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WAPA Identifies Cause of Two Major Electrical Service Interruptions in the St. Thomas-St. John District Over the Weekend

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ST. THOMAS — The cause of two major electrical service interruptions which affected customers in the St. Thomas - St. John district Saturday afternoon and early Sunday morning has been determined.

The pair of outages occurred shortly before 4 p.m. Saturday afternoon and just after 1:30 a.m. on Sunday. In both instances, customers on St. Thomas, St. John, Water Island and Hassel Island were affected, WAPA said.

On Saturday afternoon, a faulty fire detector in a WAPA-owned generator led to the shutdown of the unit, a cascading effect on other dispatched units, and a subsequent district-wide service

interruption. Utilizing other generating units, plant personnel rebuilt capacity to restore electrical service to all customers shortly after 8 p.m.

A [fatal automobile accident](#) in the Estate Nazareth area Sunday morning caused damage to a WAPA pole as well as to aerial transmission lines. When the lines were damaged, there was an adverse effect on the Tutu electrical substation which interrupted service to customers on the east end of St. Thomas and the island of St. John.

“Due to the rapid loss of a large volume of electrical demand when breakers at the substation tripped, the power plant became unstable. One of the dispatched unit’s protection schemes reacted to the plant instability which resulted in its falling offline,” said Clinton T. Hedrington, Jr., chief operating officer of Electric System. He said when Unit 23 tripped, other dispatched units also tripped leading to a major service interruption in the district. Plant personnel spent about an hour shoring up power plant operations and later commenced restoration of service to customers. All customers were fully restored shortly after 4 a.m. Sunday.

Line Department crews returned to the accident site on Sunday morning to make temporary repairs to the damaged electrical equipment. Customers on a portion of Feeder 9C experienced an approximate 90-minute outage Sunday while the repairs were underway.