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On First Day of Reopening of Non-Essential Businesses, WAPA Strikes With District-Wide Power Outage

WAPA / **Published On May 04, 2020 06:53 PM /**

Staff Consortium **May 04, 2020**

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Unit 23, the largest at the Randolph Harley power plant in St. Thomas, tripped and caused a district-wide outage, WAPA said. By. WAPA

ST. THOMAS — On the first day that non-essential businesses were cleared to reopen their establishments after being closed for over a month because of the coronavirus pandemic, a district-wide power outage affected St. Thomas and St. John, complicating a delicate reopening for those without generators.

WAPA said the power outage — deemed a "major electrical service interruption" — affected all customers on St. Thomas and St. John following the loss of generation capacity at the Randolph

Harley Power Plant. The outage occurred at 12:28 p.m., according to the authority.

Then in an update issued at 1:45 p.m., WAPA said efforts were continuing to rebuild generation capacity at the power plant to facilitate restoration of service to all customers on St. Thomas St. John. At the time, the utility revealed that the service interruption occurred when one of its largest generators — Unit 23 — tripped.

It wasn't until 6:10 p.m. that WAPA issued a new update, this time revealing that it had started the process of restoring power, and that customers on Feeders 5A, 6B, 7E, 8A, 8B, 9B, and 9E had been restored. "Service should be reestablished to all customers within an hour," the authority said.

WAPA [recently received \\$15.1 million](#) from the Bryan administration, which translates into rebates of \$250 for residential customers, and \$500 for businesses.

Residents did not take kindly to the latest outage, with a number of St. Thomians and St. Johnians lambasting the utility on social media for yet another failure — one coming at a sensitive time for non-essential outfits attempting to stage reopenings after missing well over a month of revenues.