

Concentrated storm slams Aptos neighborhood

By Ryan Masters , Santa Cruz Sentinel

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Sunday storm damage in Aptos (Contributed -- Aptos/La Selva Fire)

APTOS >> An unusually concentrated storm cell wreaked havoc on a three-block area of Aptos, knocking out power to 350, downing trees and damaging five homes Sunday.

“An intense part of the storm focused on one particular area late Sunday morning,” said Aptos/La Selva Fire Department Battalion Chief Trevor Dirksen. “Due to a high number of downed power lines and trees, we placed a reverse 9-1-1 call to those living in the affected area and asked them to shelter in place. We considered it

hazardous to be outside their homes due to the live wires and damaged trees.”

According to Dirksen, six to seven large tree were split or shattered in the area of Loyola Drive, Doris Avenue and Los Altos Drive, blocking roadways, damaging structures and knocking out power to many Aptos residents.

“There were high tension lines involved and as many as seven residential drops were sheered off,” said Dirksen.

PG&E officials said they were unsure when power would be restored in the area, although it could be as soon as Sunday evening.

According to Dirksen, firefighters surveyed the affected area, investigating the damage by patrolling street to street and knocking on doors to ensure everyone’s safety.

“The damage was impressive. There are some really big cypress streets that split in half,” Dirksen said.

An unknown number of standing trees experienced damage. Until the extent of that damage can be determined, they are considered hazards, Dirksen said.

Elsewhere in the county, Sunday’s storm kept emergency responders and PG&E crews busy as numerous reports of downed trees and wires came in from Davenport to Pajaro Valley.

Cal Fire responded to between 20 to 30 calls in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties Sunday morning as well as a number of vehicle accidents on Highway 17, none of which resulted in serious injuries to his knowledge, according to Capt. John Byrne.

“It’s a reminder to everyone driving in stormy conditions to be cautious on the roadways,” Byrne said. “Visibility is compromised because of the rain and fog and road conditions are hazardous. Take it slow.”

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