

Power restored at 6:30 p.m. after sudden power loss closes Greenfield businesses



Temporary stop signs at the intersection of Main and Federal Streets in downtown Greenfield Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2017.

By ANDY CASTILLO and AVIVA LUTTRELL
Recorder Staff
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GREENFIELD — A squirrel brought business to a screeching halt Tuesday afternoon by damaging equipment at an electricity substation, causing a four-hour power loss in downtown Greenfield.

“I was driving on Main Street. I watched them all go out,” said Erving resident Jovan Rivera, exiting the Mohawk Mall — also without power — around 2:30 p.m., 30 minutes after many stores on Bank Row, Main and Federal streets lost electricity.

“From the bank all the way down to the Hairloft,” said Laurie Paul, owner of All About You, standing on the sidewalk with a few employees.

According to Dennis Galvam, spokesman for Eversource, the incident happened around 2 p.m. More than 400 customers — two-thirds of which were local businesses — were without power until it was restored at 6:30 p.m., another spokesman, Al Lara, later confirmed.

The squirrel, Galvam said, is believed to have died.

“Generally, when squirrels get into wires, they get really zapped,” he said.

Streetlights at the intersection of Main and Federal streets were not functioning. Just after 2 p.m., traffic descended into chaos until police set up temporary four-way stop signs. The blinking yellow light at Main, High, and Crescent streets also went out.

Throughout downtown, business owners and patrons could be seen standing in darkened doorways on cell phones trying to figure out what happened and how long power would be out. The outage came at peak selling hours for stores and just after many restaurants served lunch. Eventually, many businesses closed early, sending employees home.

“It was busy, and then everyone stopped. Everything stopped when the power went out,” said James Hairston, working behind the counter at The Brass Buckle cafe. The restaurant could not serve food without power.

Beside him, Derek Payton said, “We have our fingers crossed for the lights to come back on.”

A quarter-mile down Main Street at the Public Library, librarians used pencil and paper to check out books.

Across the street inside Greenfield Coffee, business seemed to go on as usual, albeit in darkness. Music played from an iPhone as baristas greeted customers, cheerfully taking orders on the shop’s battery operated register, keeping the mood upbeat.

“We still have half a pot of coffee left. We can’t make anymore after that,” said Tess Burdick. “I’ve never seen anything like this in my life — selling coffee in the dark.”