thornburg (Senior Center Director) and the City Manager and request that we set up one in these times of disaster so people can come in and have a warm place. I'm going to ask City Council to purchase some large generators so we can staff that area with the right equipment and with blankets and cots and whatever else we need."

"Going through the different neighborhoods I saw people were taking care of each other, but one night as we were turning on power in one area I saw a group of people in a car with the motor running to keep warm. We need a shelter so people can have a place to get out of the cold."



Jamey  
Happy 20th  
Anniversary!!

Everyone knows that I don't care for fishing, but I sure am glad I took the bait.

Kim

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