

Another power outage in Whitchurch-Stouffville

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

Part of Whitchurch-Stouffville was in the dark Wednesday night, marking the sixth large power outage in the municipality in the past three months.

Power went out in sections of rural Whitchurch-Stouffville after lightning struck a transformer on McCowan Road at Aurora Road. The outage affected 2,000 households.

High winds also contributed to the power failure, said Allan Manchee, Hydro One spokesperson.

The lights went out at 7:15 p.m. and remained out until 12:15 a.m.

"Our crews were working flat out," said Manchee. "We also had a pole fire in (King

Township). It was a very busy night," said Manchee.

Hydro One customers in Whitchurch-Stouffville have been hit with a seven per cent rate hike, while the frequent power outages are raising alarm.

Stouffville resident Roger Little told town council on Tuesday that the summer outages totaled more than 30 hours.

Little is questioning if there's a link between the frequency of these power outages and the recent \$6.2-million purchase of Whitchurch-Stouffville Hydro Electric by Hydro One.

Hydro One inherited a worn system, Don McInnes, Hydro spokesperson told council.

"We're going to bring a whole new system into town next year," said McInnes.

Whitchurch-Stouffville was one of about 120

utilities in Ontario to be sold following direction from the provincial government.

Before the sale, the local utility commission served 3,500 customers in the community of Stouffville. The rest of the municipality, including the rural area and the hamlets, has been served by Ontario Hydro for years.

While council struggles with the rates, residents of Maystone Court, Elm Road, Rupert Avenue and Winlane Drive, are worried about the quality of Hydro One's service, Little stated.

"If we get similar power outages in the winter, pipes would burst," said Little.

"Customers are wondering whether to expect more disruptions during the colder months when an extended power outage could have far more disastrous consequences to homes and businesses," Little said.

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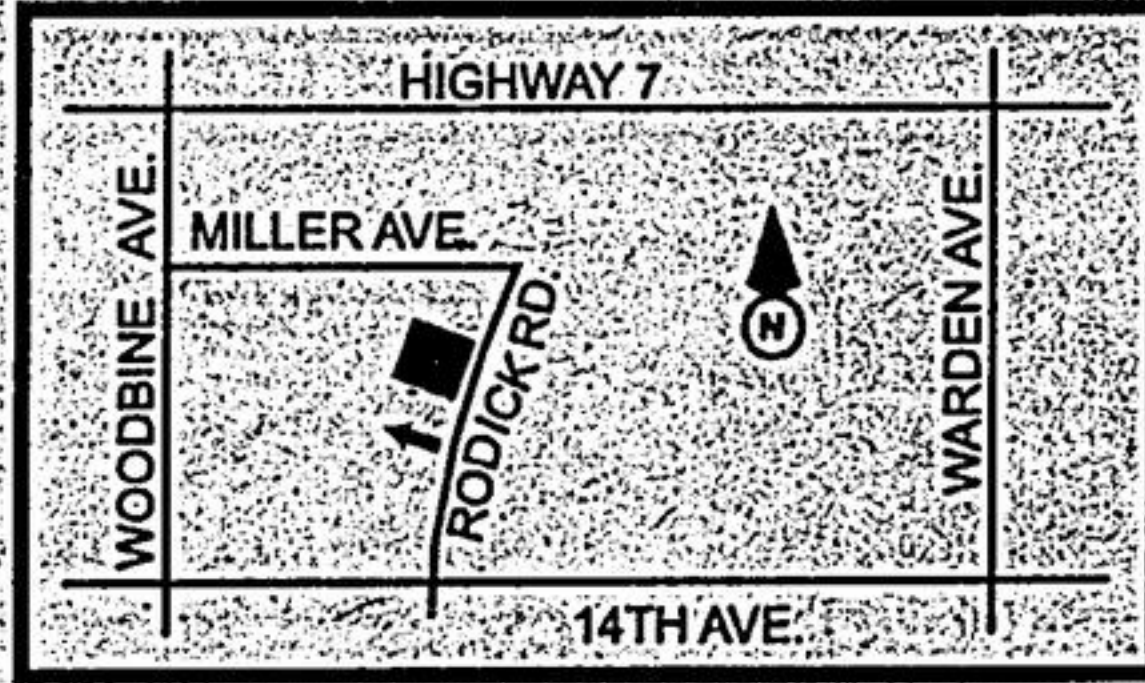
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