

# Thursday's blackout affects businesses differently

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**  
*The Champion*

Some sales figures were up, some were down, and some stayed the same.

When it came to Thursday's blackout, each business in Milton was affected differently, depending on the product or service and also the length of time power was out.

On Main Street in particular, some stores had power back within a few hours, while others just a few doors down had to wait nearly a full day for power restoration.

Main Street's Wings Up restaurant, which sells chicken wings, was one of the unlucky ones.

Since the power was out for about 20 hours, Wings Up was closed until Saturday. Thrown out were 650 pounds of wings and 80 pounds of boneless chicken breasts, said owner Mike Chuchmach.

A new shipment of meat arrived Saturday, and the store was open for business Saturday and Sunday with a limited menu. However, business was slow, adding insult to injury.

Mr. Chuchmach said he thought it

was because customers feared the chicken wasn't safe. He said he understood.

"I wasn't a confident purchaser myself at (another) restaurant — you don't know their standards," he said.

In the end, Mr. Chuchmach said he lost about \$10,000 in food and lost business.

This week, Mr. Chuchmach said he's concentrating on conserving energy. The store has limited its hours, to 4 to 10 p.m. until Sunday. Its two main signs are turned off, it has only half its dining room lights on, and it has reduced its air conditioning.

"I know I'm just a little fish in the ocean, but we can all do our part," Mr. Chuchmach said.

Another Milton venue hit hard was the Mohawk slots in Campbellville, which remained closed with other gambling facilities to conserve energy until further notice.

"We're decided to halt the services, working in co-operation with the Province," said Teresa Roncon, public relations manager for the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation.

Employees are on stand-by, waiting until they can return, Ms Roncon said.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

**Home Hardware owner Angelo DeMedicis shows the remaining flashlight and batteries after customers cleaned out the shelves Friday.**

Then there were the lucky ones.

Due to the sporadic nature of the blackouts, some businesses lost power for just a short while, and barely noticed. Jay's Ice Cream, on Main Street, was one such business.

Power came back on about 7:30 p.m. Thursday, said store owner Jason Van Der Veen. None of the ice cream

was ruined and sales were the same as usual, he said.

It was the same type of situation down the street at Milton Greenhouses. Although the power was out until 11:30 a.m. Friday, the flowers stayed fresh in the cooler, said employee Sharon Hicks. Ms Hicks said there was a slight drop in business

on Friday because people didn't know if the store was open, and because the phones were down.

"Fortunately, the power wasn't off for long," she said.

Then there were the really lucky ones, who actually experienced an increase in sales.

Case in point — Home Hardware on Steeles Avenue, thanks to the business sense of owner/dealer Angelo DeMedicis. The store closed at 5 p.m. Thursday. But the next day, staff came in at 8 a.m. and ran the store "the old fashioned way," Mr. DeMedicis said.

Customers with debit were out of luck, but cash worked just fine, and credit card purchases were processed when power was restored, at about 11:30 a.m. Customers were escorted around the store with a flashlight.

"We sold out of propane, flashlights, batteries, and there were a good number of coolers sold," Mr. DeMedicis said.

He said sales for the week were up marginally due to the increase of sales Friday morning.

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at [sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com).



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